

Sport & Colonialism in 19th Century Australasia



A.S.S.H. Studies in sports History: No. 1

**SPORT AND COLONIALISM
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AUSTRALASIA**

A.S.S.H. STUDIES IN SPORTS HISTORY: No. 1

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PREFACE

As part of A.S.S.H.'s services to members it has been decided to produce occasional *Studies in Sports History* focussing on particular topics or themes. Suggestions for future compilations, which may include reprints of articles already published, are welcome.

This first issue stems from the fact that much nineteenth century Australasian sport came as migrant baggage. It served as a reminder of home in an unfamiliar environment, but it also led to charges of cultural imperialism in that sport became a channel for the imposition of British values on colonial society.

The essays printed here examine aspects of this transfer of British sporting traditions to the Australasian colonies. John O'Hara presents a way of analysing colonial sports history, in particular those sports associated with gambling, by reference to the contemporary British experience. Dave Brown examines how the bonds with Britain were reinforced by sporting and social ideology, especially muscular Christianity and athleticism. The latter also features in Ray Crawford's case study of the transfer of English public school ideals to a Victorian situation. Finally Scott Crawford moves across the Tasman to consider how Britain's sporting heritage fared in a New Zealand environment.

Several issues are raised by these essays which hopefully other researchers will take up: perhaps honours students looking for dissertation topics could be pointed in this direction. To what extent were British ideas adapted to Australasian conditions rather than merely adopted lock, stock and barrel? Was there a significant diminution in the flow of British sporting innovation after political independence was achieved? Moreover British sport did not remain unchanged and the chronology of its developments need to be assessed against that of their transfer to Australasia, not merely in terms of their first appearance but as to when they became generally pursued. In other instances, however, Australasia was ahead of the mother country and this reverse flow of ideas needs to be analysed. When did Australasian sportspersons begin to concern themselves with

inter-colonial and trans-Tasman rivalry and when, if ever, did this supercede the desire to beat the Poms? The essays here have emphasised the role of education in the cultural transfer but what of other institutions such as religion, family, workplace and government? More work too is needed on the transmitting agents - missionaries, politicians, administrators, teachers and traders. Two other groups also require further investigation. Although mentioned in Scott Crawford's essay, the impact of European sports on the indigenous inhabitants has not yet been fully documented; similarly the sporting role of non-British migrants involves much uncharted territory.

Wray Vamplew
Flinders University
November 1986.

AN APPROACH TO COLONIAL SPORTS HISTORY

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I

In recent years sports history has become something of a boom area in Australian historical research and writing. The "Sporting Traditions" conferences and subsequent publications, the establishment of the Australian Society for Sports History and its journal, and the increasing range of important major sports history works, such as those by Ric Sissons & Brian Stoddart and Richard Cashman have all helped to add a degree of "legitimacy" to the field.¹ Nevertheless there remains a widespread degree of concern about what Bill Mandle identified as the relative lack of "serious academic study of Australian sports history".² The same concern is apparent in Wray Vamplew's call for economic historians to take sports history seriously and to revise their methods in order to apply them appropriately in this field.³ Vamplew and Mandle were not attempting to denigrate the work done in Australian sports history to date. Rather they were concerned about the lack of sufficient models for other historians to follow and so both went on to suggest methods or ways in which sports history could be approached more constructively.

It is within that tradition that this paper should be viewed. It derives from a wider study of a history of gaming and betting in Australia and in particular with the difficulties faced in finding a means of transforming a descriptive narrative account of "firsts" and "who won what, when" into an analytical interpretation more in keeping with the aims of history as a discipline. The purpose here is to demonstrate the value of placing the study in as wide an historical context as possible and, in doing so, of comparing Australian colonial society with that of industrialising Britain. My focus is perhaps narrow, namely gambling in New South Wales between 1788 and 1810, but I believe the paper has relevance to the whole area of sports history, or at least for that of colonial Australia.

The major gaming and betting developments of early New South Wales can be identified quite readily and they make a colourful story. According to some observers gaming was rife in the colony by the mid-1790s. George Barrington, the ex-pick-pocket Principal Superintendent of Convicts at Parramatta, offered the following description of events about six years after the initial landing:

The pernicious vice of gaming which had rapidly obtained in the settlement, and which was carried on to such excess among the convicts that many had been known, after losing their provisions, money, and spare cloathing [sic] to bet, and lose the very clothes from their backs, exhibiting themselves as naked, and as indifferent about it, as the natives of the country . . . They have frequently been seen playing at their favourite games of Cribbage and All-Fours for ten dollars a game, and those who were ignorant of these games would be content to toss up for dollars instead of half-pence. Their meetings were scenes of quarrelling swearing, and every wickedness that might be expected by a description of people, totally destitute of the least particle of shame; but glorying in their depravity. To this dreadful vice in a great measure may be attributed most of the crimes that existed in the colony.

In Barrington's account the convicts were not the sole offenders. He alleges that the settlers were equally dissolute. They brewed and distilled their crops or used them to pay off gambling debts rather than sending them to the government store, staked (and lost) their whole farms at Hazard, and fabricated stories of attacks by natives to conceal the fact that they had lost their provisions and clothing whilst gaming. David Collins, a more reputable observer is less sweeping in his condemnation of colonial society, but he does also provide examples of convict gaming in the earliest days of the New South Wales settlement.⁵

It appears then, that gaming, with coins, dice and cards was practised in the colonies from the outset and in this field of gambling there was little development or change in practices during the period under analysis here. In its companion field, betting, age-old practices such as betting on tests of drinking skills were practised from the earliest days of settlement, sometimes with tragic consequences, but other forms of betting, particularly those related to sporting contests, had to await

the development of colonial sport.

Cockfighting contests were impossible during the first few years, when the colonists were literally starving, but, once food supplies were assured, cockfighting developed quickly into a regular and popular entertainment which provided plenty of betting opportunities. By 1805 contests held at the Brickfields on the outskirts of Sydney Town were the subject of detailed reports in the *Sydney Gazette*. The Brickfields site was similarly used for early boxing contests which also attracted plenty of spectators willing to support their opinions with their own money.⁶

Like cockfighting, horse racing was impossible for most of the colony's first decade. Of the horses which arrived with the first fleet in 1788 only three remained in 1793. By the end of the decade however, horses imported, from the Cape of Good Hope provided the basis of a breeding programme. In 1802 Captain John Macarthur was able to boast of a stable of about twenty horses and by that time the colonial gentry had begun to test their horses and their own skills against one another in match races, held usually along the Parramatta Road, for stakes as high as £50. Within a few years a racecourse was in use in the Hawkesbury district. Few details of this course have been left but undoubtedly it was also used for match races and provided the Hawkesbury district settlers with plenty of betting opportunities.⁷

The high-point of early colonial horse racing was reached in mid-October 1810 with Sydney's first official race meeting, held on Hyde Park under the supervision of the 73rd Regiment and the patronage of Governor Lachlan Macquarie. The meeting was held over three days, Monday, Wednesday and Friday and consisted, each day, of a major race over two miles, worth 50 guineas to the winner, decided by the average performances of the horses over three heats. Between the heats the programme was filled out with match races and races for ponies and hacks. The meeting was an outstanding success, with the *Sydney Gazette* doubling the size of its edition to cover the races, perhaps thereby providing a precedent which the Australian press has followed ever since. The *Gazette* also provided coverage of the cockfights con-

ducted on the Tuesday and Thursday of race week; a week given over almost entirely to celebration and betting.⁸

The 1810 Hyde Park races established a precedent which was to be followed annually, at least while Macquarie and the 73rd Regiment remained in the colony. At the second annual meeting in 1811 a further precedent was created when Macquarie decreed that all mechanics and labourers in government service should enjoy holidays on all three days of the racing carnival.⁹

As a result of the Hyde Park races, match racing and races against the clock along Parramatta Road became both more frequent and more publicly prominent. "Unorthorised" race meetings also proliferated and betting on other sporting contests was at least reported in the press more frequently. Boat races were particularly popular, with stakes soon reaching 50 guineas, to equal those of the Hyde Park races.¹⁰

It can be seen then that betting, like gaming, became an established feature of colonial New South Wales very early in that colony's history and that the relationship between betting and sporting contests had also been established. Later decades were to witness the development of more sports, their codification and institutionalisation and significant development of horse racing and other objects of betting, but by 1810 the basic precedents were set, at least as far as gambling practices were concerned.

It is tempting then for the historian of early New South Wales, to stop at this point. Early gambling practices have been illustrated and the importance of the Hyde Park race meetings has been identified. However, if the account proceeds no further than this its value is severely limited, for the purpose of the historian is to provide insight into the nature of the society under analysis. The above account does perhaps provide some insight into the society's practices but it offers little which allows us to understand that society better. A deeper analysis which places the colonial developments in a much broader context can tell us much more about the society and can widen the narrow focus of the examination into an interpretation of the nature of colonial society. This can be achieved by comparing the society with that of Britain during the same period.

III

Students of British sports history are blessed not only with many more detailed historical works which provide the background for their studies, but also with a more developed historical study of the specific area of leisure and recreation. Major works by R.W. Malcolmsen, Peter Bailey, Hugh Cunningham and James Walvin, covering the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, offer the student of recreation or sports history a broad context for their analysis and interpretation. Equally, however, these works can be used by the student of colonial Australia, for they provide the means of measurement or evaluation through comparison. ¹⁰

At the time of the New South Wales settlement British society was beginning its dynamic transformation from a rural, agricultural-based society to one based on urbanised industrialisation, in which new notions of morality, industry and progress were to play important parts. These new notions had a dramatic, if gradual, effect on popular leisure and recreation, which came under attack because they were seen as subverting the productivity and industrial progress of the new society. Prior to the industrial period leisure was an accepted part of British life, and gambling was an accepted part of British leisure. Little distinction was made between work and leisure in a society which was task oriented, as long as the particular task was done. But British rural society did devote special attention to leisure in the form of fairs and feast days, which invariably occupied a special place in the annual calendar of events for each region.

Apart from their more obvious economic and social functions, the fairs provided a means of social control. They provided the populace with an opportunity to let their hair down, or to let off steam in a controlled environment. They also provided occasions to look forward to or to reminisce about, thus sustaining the workforce between events. Football matches, cudgelling events, or other violent contests, served the purpose of channelling hostilities into isolated manageable conflicts. Accordingly, the rural fairs and similar events were sponsored by the gentry, or the dominant classes, as useful and even necessary occasions for promoting the well being of the community. ¹²

Gaming appeared in various forms as an integral part of these occasions, but perhaps its most basic and certainly one of its most popular forms, was the game of "throwing at cocks" in which competitors paid for the privilege of throwing a stone at a cock which was tied by a short cord to a stake about twenty yards away. If the thrower succeeded in knocking down the cock and running in to secure it before it regained its feet, he claimed the bird and the right to charge other competitors who might wish to try to emulate his feat. Such games, together with lotteries, with spoons and rings as prizes, were common at eighteenth century fairs and wakes. After the fair or holiday festivities the day might be concluded with card games.¹³

These, along with coin and dice games, were played also by the poorer classes in the quiet streets of the towns or in gaming houses behind taverns. But for the wealthy, private gambling clubs provided the opportunity for members and their guests to wager tens of thousands of pounds at the tables. The most famous of these was White's club in St. James Street, London, which provided facilities for dice and card games and also kept a book in which bets between members were recorded. The entries in this book demonstrate that English gentlemen were prepared to wager huge sums on almost any contingency.¹⁴

Traditional popular recreation provided plenty of betting opportunities. All types of sporting events on which predicted opinion differed were used for betting. Contests, whether between men, in football or cricket matches, foot races or pugilism; or between animals, as in cockfighting, dog fighting or the various forms of animal baiting, were all objects of betting. Gaming and betting opportunities were available for all. These forms of gambling were not restricted to the "leisured classes", though the gentry may well have been in a position to indulge themselves more frequently, or at least with higher stakes.¹⁵

However, two aspects of gambling in pre-industrial Britain deserve closer attention because of their relevance to later developments in Australia. These are the discernable differences in the typical attitudes of gamblers from different social classes and the intimate relationship between the gentry and the lower orders over gambling matters.

For the gentry, gambling was typically a means of display, in which they could show their wealth and their contempt for mere money, rather than a means of increasing that wealth. For them, *losing* large stakes was just as important as winning. They were not concerned with trying to achieve good odds. An even-money bet had greater attraction than the possibility of winning a large sum for a small investment.¹⁶

For the poorer classes however, a win offered the opportunity to achieve things which were normally beyond their means. The man who won at "throwing at cocks" could assume, for awhile, the role of entrepreneur. One who won a prize in a lottery could present his sweetheart with a trinket. For most of the labouring classes income was irregular and savings were virtually unheard of, apart from the money put aside for burial expenses. So for them, gambling provided a unique opportunity and naturally they were attracted to those forms which offered the possibility of a large prize in return for a small outlay.¹⁷

The history of British lotteries illustrates this difference in attitude. When England's first national lottery was held between 1567 and 1569, 100,000 tickets were offered at ten shillings each for a £5,000 first prize. The tickets were too expensive for all but the wealthy, and that group showed little interest in this type of gambling. Less than 10 per cent of the tickets were sold and prizes were reduced accordingly. As a fund-raising exercise this lottery was a failure. It did, however, provide inspiration for numerous less ambitious and consequently less expensive lotteries which followed. Small scale lotteries, sometimes state-run but more frequently private lotteries used as a means of selling goods at provincial fairs, achieved such enormous support from the poorer classes that legislative attempts were made in 1669 and 1710 to restrict their growth. These attempts failed and "little-goes" continued to attract greater support; to the point where a parliamentary enquiry in 1808 recommended their prohibition.¹⁸

Although the wealthy and the poorer classes were attracted to different forms of gambling, or were motivated by different desires, they were mutually interdependent. In particular, the major betting outlets provided occasions for class co-operation.

Horse racing, cockfighting and pugilism were all supported by the labouring classes, but all relied upon the gentry's patronage. Pugilism, though sometimes spontaneous, often required promotion by members of the gentry, many of whom sponsored their own champions. The gentry similarly owned most of the fighting cocks, though their role as entrepreneur was gradually being assumed by the tavern proprietor. But it was horse racing which provided the clearest indication of gentry patronage of a sport used by both groups for betting. Without the gentry horse racing could not exist. The expense of maintaining a team of horses bred for speed was something only they could afford, but the enjoyment of watching the equine contests was not an exclusive pleasure.¹⁹

The most common type of race was a match race between two horses, ridden by their owners. The prizes for the winner included the "stake" provided by the losing owner, in addition to the honour and prestige attached to victory. But, during the eighteenth century horse racing gradually became more formalised and more institutionalised. Races for a number of horses, with the owners subscribing a sweepstakes prize, became more common and clubs were established to supervise and control race meetings. These developments culminated in the establishment of the Jockey Club at Newmarket in the 1750s and its assumption of control over the sport. Through the Jockey Club and the later development of Tattersall's subscription room, for the laying and settling of bets, horse racing came firmly under gentry control, but it remained far from exclusive in its appeal.²⁰

At Newmarket the masses were actively discouraged, but elsewhere they played an important part in race meetings. Spectators paid for seats in the grandstand. Others leased the right to erect gambling booths, beer tents and food stalls. Sometimes farmers and tradesmen could participate in the races, especially when they were held as part of a local festival. For the masses, the horse races were merely the centrepiece of a day's carnival which included a vast array of entertainment, ranging from cockfighting and boxing, to wrestling and gaming booths. For the gentry, however, the horse race events were the *raison d'etre*. Whilst the two classes co-operated in contributing to each

other's needs, wherever there was a grandstand the mixing of the classes could be minimised; though real segregation could not be achieved until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the enclosed racecourses were carefully divided into sections for the various strata of society - each section charging a different admission price and providing different forms of additional entertainment.²¹

In late eighteenth century Britain, however, the gentry and the labouring classes found their traditional gambling and general leisure pursuits under attack from a highly vocal middle-class group which adhered to and expressed the new values of the industrialising society. As the nation rapidly became more industrialised, the strength of the new values grew and their adherents' power to reform the society also grew. The three main elements in the subsequent attempts to reform traditional recreations were the concept of an industrial labour discipline, a reinforcement of Britain's puritan tradition and the physical consequence of rapid urbanisation.

The new concept of industrial labour discipline drew a firm distinction between work and leisure. It was concerned with efficiency and productivity in work time and saw recreation or leisure as unproductive idleness and consequently as a drain on the national economy. As such, leisure could be seen as unpatriotic in a society which was beginning to view industrial progress as the supreme symbol of civilisation and the proof of British superiority.²²

This attitude to leisure was reinforced by the remnants of Britain's long standing puritan tradition, which had had its foremost expression during Oliver Cromwell's post civil-war protectorate in the seventeenth century. This tradition was given a new lease of life by an eighteenth century evangelical religious revival. Evangelicalism, with its emphasis on self-discipline, sin and salvation, and standards of morality, was well suited to the aims of the growing urban-industrial middle class. It nicely complemented the industrial labour discipline.²³

The third major element promoting reform of traditional recreation practices was the process of industrialisation. The rapid and haphazard growth of the industrial towns and cities

took little or no account of the need for recreation space. The migration of workers to the towns removed them from their local or regional traditions, which had provided the reasons for local or regional festivities. Within the towns the mix of labourers from different regions prevented the expression of traditions common to the whole group. So the feast days, wakes and other traditional occasions for recreation festivities did not survive the transition to urban society.²⁴

Other factors also contributed to a gradual breakdown of traditional leisure and recreation, including an alliance by police and the magistracy against popular recreation, aimed at preserving private property; and a gradual withdrawal of patronage by the gentry, who began to retreat into their own exclusive leisure pursuits such as shooting and hunting.²⁵

The English urban middle-class reformers achieved many of their aims in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The traditional animal blood sports were virtually eliminated and the more violent athletic sports such as football were placed under greater control, minimising the disruption to public order. Gambling survived only because it was able to demonstrate a degree of acceptance of the new values, as expressed by its adoption of a lower public profile.²⁶

The gentry were able to justify horse racing in terms of its contribution to the breeding of superior horse stock for cavalry warfare. But they also needed to demonstrate that they had full control of racing and that it was gradually being made less accessible to the public.²⁷ The gentry's gaming clubs also remained relatively untouched because they were private establishments and did not interfere with the work habits of the industrial labourers. However, because of the close inter-relationship between the gentry and the labouring classes in the field of gambling, if gentry pursuits remained free from legislative reform the labourers' gambling pursuits would also be protected. This situation posed a dilemma for reformers, who attempted to find a solution in legislation which allowed gaming and betting to remain as lawful activities, but declared unlawful particular games and activities which could be deemed to create a public nuisance.²⁸

At the time of the initial Australian settlement British society was beginning its urban-industrial transformation. New South Wales was settled in this era when society's traditional values were being challenged by urban middle-class reformers intent on removing obstacles to the progress and productivity of the new industrial society. It might be reasonable to expect that the earliest Australian settlers would have taken to New South Wales the same mixture of tradition, change and reforming attempts, but to determine whether or not the same changes resulted we need to shift the focus of analysis back to New South Wales.

IV

We have already seen that both gaming and betting flourished in early New South Wales. Colonial administrations were not concerned with pressing for the reforms being pursued in Britain, although Governor Hunter did attempt to prevent gambling after curfew and colonial magistrates did request the military to break up cockfights and boxing matches. In both cases however, the officials were concerned only with preventing the public disorder which often accompanied such events. We have also seen that Governor Lachlan Macquarie actively promoted horse racing, through his role of patron of the Hyde Park races. Similarly, Macquarie provided a degree of greater legitimacy to gaming, through his love of card playing. yet Macquarie's administration is noted for the Governor's determination to transform New South Wales into an outpost of British civilisation. His concern with order and morality, including his campaign against cohabitation appears to be in conflict with his definition of Hyde Park as a recreation and amusement ground and a racecourse.²⁹

Nevertheless the apparent contradiction can be reconciled. The building of a racecourse close to the town was a deliberate part of Macquarie's recreation policy. Race meetings at Hyde Park were to become part of a programme of annual recreations which included an Easter Fair and Whitsuntide celebrations. In promoting such leisure activities, Macquarie was simultaneously bringing some order to colonial recreation by confining it to specified periods, and he was defining the role of the colonial

governor as something akin to the rural landlord of early eighteenth century Britain.

Macquarie's decision in this instance was compatible with his overall intentions of promoting order and civilisation; things which should be as attainable in recreation as in town planning. The very fact of holding a race carnival was part of the promotion of order. In the value system of Britain's pre-modern elite it was better to have such events carefully controlled, patronised and concentrated into celebrations under the control of the government and the elite, than to permit the continuance of haphazard spontaneous race meetings which might not be so controlled. Indeed, when the success of the inaugural meeting prompted some of the colonists to hold another race day less than four months later,

...The day's sports were only sanctioned by His Excellency the Governor in compliment to the Gentlemen riders and were kept as secret as possible until the time of starting.³⁰

So Macquarie was not attempting to promote horse racing and betting for their own sake. He did not envisage weekly or monthly races in the colony. Rather, he saw the role of the race meeting as an annual event which, apart from adding to the aura of civilisation in the colony, and perhaps providing some encouragement towards improving the quality of the breed of colonial horses, would also play a part in the social control of the lower orders. The annual race meeting would play a role similar to that of the pre-modern rural wakes and fairs. It would give the colonists an event to look forward to, and once past it would provide them with pleasant memories of a few days "fun" to help sustain them in their labours, until they were sufficiently close to the next major event on the recreational calendar to begin looking forward again.

Clearly, colonial New South Wales society was not a carbon copy of industrial Britain: It had much more in common with Britain's pre-industrial rural society. The colonial gentry were acting in accordance with their inherited traditions. They had some leisure. They did not need to spend all their time in productive pursuits. They could also be considered capable of judging what they could afford to do, or stake. But

they also had a duty to display the forms of British civilisation and, if in doing so they were able to exercise a degree of social control over the lower strata of society, they would serve the colony's interests as well as their own. The gaming and betting practices of the gentry went virtually unchallenged, but the same cannot be said of the practices of the convicts and the poorer sections of colonial society.

Voices were raised against the practices of the lower orders. Governor Bligh and the clergymen Samuel Marsden and Rowland Hassel registered their complaints, though their objections were based less on moral considerations than on gambling's alleged promotion of idleness and the undermining of any spirit of industriousness. Occasionally letters to the *Sydney Gazette* condemned labourers and convicts for gaming and even chastised children for playing marbles. Such opinions were expressions of the dominant morality of middle-class, urban, industrial Britain.³¹

Nor did Macquarie disagree with this view. His encouragement of horse racing was not designed to cultivate a spirit of adventure and gambling. Rather it was intended to channel the existing gambling inclinations into an activity which would perform an annual safety-valve function. The release of the gambling energies on an annual event, to take place under his watchful eye and control during a week of celebration and public holidays, might perhaps have enabled the convicts and the labouring classes to go about their work for the rest of the year industriously, and free from the urge to game or bet in search of the unearned wealth.

If such was Macquarie's intention, there is little evidence of success for this policy. The horse racing of the gentlemen was pursued with vigour, and the gambling instincts of the lower orders continued to find outlets for their expression in both gaming and betting. The expression of urban industrial middle-class values by the holders of colonial authority could be little more than empty rhetoric when those same holders of authority sponsored the imposition of a pre-modern society, and provided patronage for an ever increasing range of gaming and betting practices. Those practices in the early Australian

colonies, if not capable of real quantification, were numerous and diverse. They were not concentrated in time and place, as Macquarie might have wished, but were practised in all settlements and outposts, by officers, gentry, convicts and emancipists.

In the Australian colonies of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, gaming and betting survived even more clearly than they did in Britain. In New South Wales the forces transforming British society were less powerful. In the pre-modern colony, labour discipline derived more from the task than from industrial time, and evangelicalism, even if subscribed to by the majority of the Anglican clergy, did not receive support from a strong vocal urban middle class. So, opponents of gaming and betting had even less chance of success in the colonies than they had in Britain.

Analysis of gaming and betting in early colonial New South Wales reveals that the cultural values of colonial society differed markedly from those of Britain during the same period. When the examination of these gambling practices and the attitudes of society towards them are placed in the widest possible colonial context, and comparison is made with the British experience it can be seen that early New South Wales was a copy of pre-modern Britain rather than a small scale version of the new urban industrial society. Accordingly the gaming and betting and other recreational practices of the old world were part of the colony's inherited traditions. It was not until the evangelical morality of Britain came to Australia *en masse* with free immigration from the 1840s, that the colonies' pre-modern values faced their first real challenge. By then, however, pro-gambling values and a large variety of gambling practices had become entrenched in colonial society.

NOTES:

1. Ric Sissons & Brian Stoddart, *Cricket and Empire: The 1932-33 Bodyline Tour of Australia* (Sydney: 1984), Richard Cashman, *'Ave a Go, Yer Mug! Australian Cricket Crowds from Larrikin to Ocker* (Sydney: 1984).
2. W.F. Mandle, "Sports History", in G. Osborne & W.F. Mandle, *New History: Studying Australia Today* (Sydney: 1982), p.82.

3. Wray Vamplew, "Late Kick-Off: Economic History and Sports History" paper to *History '84* conference, Melbourne University, 1984.
4. George Barrington, *A Sequel to Barrington's Voyage to New South Wales . . .*, (London: 1800), p.34.
5. *ibid.*, p.35-36; Hazard is a dice game, normally involving the use of three dice, in which the players attempt to forecast how the dice will fall. It was the forerunner of the popular American game of craps. Alan Wykes, *Gambling*, (London: 1964), pp.137-139; David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1, 1798, pp.359-360.
6. *Sydney Gazette*, 18 August 1805, 4 August 1810.
7. D.M. Barrie, *Turf Cavalcade* (Sydney: 1960), pp.2-4; J.D. Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales...*, (2nd edn.) vol. 1, 1836, p.77, *Historical Records of Australia*, series 1, vol. 3, p.613, vol. 6, p.640.
8. *Sydney Gazette*, 20 October 1810.
9. *ibid.*, 10 August 1811.
10. *ibid.*, 29 September 1810, 30 March 1811, 27 July 1811, 17 August 1811.
11. Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: 1978) ; Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-1880* (London: 1980); R.W. Malcolmsom, *Popular Recreation in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: 1973); James Walvin, *Leisure and Society, 1830-1850* (London: 1978).
12. Malcolmsom, *op.cit.*, pp.75-88, 157-163, 168.
13. *ibid.*, pp.20, 29, 48.
14. John Ashton, *The History of Gambling in England* (London: 1908; reprint Detroit: 1968), pp.62-63, 90-102; A.H. Bourke, *The History of White's*, 2 vols. (London: 1892).
15. For some examples see Bailey, *op.cit.*, p.22; J.H. Plumb, *The First Four Georges* (London: 1966), p.17; Malcolmsom, *op.cit.*, pp.43-50. See also the novels of Fielding and Smollett.
16. Illustration of these attitudes is provided by Ashton, *op.cit.*, pp.64-89; S.D. Taylor, *The History of Playing Cards* (London: 1865; reprint London: 1973), pp.416 ff. F. Dostoyevsky also explores this idea in *The Gambler*, (J. Coulson, trans.) (Middlesex: 1966), pp.29-31.
17. See Ross McKibbin, "Working-class Gambling in Britain, 1880-1939", *Past and Present*, No. 82, February 1979, pp.161-162.

18. Alan Haynes, "The First English National Lottery", *History Today*, vol. 29, September 1979, pp.610-613; Ashton, *op.cit.*, pp.222-236; Bailey, *op.cit.*, p.23; South Australia, *Royal Commission on Betting*, 1933, Report, p.14; House of Commons, *Select Committee on Lotteries*, 1808, 2nd Report, p.12.
19. Cunningham, *op.cit.*, p.24; Roger Longrigg, *The History of Horse Racing* (London: 1972), pp.49-51, 69-70.
20. Longrigg, *op.cit.*, pp.89-91, 95; Wray Vamplew, *The Turf: A Social and Economic History of Horse Racing* (London: 1976), pp.78-80.
21. Vamplew, *op.cit.*, pp.18-19, 151.
22. E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, vol. 38, December 1967, pp.56-97.
23. Malcolmson, *op.cit.*, pp.89-101; Bailey, *op.cit.*, p. 17; Cunningham, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-20.
24. Malcolmson, *op.cit.*, pp.107-114; Cunningham, *op.cit.*, p.45.
25. Cunningham, *op.cit.*, pp.16-20. Football and bull-running, two sports which had particularly destructive effects on private property were favourite targets of the magistrates.
26. Malcolmson, *op.cit.*, pp.119-126, 143-145; Bailey, *op.cit.*, pp.18-22; Cunningham, *op.cit.*, pp.24-25.
27. Through course enclosure and admission charges.
28. G.E. Seaton, *The Law Relating to Gaming, Betting and Lotteries*, Sydney 1948, p.1. See also, House of Commons, *Select Committee on Gaming*, 1844, pp.iii-v.
29. Hunter, General Orders, 9 November 1796, enclosure to Duke of Portland, 12 November 1796, *Historical Records of Australia*, series I, vol.1, p.701.
30. *Sydney Gazette*, 2 February 1811.
31. A.T. Yarwood, *Samuel Marsden: The Great Survivor* (Melbourne: 1977), p.141; House of Commons, *Select Committee of Inquiry into Transportation 1812, Evidence*, p.30; *Sydney Gazette*, 6 July 1806, 21 August 1808.

THE LEGACY OF BRITISH VICTORIAN SOCIAL THOUGHT: SOME PROMINENT VIEWS ON SPORT, PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND SOCIETY IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

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During the winter of 1884, Henry Sanderson Edmunds outlined with clarity his thoughts on a popular topic of discussion for his age, 'Public Education', in a respectable New South Wales journal, *The Sydney Quarterly Magazine*.¹ Edmunds, like many pedagogues of the period, saw the need for education to progress with the demands of a changing society. He stressed the importance and value of the inclusion of technical courses in the school curriculum. His sense of 'progressivism' did not end here however, for he was also eager to apply the emerging ideas of the eminent social scientist, Herbert Spencer, to the educational setting. He deemed that "a knowledge of physiology and of the laws of health" were an 'absolute necessity' in the "mission of moulding the upgrowing generation into good men and citizens". In complete emulation, Edmunds echoed the Spencerian maxim 'the first requisite to success in life is to be a good animal', and regarded any system of education which did not assist in developing the physical faculties of the country's youth to the full as being imperfect. Physical health to Edmunds was, of course, equated highly with mental and moral well-being, and in this regard his advice and rhetoric were much more orthodox. He promoted the concept of the sound mind in the healthy body, a true Victorian obsession.² He advocated regular instruction in drill and calisthenics, a considered Victorian practice.³ And he united his treatise with the Arnoldian belief that children must be educated in the principles of Christian manhood, a typical Victorian ideal. Indeed, the sentiments expressed in Edmunds' discourse, and particularly with reference to physical education, were quite indicative of some general attitudes held not only towards education but also towards other facets of nineteenth-century Australian life. Both

singularly and collectively these attitudes significantly influenced middle and upper-class social thought and their perspectives on colonial society, and illustrate very clearly the antipodean dependence on contemporary and emerging ideas from Britain. Ideas concerning sport and many forms of physical activity were certainly not exempt from these and other popular views which preoccupied the Victorian 'frame of mind'.⁴

This observation is not new. Ian Turner has demonstrated quite clearly that sport in Victorian Victoria encompassed a number of prevalent values; cultural continuity; national honour, manliness, sportsmanship, classlessness, competition and progress.⁵ Other historians, Elford and Mandle, have analysed sporting activities in terms of the specific ideals of manliness and nationalism respectively and have argued at a fundamental level that sport was an expression of and contributor to the formation of wider social values adopted in the colonies.⁶ While this interpretation is correct, the analysis could be further developed, especially in terms of understanding the more precise relationships between the dominant ideals. In an essay on the influence of Darwinism on English literature and literary ideals, William Leatherdale has noted that the Darwinian doctrine was not applied in isolation but rather fused with a whole spectrum of most of the leading ideas of the period.⁷ This same conclusion is true with regard to the values impinging on sporting and physical pursuits. Prevailing ideas "coexisted, openly competed and frequently overlapped".⁸ The purpose of this investigation is to extend this fruitful line of inquiry and explanation by evaluating sport and physical activity in Victorian Australia with reference to a cluster of potent social issues and ideas; the notion of 'muscular Christianity', deliberations on the general laws of health and physical exercise and the Darwinian debate on the superior nature of the country's Anglo-Saxon stock and of her environment.

One of the most acknowledged influences on the development of sport in Britain and her Dominions is the muscular Christian ideal.⁹ It was certainly, to quote Turner, one of the strongest recurrent themes of those Australian colonists who asserted the character-building nature of physical activity,¹⁰ and was evident almost everywhere eager disseminators of British culture

attempted to reproduce the best traditions of the Mother Country. The ideal was greatly inspired through the works of two eminent Victorian novelists, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes.¹¹ In *Westward Ho!* (1855) and *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), Kingsley and Hughes, respectively, transformed the Arnoldian concept of 'Christian manliness', which represented the Christianising of a man's character through moral endeavours, by augmenting it with a distinctive muscular or physical dimension. The label 'muscular Christianity' was subsequently coined as an expression of this new concept,¹² and certain sports, notably the team games of cricket and football, were considered, in Hughes' own words, worthy for the training of a man's body "for the protection of the weak, and the advancement of all righteous causes".¹³ Hughes, while holding no claim to the term's invention, certainly endorsed its use in following years as the doctrine gained wider appeal and acceptance through his stories of Tom Brown at Rugby and Oxford.¹⁴ Kingsley was apparently ignorant of the origin of the label and preferred instead to preach of 'manly Christianity'.¹⁵ The true intent of his writings was "to lead men to a higher physical type of manhood" in order that "they should 'Glorify God in their body as well as in their spirit... to best improve, and to use to the best purpose, the mental and physical faculties that God has given them".¹⁶ Victorian Australians were exposed on a number of occasions to this Kingslyan interpretation of healthy Christian manliness. But more frequently, they paid lip service to other assertions which were commonly associated with the muscular Christian gospel. They coveted the quality of 'manliness', and thus emphasised the benefits of 'manly' exercises. They were absorbed with the idea of *mens sana in corpore sano* and condoned practices which brought about this satisfactory state. In short, they provided a powerful rationale for the promotion and development of the organised sport and physical activity of their age.

Early in 1859, *Bell's Life in Victoria* declared itself a devout believer in 'Muscular Christianity' and explained some of the creed's virtues as well as its sources of transmission and diffusion.¹⁷ The lengthy editorial proclaimed that "health and exercise have a great effect in producing a well-balanced mind" and a manly temperament. It considered football, cricket and

boating as worthy games for the emerging Australian race and commented on the association of character-building sports with Arnold, Tom Brown, "British pluck" and "British fair play".¹⁸ In a later article entitled 'Muscular Christianity', *Bell's Life* was more specific in naming the 'founders' of this 'rational' and 'theological creed'.¹⁹ Rugby's headmaster, Thomas Arnold, was ascribed undue acclaim and "that rigorous divine" Charles Kingsley was singled out as the 'chief preacher'.²⁰ An attempt was even made to define the "essential principle" of the ideal. "Bodily as well as spiritual perfection", attained through a variety of "healthy and athletic exercises", were deemed crucial elements, with the "cultivation of muscular fibre" being a definite subsidiary to "spiritual well-being".²¹ The link between Hughes, Kingsley and the literary ideals of muscular Christianity were firmly established in the antipodean colonies by 1860 and in the following years Kingsley's ideal of spiritual and 'invigorating recreation' in particular gained widespread recognition not only from sporting enthusiasts but also from concerned educationalists and social commentators.

In certain circles Kingsley's views were advocated by those who sought to reform a 'defective moral culture'.²² One proponent from Victoria envisaged a marriage of moral, religious and physical education which would "induce such purity and strength of the spiritual nature as shall ensure true and unselfish actions in the physical".²³ Another proselyte called for improvements in the neglected area of character formation in Victoria's school system by demanding its boys be "imbued with the spirit of Amyas Leigh, in "Westward Ho", who believed that it was the finest thing in the world to be a gentleman". The sources of this gentlemanly code of conduct were identified as self-respect, *esprit de corps* and, of course, manliness.²⁴ These sentiments were carried a step further by a would-be reformer in Sydney who championed the cause of physical amelioration of the Australian populus.²⁵ According to Frances Gillam Holden, the moral and physical states were intertwined and strengthening the body, or the 'Temple of the Lord', could only result in "a great wave of moral and spiritual elevation" all over the land.²⁶ "Manliness", stated Holden, was, in the true Kingslyan sense, "entirely compatible with Godliness".²⁷

Muscular Christianity in her opinion was the necessary 'Gospel of Physical Salvation' for Victorian society. There were indeed many who shared Holden's beliefs but all too often, as Sandercock and Turner have pointed out, "God received only token recognition" in their translation of the gospel;²⁸ manliness was a much more frequent interpretation for the sporting zealot.

Victorians were obsessed with the concept of 'character'. A sense of moral earnestness and compassionate gentility were indicative of ideal qualities which men should possess if they were to be considered decent members of society. Such qualities were imperative to living a Christian way of life. As one historian writing on the Victorian 'frame of mind' has observed, "to be an earnest Christian demanded a tremendous effort to shape the character in the image of Christ".²⁹ And it was the Christian characteristics of duty, courage, endurance and self-discipline which were encapsulated in the 'ultimate masculine quality' of manliness,³⁰ which was tested in everyday circumstances and especially, with the evolution of a muscular Christian philosophy, through involvement in approved physical exercises. There was a coterie of activities which challenged a man's manliness and helped bring about a better physiological and psychological well-being; fencing, riding, swimming, running and boxing. But it was cricket and football which attracted constant reference as manly games. Cricket, noted Thomas F. Wray, a reputable player in Victoria, "is a sport connected with which there is not one objectionable feature, and, viewed both morally and physically, is calculated, by the spirit of emulation to which it gives rise, to strengthen and develop [sic] in the rising generation, the best qualities of mind and body".³¹ More specifically, recorded one poetic admirer of cricket:

Tis the King of Anglo-Saxon games -
The type of our strength confessed;
Where the charm of perils bravely dared
Inspires each manly breast!³²

And football was not far behind. It involved 'plucky and gentlemanlike play.'³³ It was a game of skill, courage and endurance, contributing greatly to 'health and strength.'³⁴ The verdict on manly sports by Victorian Australians was unequivocally consistent. In 1861 *Bell's Life* declared that the population of Victoria

was destined "to be hardy, active, high-spirited and addicted to the manlier amusements and occupations." ³⁵ Some thirty years later Queensland upheld the same claims; "Young men who mix together in healthy sport and manly exertion grow into robust, fearless, men... The atmosphere of the sports ground is free and invigorating; the men are manly...." ³⁶ A 'sturdy sporting manliness' had become a prominent ideal in Australian social circles and particularly within the country's leading public schools where it was observed that the boys had a liking for outdoor sports "which at times was close to a mania," and which has more commonly been referred to as athleticism. ³⁷

In the context of the English public schools athleticism has been defined as an ideology which at the practical level comprised considerable and compulsory involvement in organised physical activity, especially the team games of cricket and football. By partaking in such exercise, it was believed that an individual developed physical and moral qualities of benefit in Later Life. A sense of duty of self and group, which could include a team, the school and ultimately the nation, the qualities of honesty, truth and fair-play, and the ability to co-operate, command and obey, were effectively transmitted through participation. ³⁸ Public schools on the English model were founded in colonial Australia and it was only a matter of time before the customs and ideals of the Old World institutions were diffused to those in the New. ³⁹ By the latter decades of the nineteenth-century the moral education of Australia's youth, accomplished in mid-century in the chapel, classroom and library, was now fostered also on the cricket-square, football field and river. Subscription to the ideology of athleticism became a period trend in the antipodean public schools. ⁴⁰

The ideological roots of athleticism in Australia's elite institutions were varied. Some Headmasters and masters perpetuated the disproportionate acclaim afforded to the contribution of Thomas Arnold to the organised games movement purely because they had been schooled at Rugby. Nevertheless, schooldays at Rugby and other leading schools in Britain, augmented by further experiences at Oxford and Cambridge and contemporary educational views provided a number of Victorian teachers with definite ideas concerning school management. Henry Girdlestone

of St. Peter's College, Adelaide, John Bracebridge Wilson of Geelong Church of England Grammar School, Edward Ellis Morris, of Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, Akbert Bythesea Weigall of Sydney Grammar School, Alexander Morrisson of Scotch College, Melbourne, Lawrence Arthur Adamson of Wesley College, Melbourne, and Reginald Heber Roe of Brisbane Grammar School can be numbered among the many Headmasters who joined forces to make 'the Christian and the gentleman' in the true Arnoldian tradition, and to forge a 'manliness of character' through organised sport.⁴¹ It is well worth taking a brief look at the backgrounds and careers of some of this selected group of educators in order to demonstrate the variety of approaches and philosophies that were adopted.

Edward Ellis Morris (1843-1902) was educated at Rugby School and then at Lincoln College, Oxford. He arrived in Australia in 1875 to become Headmaster of Melbourne's Church of England Grammar School after a period of teaching at Haileybury and 'Radley' schools in Britain. He successfully developed the Victorian institution along English public school lines.⁴² His methods in this regard were quite orthodox for the era. In Arnoldian fashion he instituted the Prefect System and like many post-Clarendon Commission educators, he viewed organised physical activity as a central feature of the school system.⁴³ On his arrival, provisions were made for the establishment of a new cricket field. The first school boat was launched the following year, in 1876. Drill classes were introduced in 1877. And for good measure he inaugurated a school magazine, the *Melburnian*, designed the school flag and coat of arms and changed the school colours to Oxford blue.⁴⁴ Under Morris' early guidance there was an increase in enrolment and the Grammar School's status matched that of neighbouring Scotch College and Wesley College. Prestige, in no small way, was attained through profile given to sport, although Morris, "fearful that physical activities were deemed more important than the intellectual", attempted to keep athleticism in proper perspective.⁴⁵ The same could not be said of another Melbourne master, Lawrence Arthur Adamson who, by coincidence, was also schooled at Rugby.

Adamson (1860-1933) progressed from Rugby to Oriel College Oxford. Except for a decade of his lengthy teaching career, he

was on the staff of Wesley College where, in 1887, "he was made sportsmaster and urged to improve the standard of games."⁴⁶ In the opinion of the school historian, and perhaps one of Australia's leading social historians, Geoffrey Blainey, Adamson was the man who "started to inject sentiment" into Wesley Collegians through the emphasis he placed on sport.⁴⁷ He was committed to developing character, cultivating correct manners of behaviour, and fostering the idea of service, especially through the concept of corporate school spirit.⁴⁸ In his mind, participation in sport achieved these ends. However, in realising his objectives Wesley was consumed by the athletic ideal. Athleticism prospered at the expense of academic study. He improved facilities, instituted a controlling body, the games committee, and introduced a colours system to reward outstanding players, the 'bloods', whom he lavished with praise in poetic verse and in public speeches.⁴⁹ Indulgence in organised games was taken into the extreme. He accentuated, quite deliberately, the importance of excellence in sporting activities and erected an extensive and prominent symbol system in "support of ideological fashion."⁵⁰ It was a state of conditions reminiscent of those at Harrow in the 1870s and 1880s rather than at Adamson's *alma mater*, Rugby. There were obvious dangers in creating such a cult but indirectly Adamson raised the prestige of Wesley College throughout the country and at the same time gained personal recognition as one of Australia's most famous Headmasters.⁵¹

Other public schools did not conform exactly to the manifestations at Wesley College and Melbourne Grammar School although subscription to athleticism itself was tediously uniform. At Brisbane Grammar School for example, Reginald Heber Roe (1850-1926) was a sure candidate for the muscular Christian school. He was devoted to the teachings of Christ and was an avid sportsman, excelling as an oarsman, tennis player and swimmer.⁵² Roe had graduated from Christ's Hospital School in London and from Balliol College, Oxford, where he had distinguished himself in the examination hall, at Mathematics and Classics, and on the river, for his college crew. Well-read and well-built, Roe evolved his own philosophy of education which relied heavily on the practices of the English public schools, the ideals of

Thomas Arnold and Friedrich Froebel, and the works of Charles Darwin.⁵³ Brisbane Grammar School, the acknowledged premier school in Queensland,⁵⁴ became, in 1876, the testing ground for his pedagogical visions. He did his utmost to ensure that the perversity, tyranny and immorality of schoolboy life in Britain's elite institutions did not become a feature of his new school,⁵⁵ and yet he emphasised a Christian education based on 'discipline and moral tone.' In his own words, he stressed "the development of character and physique no less than mental power and examinational knowledge," the harmony of scholarship and sportsmanship.⁵⁶ Roe gave "hearty encouragement" to "all the manly games" that helped "to invigorate the body and character."⁵⁷ He introduced new activities such as lawn tennis and rowing, directed the building of a new gymnasium and established a Sports Fund for the maintenance of games.⁵⁸ His products epitomised his ideal of the Christian gentleman, well-equipped physically and psychologically to fight life's struggles in the the world. In fact, they were indicative of the 'fittest' possible Christian gentleman.⁵⁹ Roe's concern for the welfare of his wards was influenced as much by the tenets of Social Darwinism as by the principles of muscular Christianity.⁶⁰

The publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 had a marked impact on the Victorians' mode of thought. Darwinian theory on evolution by natural selection attracted its adherents and critics among scientists, theologians, intellectuals and social reformers of the age. Opposition to the evolutionary hypothesis on religious and moral grounds paralleled support of the doctrine at a working and rhetorical level. It was, of course, the oversimplified catchword of Darwinism, 'the struggle for existence' and 'the survival of the fittest', which gained popular appeal. As Hofstadler has remarked, when these phrases were "applied to the Life of man in society," it was "suggested that nature would provide that the best competitors in a competitive situation would win, and that this process would lead to continuing improvement."⁶¹ Some Australians certainly offered a Darwinian explanation for social inequalities.⁶² In the country's leading schools, traditional Christian motives often masked Darwinian effect. Health-promoting and competitive physical activities were considered central to

the character-building process. In this sense, the struggles or battles on the games field were merely aiding in the realization of the schools' stated Christianising mission. They developed 'pluck', endurance, and courage, the moral and physical stamina which would help boys to survive in the real world at a Later date.

The Headmasters and supporting staff at the schools perpetuated the hardy and stoic dimensions of the playing field. Many were ignorant of its unchristian nature and chose only to see its perceived virtues as they subconsciously employed Darwinian phraseology to describe the system's strengths and objectives. Some like Roe, James Moorhouse, the Bishop of Melbourne, and John Edward Bromby of Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, incorporated the evolutionary doctrine into their Christian teachings on "the struggle of Life."⁶³ Like men in other spheres of life at that time, such as historian Charles Henry Pearson and economist Henry Gyles Turner,⁶⁴ they had little trouble accommodating Darwinism into their theological, educational and social debates. In their view, the order of Nature, evolution by natural selection, was, as one period commentator explained, "but another phrase for the action of God...the one primal force of which all the phenomena of the universe are but the manifold expression".⁶⁵ Darwinism in this way, was easily transposed onto the ideology of athleticism. Australians, in fact, had been quick to apply the 'vulgarized conception' of the doctrine quite freely to other sporting and social situations.

The relationship between sport, climate, geography, physique and notions of superiority and progress in Australian history has been identified previously by a number of academics. Some have inferred a Darwinian connection. Ian Turner for example, in a discussion of 'Work and Play in Victorian Victoria', concluded that "colonial society was staking its claim to a unique place in the community of nations and seeking to establish an aspect of Life in which it could confidently assert its maturity, and even its *superiority*".⁶⁶ And Bill Mandle, while exploring 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism in the Nineteenth-Century', noted that the "assertion that ability at cricket indicated *national superiority* was commonplace".⁶⁷ A few historians have gone further and analysed sport in the wider social

context. Inglis has pointed out that an interpretation of the results of colonial cricket games before 1900 could not "escape entirely the influence of that tradition of speculation about evolution which culminated in *The Origin of Species*".⁶⁸ Cricket too, according to Mulvaney, provided more food for evolutionary thought when the Australian aboriginal tour of 1867-68 inspired 'Darwinian controversialists' to generate some rather 'superficial and dubious' racial comparisons.⁶⁹ Period reporters of many types of athletic exercises were actually quite convinced of the application of the social doctrine of evolution.⁷⁰

At first, in early 1860s, the inference was confined to the superior nature of transplanted and adapted sports. Articles on hunting and coursing gave *Bell's Life* the opportunity to praise Australian conditions. The kangaroo, as opposed to the British fox, was proclaimed 'a glorious game'. The kangaroo dog was declared "a far nobler animal than the delicate greyhound used after hares". And the excitement of a ride in the bush was considered "far superior to the plain going on the English downs".⁷¹ Meanwhile, the Australian turkey, "that noble specimen of Australian ornithology," far excelled its European counterpart in size, both height and weight.⁷² But the antipodean colonies had advantages which went beyond its game. The climate was a supplementary benefit which would help "to foster the love of open-air life" and "give a direction to the national character"; it would fashion a hardy, active and vigorous race, a healthy sign of growth in Britain's southern communities.⁷³ Advancement was also possible through competition in sport, and especially in the struggle with the Mother Country.⁷⁴ Games against England's cricketers in 1861-62 and in 1863-64 prompted lengthy discourses on their positive moral and physical effects on the Australian people.⁷⁵ These claims would be developed more fully in following years as progress became the 'great beacon of the age' and the substance of Charles Darwin's ideas was more commonly used to describe and explain a rapidly developing nation.⁷⁶

At the start of the 1880s an article in *The Victorian Review* looked closely at the features of 'An Australian Dominion'.⁷⁷ The Legacy of British settlement and the deliberate reproduction of many of Britain's values, customs and institutions,

were applauded. Comparison was also focused on 'physical development and mental capacity'. Vincent Cavendish, the author of the essay, was adamant in his belief that Anglo-Australians would stand up favourably against the average Britain. In fact, he was quite confident that "under the stimulus of a bright atmosphere, and of the hopeful conditions of life in a young country, the enterprising and adventurous characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race are capable of reaching an even higher degree of development in Australia than they do in England,,⁷⁸ Australia, he concluded, with a term would ultimately be made famous by Charles Dilke, held the promise of a 'Greater Britain'. Cavendish had plenty of support for his arguments. *The Sydney Quarterly Magazine* developed the notion of 'colonial physique' in late 1883, unconvinced of the beneficial qualities of the 'sunny summers', but quite confirmed in the opinion that temperance and active training could 'secure to the Australian-born a physique as majestic and enduring as that of England's noblest and most stalwart sons'.⁷⁹ Another acolyte, A.J. Ogilvy, was in agreement. However, he advanced the invigorating, rather than debilitating, effects of the elements as he skillfully linked physical and psychological improvement with soil, climate and geography in a deliberation on 'National Character'.⁸⁰ Drawing from a wide range of sources on a number of different racial groups, Ogilvy had little difficulty equating the characteristics of a nation, its habits and pursuits, with its geographical environment.⁸¹ Indeed, the climate, according to the President of the Royal Society of Queensland, William Taylor, had 'not exercised any injurious effects', on the youth of his colony. Instead, it had given them 'a taste for out-door exercises of a healthy invigorating kind,, and an athletic appearance more than favourable with their British counterparts'.⁸² A truly nationalistic pride, based in part on physical and sporting supremacy had evolved. The victory of the Australian cricketing tourists at Lord's in 1878 in particular had certainly helped to extinguish the flames of athletic inferiority and to bolster the prestige of Australasian 'bone and muscle'.⁸³ By the 1890s, sporting and physical prowess, and their fusion with contemporary views concerning national character and progress, had become symbols of a new-found superiority over Britain.

They were also, now, much coveted ideals. As one ardent Queenslander remarked: "We are not all cut out for distinguished men of Letters, poets, philosophers, scientists, or actors. It is therefore a commendable ambition to become a celebrated athlete. *The fittest survive in every walk of life*, and those who distinguish themselves as cricketers or footballers are worthy of our esteem and admiration".⁸⁴

While they found it increasingly easier to justify their concern for the healthy body in an emerging nationalistic sense on moral grounds and in Darwinian terms, Victorian Australians also based their exercise prescriptions on other social problems. Failings in the country's state schools' programmes and problems of physical and moral degeneration in the country's cities were common topics of debate among interested groups of reformers. When offering solutions, these people turned to theories and ideals which promoted a healthy individualism among the general population and which emphasised, again, a reliance on the social and physical dimensions of evolutionary thought. In this regard, the work of Herbert Spencer was widely quoted and applied.

In his essay on 'Evolution and Educational Theory in the Nineteenth-Century', Walter Humes has argued that Spencer's *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*, published in 1861, must feature prominently in any attempt to trace the impact of evolutionary ideas in the field of education.⁸⁵ Historians interested in sport and physical education in the Victorian world have found Spencer's ideas to be extremely influential,⁸⁶ and Victorian intellectuals themselves would have agreed too, for to be active in the field of debate it was necessary to master Spencer's work.⁸⁷ Articles which appeared in Australian periodicals, such as *The Melbourne Review*, *The Victorian Review* and the *Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, grappled with topics on mental hygiene, sociological theory and educational issues from a Spencerian standpoint.⁸⁸ Those who were impressed with his advice on 'the preservation of health' and 'physical morality' were committed to seeing these ideas brought to practical fruition. At a basic level the well-worn adage, 'the first requisite to success in Life is to be a good animal' provided a simplistic rationale

for subscription to physical exercise programmes.⁸⁹ The association between success in life and national prosperity, and the insistence on physical conditioning of the individual in childhood for successful attainment of the former, thus resulting in a nation of healthy animals, attracted many disciples. Other followers paid greater attention to his elaborations on diet, clothing, physical degeneracy, sex differences and systematised physical education and became well-versed advocates of Spencerian 'laws of health'.⁹⁰

Alexander Sutherland, Melbourne schoolmaster, intellectual and journalist, was an early voice in the campaign for the instruction of 'sanitary truths'. In the first edition of *The Victorian Schoolmaster* in 1879 he claimed that sanitary teaching was "a matter of the highest importance" for consideration by State authorities.⁹¹ "The health of its component members", said Sutherland, "is a very serious factor in its material prosperity, to say nothing of its moral and mental progress".⁹² A knowledge of elementary principles of physiology was "the turning point between the health and sickness, not only of individuals, but of whole neighbourhoods".⁹³ The preservation of health in Sutherland's eyes was a teacher's duty. He would publish *The Origin and Growth of Moral Instinct* nearly twenty years later in 1898, but even now Sutherland was displaying a keen sense of physical morality.⁹⁴ Henry Edmunds, our Sydney based educationalist, was of the same ilk. He quoted Spencer's essay on physical education with conviction and called for the inclusion of systematic programmes in New South Wales' schools.⁹⁵ And in Brisbane, William Taylor strongly impressed upon his Royal Society of Queensland audience 'the necessity of regular physical exercise' for increased breathing capacity, more complete aeration of the blood, promotion of the appetite, improvement of the digestion, strengthening of the nervous system and the establishment of 'a healthier tone of the general system'.⁹⁶ But of all those who called for such reforms in the country's schools, John Simeon Colebrook Elkington (1871-1955) stands out as the 'champion' of Public Health.

Elkington's views were founded on medical knowledge. He had in fact studied medicine at Melbourne University in 1890

but failed in his finals. He subsequently qualified as a licentiate in Edinburgh and Glasgow in Britain to gain working experience in the health field.⁹⁷ His ideas however, were also based on additional experiences. He was extremely fond of the outdoor life and counted hunting and boxing among his hobbies. He had also been schooled at Sutherland's Carlton College. His thoughts on instruction of school hygiene were not unlike those of his former headmaster; it would "increase educational efficiency and...raise the physical and mental standard of the race...for the struggle of modern competition".⁹⁸ The 'stamina' of the nation, he opined, depended largely "upon the healthy or unhealthy condition of the children" in the schools.⁹⁹ He developed a comprehensive philosophy and programme of health education which relied on developments in Britain and North America, and which covered aspects of ventilation, sanitary accommodation, hygiene curriculum, nutrition, clothing and a system of checking children's physical state which became a model throughout Australia after 1900 during his service as Tasmania's chief health officer, and later as Queensland's Commissioner of public health.¹⁰⁰

Although the impact of Elkington's crusade for health education affected the Edwardian Australian world, its basis was decidedly Victorian in tone and outlook.¹⁰¹ The movement was partly prompted and supported by an amalgam of prevailing ideas, very similar to the diverse strands of thought which had a profound influence on the ideological structure of Australian sport and society; the muscular Christian sentiments of Hughes and Kingsley, and the physical dimensions of the social theories of Spencer and Darwin. The blend of these ideas was complex and, of course, not always, consistent. But it was an enduring feature of Victorians' attitudes towards athletic exercises and physical development. In 1900, for example, W.B. Carmichael and H.C. Perry published their book, *Athletic Queensland*, an apt title and a sign of the times. Rowing was cited as a healthy and beneficial activity. It developed a 'true manly spirit' and 'endurance'. It inculcated 'the old indomitable spirit of pluck and determination' through the 'fierce struggle of the race'.¹⁰² Gymnastics, meanwhile brought about 'a superior

physical development' and realised the necessity of a 'systematic physical education'.¹⁰³ In the following decades, as physical education was extended formally to hosts of young Australians and when the nation became involved with 'the greater game' of the First World War, these values were continually re-emphasised and the rationale was compounded further by notions of imperialism and militarism.¹⁰⁴ The bonds with Britain, clearly evident in the ideological roots of the country's sporting and social thought, persisted as pronounced sentiments. While Australians retained their devotions to their physical passions, which in turn remained integrated with the wider issues and fabric of antipodean life, they still paid great attention to the 'crimson thread of kinship'.¹⁰⁵

NOTES:

1. Henry W. Sanderson Edmunds, "Public Education", *The Sydney Quarterly Magazine* (July 1884), 384-414.
2. For a discussion on this point see Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1978).
3. See Peter McIntosh, *Physical Education in England Since 1800* (London 1968).
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6. See particularly K. Elford "Sport in Australian Society: a Perspective", in T.D. Jaques and G.R. Pavia (eds.), *Sport in Australia: Selected Readings in Physical Activity* (Sydney 1976), which looks at the concept of manliness, pp.33-45; and W. Mandle, "Cricket and Australian Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of the Royal Historical Society*, 59:4 (December 1973), 225-46. John A. Daly in "Australia's

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7. William Leatherdale, "The Influence of Darwinism on English literature and Literary Ideals", in Oldroyd and Langham, *op.cit.*, pp.1-26.
 8. See J.A. Mangan, "Athleticism: A Case Study of the Evolution of an Educational Ideology", in B. Simon and I. Bradley (eds.), *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution* (Dublin 1975), p.166.
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 10. Turner, *op.cit.*, 41.
 11. See Henry A. Harrington, *Muscular Christianity: A Study of the Development of a Victorian Idea* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1971).
 12. Harrington, *ibid.*, *passim.*, discusses in detail the works which influenced the evolution of the ideal. And Redmond has illustrated elsewhere that it had its origins in the pre-literature of Kingsley and Hughes but was not afforded this popular label. See Gerald Redmond, "The First Tom Brown's Schooldays: Origins and Evolution of Muscular Christianity in Children's Literature, 1762-1857" *Quest* (Summer, 1978), 4-18.
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 14. W.E. Winn, "Tom Brown's Schooldays and the Development of Muscular Christianity", *Church History*, 29 (1960), 67.
 15. See Henry R. Harrington, "Charles Kingsley's Fallen Athlete", *Victorian Studies*, 21:1 (Autumn, 1973), 73-74; and *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life*. Edited by His Wife (London, 1882), pp.74, 75 and 179.
 16. A.M. Machar, "Charles Kingsley", *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, 7:3 (March 1875), 249-253.

17. *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* (hereafter *Bell's Life*) 4:120 (April 23 1859).
18. *Ibid.*.
19. 'Muscular Christianity, ' *Bell's Life*, 4:134 (July 30 1859).
20. *Ibid.*.
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22. Miss Garrett, "Moral Education", *The Victorian Schoolmaster*, II:16 (October 27 1880) 59-60.
23. *Ibid.*.
24. W. Tomlinson, "Education, True and False", *Victorian Review* I:4 (February 2 1880), 633-640.
25. Frances Gillam Holden, "Body and Soul", *Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, (January 1884) 147-153; and "The Gospel of Physical Salvation", *Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, (September 1887) 202-210.
26. Holden, "Body and Soul", *Ibid.*, 149.
27. *Ibid.*, 151.
28. Leonie Sandercock and Ian Turner, *Up Where, Cazaly? The Great Australian Game* (Sydney, 1982) p. 13.
29. Houghton, *op.cit.*, (London, 1957) p. 231.
30. See Mott, *op.cit.*, 27.
31. *Bell's Life*, 4:128 (June 18 1859).
32. "The Cricketer's Song", *Bell's Life*, 5:160 (January 28 1860).
33. *Bell's Life*, 6:233 (June 1861).
34. *Bell's Life*, 9:309 (April 9 1864); and "Football in Melbourne", *Bell's Life*, 9:315 (May 21 1864); *The Australian Sketcher*, III: 29 (June 12 1875). For a lengthier discussion on this point see Sandercock and Turner, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-15.
35. *Bell's Life*, 6:222 (April 6 1861).
36. "Athletes, Athletics, and the Public", *The Queensland Cricketer and Footballer*, 2:1 (September 15 1893), 14.
37. See Geoffrey Blainey, James Morrissey and S.E. Hulme, *Wesley College: The First Hundred Years* (Melbourne, 1967), p.71. The term 'sturdy sporting manliness' is taken from Norman Vance, 'The Ideal of Manliness', in B. Simon and I. Bradley (eds.), *op.cit.*, 128. A comprehensive analysis of athleticism in Australia's public schools has yet to be undertaken.

38. J.A. Mangan, "Athleticism", *op.cit.*, p. 174.
39. See C.E.W. Bean *Here, My Son: An Account of the Independent and Other Corporate Boys' Schools of Australia* (London, 1950).
40. Geoffrey Cherrington "Athleticism in the Antipodes: The Athletic Association of Great Public Schools of New South Wales", *History of Education Review*, 12:2 (1983) 16-28; and Gordon Inglis *Sport and Pastime in Australia* (London, 1912), pp. 131-146.
41. See C. Turney, "The Advent and Adaptation of the Arnold Public School Tradition in New South Wales", Part I, *The Australian Journal of Education*, 10:2 (June 1966), 133-144; Part II, 11:1 (March 1967), 29-43; Larry Jagan, "Schools and Society: Scotch College - A Case Study", *Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Education Society*, 7:2 (Spring 1978), 1-8 ; and T. Max Hawkins *The Queensland Great Public Schools: A History* (Brisbane, 1965).
42. Olive Wykes, "Edward Ellis Morris", in B. Nairn, G. Serle and R. Ward (eds.) *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 5, (Melbourne, 1974), pp. 293-294.
43. See Mangan, "Athleticism", *op.cit.*.
44. Wykes, *op.cit.*; See also R.W.E. Wilmot's account of the School under Morris in his edited book *Liber Melburniensis, 1858-1914: A History of the Church of England Grammar School, Melbourne* (Melbourne, 1914). Financial problems in 1879 were partly responsible for Morris' resignation in 1882 when he left for a position at the University of Adelaide.
45. Wykes, *ibid.*.
46. Blainey, *op.cit.*, p. 76.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
48. M.A. Clements, "Lawrence Arthur Adamson", in B. Nairn and G. Serle (eds.) *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 7, (Melbourne, 1979), pp. 11-13; and F. Meyer, *Adamson of Wesley* (Melbourne, 1932).
49. *Ibid.*, Blainey, *op.cit.*, pp. 75-79; and Dunstan, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-30.
50. See Mangan, *op.cit.*, particularly pp. 141-178, which deal with the 'forces of ideological consolidation' in the Victorian public schools of England.
51. Blainey, *op.cit.*, p.79.
52. See Percival Serle (ed.), *Dictionary of Australian Biography* Volume II, (Sydney, 1949), pp. 286-287; Keith Willey, *The First Hundred Years. The Story of Brisbane Grammar* (Brisbane Grammar School, 1968), p. 59.

53. R.H. Roe, "Looking Backward", in Stuart Stephenson (ed.) *Annals of The Brisbane Grammar School, 1869-1922* (Brisbane, 1923), pp. 27-31; and "Darwin and Darwinian Theory", report of the "popular science lecture" delivered by Roe to the Royal Society of Queensland in the *Brisbane Courier*, (November 17 1896).
54. Ronald Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s - A Study of Australian Urban Society* (Queensland, 1973), p. 163.
55. Roe, *op.cit.*, p.29. For a discussion on the nature of life in British public schools in the nineteenth century see Mangan 'Social Darwinism, ' *op.cit.*.
56. Roe, *ibid.*, pp. 27-29; and Willey, *op.cit.*, p. 18.
57. "Mr. Roe's First Presidential Address", in Stephenson, *op.cit.*, pp. 57-58.
58. Roe, *op.cit.*.
59. Jean Barman has made the same claim with respect to Canadian private schooling in "Growing Up British in British Columbia: The Vernon Preparatory School, 1914-1946", in J.D. Wilson and D.C. Jones (eds. *Schooling and Society in Twentieth-Century British Columbia* (Calgary, 1980,) p. 126.
60. For a development on this point with regard to schools overseas see Mangan, *op.cit.*, and David Brown *op.cit.*, 27-37. It should be noted that other ideals, such as imperialism, nationalism and militarism also overlapped with Darwinian and Christian sentiments.
61. Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston, 1955), p. 6. See also P.D. Marchant, "Social Darwinism", *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, III: 1 (November 1957) 46-59.
62. See Goodwin *op.cit.*; A.T. Yarwood and N.J. Knowling, *Race Relations in Australia, A History* (Sydney, 1982); and Lawson, *op.cit.*, pp. 260-262.
63. Taken from "Address Delivered At the Social Science Congress, Melbourne, october 12, 1880, by His Lordship the Bishop, Dr. Moorhouse", *Victorian Schoolmaster*, II:16 (October 27 1880) 50-51, 58. Moorhouse sympathised with the views of the acknowledged evolutionist, Thomas Huxley.
64. Goodwin, *ibid.*, pp. 393-405.
65. Robert Potter "Evolution in Relation to Theology", *Melbourne Review*, 1:IV (January 1880) 90.
66. Turner, *op.cit.*, 47, emphasis mine.
67. Mandle, *op.cit.*, 48, emphasis mine.

68. K.S. Inglis "Imperial Cricket: Test Matches Between Australia and England, 1877-1900", in Richard Cahsman and Michael McKernan (eds.) *Sport in History: The Making of Modern Sporting History* (Queensland, 1979), p. 165.
69. D.J. Mulvaney *Cricket Walkabout: The Australian Aboriginal Cricketers on Tour, 1867-8* (Melbourne, 1967), pp. 3, 52-53
70. See Maxwell L. Howell and Reet A. Howell, *Sport in Australia* (Unpublished Manuscript, University of Queensland, 1985), p. 5; and J.W.C. Cumes *Their Chastity was not too Rigid: Leisure Times in Early Australia* (Melbourne, 1979) p. 221.
71. "Hunting", *Bell's Life*, 5:165 (March 3 1860), emphasis mine.
72. "Australian Game, its Habits, its Pursuit, and Preservation", *ibid.*, 5:170 (April 7 1860).
73. *Ibid.*, 6:222 (April 6 1861).
74. *Ibid.*, 7:261 (January 4 1862). Inter-colonial games also aroused a sense of pride. *Bell's Life*, commenting on cricket between Victoria and New South Wales in 1863, remarked: "The competition was, or must be supposed to have been, for honour alone. One side burned to retrieve for its colony its original position of superiority; the other to add another leaf to the crown of laurels it had won for its fellow citizens". 8:249 (February 14 1863).
75. See for example, "Cricket and the Colonies", *ibid.*, 6:240 (August 3 1861) and 9:311 (April 23 1864).
76. See Yarwood and Knowling, *op.cit.*, p. 177; Lawson, *op.cit.*, p. 260; Goodwin, *op.cit.*, p. 399; and "Australian Progress", *The Australian Sketcher*, II:21 (October 13 1874).
77. Vincent Cavendish, "An Australain Dominion", *The Victorian Review*, 1:3 (January 1 1880), 384-391.
78. *Ibid.*, 385.
79. "English Prejudice - Australia's Misfortune", *The Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, (October 1883), 73-78.
80. A.J. Ogilvy, "National Character. A Sketch by an Evolutionist", *The Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, (September 1886) 518-549.
81. *Ibid.*, 518-520.
82. W.F. Taylor, "Presidential Address", *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland*, Volume XI, (Brisbane, 1896), pp. xxiii-liii. The argument that the environment could transform Australians into a physically healthier type was to surface in the Nature-Nurture debate in the early decades of the twentieth-century. See C.L. Bacchi, "The Nature-Nurture Debate in Australia, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 19:75 (October 1980), 199-212.

83. See Mandle, *op.cit.*, 58-59.
84. "Athletes, Athletics, and the Public", *op.cit.*, 14, emphasis mine.
85. Humes, *op.cit.*, p. 30.
86. Two notable examples are Haley, *op.cit.*, and Mangan *op.cit.*.
87. Hofstadter, *op.cit.*, p. 33, makes this point with reference to American society.
88. See for example, "Mental Disease and Modern Civilization", *The Melbourne Review*, II:5 (January 1877) 36-54; A.M. Tropp, "Spencer's Principles of Sociology", *The Melbourne Review*, II:7 (July 1877), 316-322; T. Jeffrey Parker, "Charles Darwin", *The Victorian Review*, 1:34 (August 1 1882), 387-403; and "Value of Emotion as a Factor in Education", *The Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, (December 1891), 278-285.
89. See Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (New York, n.d.), pp. 101, 238-39.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-300.
91. Alexander Sutherland, "Sanitary Teaching", *The Victorian Schoolmaster*, 1:1 (July 16 1879) 6.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*; and see Spencer *op.cit.*, p. 308.
95. Edmunds, *op.cit.*, 386-387; Holden, *op.cit.*, 152, also focuses on the need for Sanitary reform.
96. Taylor, *op.cit.*, pp. xxxix-xli.
97. Michael Roe, "John Simeon Colebrook Elkington", in B. Nairn and G. Serle (eds.) *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8 (Melbourne, 1981), pp. 425-426.
98. J.S.C. Elkington, *Health in the School: or Hygiene for Teachers*. (London, 1907), pp. 8-9. This was the Queensland Edition.
99. *Ibid.*.
100. *Ibid.*, *passim*; and *Health Reader: With Chapters on Elementary School Hygiene* (Melbourne, 1908); and Roe, *op.cit.*
101. See Anthony S. Wohl, *Endangered Lives. Public Health in Victorian Britain* (Melbourne, 1983), particularly "A Nation of Good Animals?" pp. 329-342.
102. W.B. Carmichael and H.C. Perry, *Athletic Queensland: A History of Amateur Rowing, Boxing and Physical Development, Pedestrianism and*

Cycling in Queensland (Brisbane, 1900), pp. 3-5.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

104. See W. Gordon Young *Physical Education in Australia*, (Unpublished M.Ed., Thesis, University of Sydney, 1962). Imperialistic and militaristic tendencies were evident throughout the nineteenth-century and were constantly overlapping with the ideas discussed in this paper.

105. Douglas Cole "The Crimson Thread of Kinship: Ethnic Ideas in Australia 1870-1914", *Historical Studies*, 14:56 (April 1971), 518-529.

ATHLETICISM, GENTLEMEN AND EMPIRE IN AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: L.A. ADAMSON AND WESLEY COLLEGE, MELBOURNE

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In the spring of 1932 it became common knowledge among the Victorian public schools that Lawrence Arthur Adamson was about to retire from his post as headmaster at Wesley College, the position he had held for thirty years. A cross-section of the Melbourne community elected to honour Adamson in those final months of the year and show their gratitude for his services to education and his general contributions to the public life of the city. Xavier College and the Old Xaverian's Association took the unique step of holding a dinner for the Wesley head and nearly four hundred people gathered to pay homage to Adamson who was "obviously affected by the flattering reception".¹ Praise was lavished upon Adamson for the unparalleled part he had played in fostering the public school spirit which gave its noblest regard to loyalty, honour, purity, strenuousness and being faithful in friendship.² Dr. W.S. Littlejohn, headmaster at Scotch College, writing in the *Sun-News Pictorial*, made the observation that Adamson had "raised Wesley College from almost insignificance to importance in the community" and it was he, more than any other, who had brought about better feelings between the public schools in Victoria. His efforts had rid the schools of the "bitterness and rancour" that existed among their ranks at the turn of the century.³ Such an outpouring of acclaim and genuine regard for Adamson from the public schools might have been expected. He had, after all, been part of that education scene for half a century. Yet the volume and breadth of the tributes show that Adamson was held in high esteem in the broader community and at the end of a life's work a great many people wished to express their appreciation to him. On the 14 December 1932, just two days before he was to retire from his official duties, Adamson died in his rooms at Wesley College.⁴ At the end of his life the fame of Adamson was apparently assured and conclusive, his eminence resting

securely on the universal opinion that his peerless endowments to education and sport in Victoria would be permanently acknowledged. However, nearly forty years later strong criticism of the Wesley headmaster, and his influence upon the educational developments within the Victorian public schools, was to surface.

When James Darling arrived in Adelaide in early February 1930, en route to his new position as headmaster at Geelong Grammar School, the train journey to Melbourne gave him the opportunity of observing his first bushfires and he was mildly surprised by the casual attitude taken to them by his fellow passengers.⁵ Darling was about to join the exclusive ranks of men who controlled and ran the six prestigious public schools in Victoria, and offer that education system something of his knowledge and background of the English public schools that he had just left.⁶ In 1969 Darling was to recall his impressions of this Australian baptism and record his views on the public school scene he found in the state in the 1930s. These recollections give credit to some advanced aspects of Victorian education, particularly the registration of teachers in the state, but in the main Darling's overriding reminiscences reveal a school system that apparently knew little of, and appeared unresponsive to, the progressive movements in education. Plainly, the changes and trends that were exerting their influence and altering the face of English public school education during the 1920s had not been transmitted to Victoria. Darling's chief condemnation was reserved for an entrenched educational philosophy in the schools that continued to revere the doctrine of strenuousness and sentiment. He was equally dismayed at schools that seemingly gave the highest priority to organised games and competitive sport. Athletic glory had no principal role in the plans of the new Geelong headmaster and it was a stance he wanted to make clear at the outset of his office.

The school scene that Darling objected to more than anything else related to sport and the prominence it was given in the organisation of the school's activities. His assessment of the situation produced a vigorous denouncement of a *mens sana in corpore sano* that had been allowed to "run riot" - a state of affairs that Darling attributed to the work and influence of

the seventy-year old Adamson.⁷ The six schools were locked into an elitist system that exalted competitive sport, gave an inflated emphasis to the importance of winning, and embalmed the heroes of the playing field in antiquated sentiment. In Darling's opinion a rampant athleticism not only created a wrong set of values in the schools and certainly gave boys in the first teams false notions of their own importance, but it was a detraction for schools that should have more worthy commitments, especially in the area of social obligation.⁸ In 1930 Adamson was the most senior of the public school headmasters and automatically held the chairmanship of the Victorian Public Schools Association, the organisation responsible for the control of sport. He was also, without doubt, the staunchest defender of its operation. His belief had never waivered that sport was the most valuable and powerful means to attain the highest of all educational goals - the cultivation of a gentleman inculcated with moral behaviour that gave open display of loyalty, truth, courtesy, honour and a capacity to "win decently and lose decently".⁹ When Darling complained to Adamson about the excessive interest and time given to sport in the public schools, it was this pattern of virtues which probably inspired his answer: "it was only sporting fixtures which separated their own schools from the opposition, the state high schools".¹⁰

Adamson was an extraordinary man with an extreme passion for schoolboy and amateur sport and firm beliefs in the moralistic values that could be transmitted through the activities of the playing field and the river. Throughout his life and long career in education he remained an enthusiast of his past and a nineteenth century Englishman in spirit and temperament. Any consideration of Adamson and his influence should begin from this fundamental position. It is a matter of debate, however, whether or not Adamson should be accused of failing to accommodate the progressive trends in education that only slowly developed in Australian public schools early in the twentieth century. Perhaps more important, the specific allegation that Adamson was primarily responsible for the development and perpetuation of an undesirable form of athleticism in the public schools of Victoria needs to be more carefully reviewed. Darling's interpretation of the school sporting scene suggests

that competitive sport had become a corrupting influence upon many boys. If an over emphasis on athleticism had its obvious dangers it was clear that several headmasters in the early 1930s subscribed to the view that considerable educational benefits were to be derived from the pursuits of the games fields. However, Darling's direct condemnation of Adamson's singular stance on public school sport calls for an examination of the nature and characteristics of athleticism at Wesley College and the extent to which its headmaster might be held responsible for the spread and entrenchment of the controversial educational ideology.

The views and actions that Adamson precipitated at Wesley College need to be considered against his English background and the conditioning he experienced as a boy and young man in Queen Victoria's England. Born in the Isle of Man in 1860, Adamson grew up in the privileged world of the English upper class. In 1874, the year he went to Rugby School, Queen Victoria had over a quarter of a century to rule her Empire, Disraeli became Prime Minister, there was famine in Bengal, a Zulu revolt in South Africa and Irish revolutionaries had brought terrorism to London.¹¹ Browning, Tennyson, Carlyle and Ruskin were the giants of English literature and British Imperialism was secured at the domestic level by success, prosperity, moral rigour and social certainty. Propriety, and its unwritten codes, bound the middle and upper classes into their respective social spheres, observed in the subtleties of dress, manners and speech. It was a world that Adamson understood and was familiar with through his education at home, Rugby and Oxford. At Rugby, Adamson had only moderate success in playing cricket and rugby football but he enjoyed his sport, found pleasure in its social experiences and no doubt became aware of the central role team games could play in creating and developing atmosphere and tone in a great public school.

Team games, and their particular character of amateurism, had been efficiently and effectively harnessed in the English public school system for the purposes of character training and as a means of indoctrination into a prescribed code of rules and conventions held by the upper classes. The practical value

of the games field in moral training, and the development of the manly virtues exhibited by gentlemen, were Lessons readily available to Adamson. Sport was a pleasurable medium with the added capacity to symbolise victory, defeat and loyal endeavour, and it was capable of "lending its emotional powers to other worthwhile causes".¹² There is little doubt that country and Empire held prominent places in the mind of Adamson and he carried the conventional beliefs of the mid-Victorian era that the energies of the individual should be placed in the service of the state and the causes it chose to defend.

In taking over the headship at Wesley in 1902, the forty-one year old Adamson seems to have entertained few doubts that he would make a success of a school that was having considerable financial and enrolment problems.¹³ Enthusiasm and confidence overruled uncertainty. His deepest aspirations were "to reproduce the thing that he had admired most as a young man, the atmosphere of a great public school".¹⁴ This central purpose of Adamson's life, the re-creation of a "Rugby in the antipodes", is the key to his motivation and serves to explain much of the course of action he adopted at Wesley, particularly in the years leading up to the Great War.¹⁵ "Atmosphere" and "tone" were elusive, yet recognisable qualities in a great school, created through a sense of pride and loyalty in the participation of collected actions. Thus from the outset of his reign as headmaster Adamson placed enormous faith in the powerful sentiments encouraged by school assemblies, banquets for winning sports teams, boarders' nights, speech days, military training, cadet parades and the celebration of Empire day. But above all else, sport had the means to build in boys a set of ethical values - allegiance, fair play, honour and trust - that were equally important in the determination of "atmosphere". Moreover, "tone" could be measured through the behaviour of a school's pupils, hence Adamson's perpetual insistence that Wesley boys should conform to the ideals of 'a gentleman'. As Adamson began his term as headmaster he had the confident knowledge that competitive sport had proved its value in manifesting 'atmosphere' in the school during his apprenticeship years at Wesley between 1887 and 1897.

On his appointment to Wesley in 1887 as Senior Resident Master, Adamson was welcomed as an "old Rugby boy" who had been a member of "the football team of his time". The hope was expressed that he would "feel at home in the colonies".¹⁶ The standard of games had been declining at Wesley for several years and Dr. Way, as co-headmaster, persuaded Adamson to accept the positions of sports master and chairman of the games committee in an effort to revive the flagging interests of the boys for sport. Unlike rival schools, Wesley boys had lost their enthusiasm for competition and rarely stayed on at school beyond their eighteenth birthdays to claim the distinction of representing the school team. With an astute blend of improved training methods and wider participation created through intra-school competition, the new sports master gave games more popular appeal.¹⁷ This internal "strenuousness" gave Adamson the basic platform to launch his drive for success in inter-school competition, but he was equally quick to permeate his games organisation with the trappings and rituals capable of producing "sentiment". Reverting to the Rugby system, Adamson introduced the award of colours, codes of privilege and sporting songs in his efforts to foster tradition and honour the playing field hero. The success experienced by the Wesley teams from the Late 1880s was the positive catalyst in the growth of the games cult at the school and it also contributed to the enormous popularity of Adamson with the majority of the boys. When Adamson took four months leave in England early in 1895, he was greeted on his return at Port Melbourne by a group of boys and then taken directly to the school buildings. A mass of boys had congregated and he "received an ovation which shook the very foundation of the building".¹⁸ During his period as sports master Adamson had demonstrated, and confirmed his own beliefs, that well-conducted sport in an Australian public school was a powerful means in the attainment of certain educational goals. In addition, sporting success was a powerful and pragmatic instrument for the purpose of transformation and the playing fields could be trusted with his greater aspirations for the school.

Adamson's fame as the headmaster of an Australian public

school was at its peak between 1902 and the beginning of the Great War. This period was to be the golden age of sport at Wesley, a remarkable era of prolonged success in football, rowing and cricket.¹⁹ Fanned by this record of continuous victory, the educational doctrine of "strenuousness and sentiment" also reached the height of its appeal at Wesley and in the public schools of Victoria. In his new role of headmaster, Adamson's strong and immediate support of sport made it generally known that the activities of games field and the river were to play a key role in the life of the school. The impression was clearly given by Adamson that sport was a vitally important activity, and if intellectual pursuits had claim to a higher importance, then the challenge of the playing field and the river, and successful struggle, produced outcomes that were superior to those arising from competition in classroom subjects. Yet Adamson was well aware that the day boys at Wesley were not Rugby boarders and that Melbourne middle class parents saw private schooling as an investment that should reap future economic rewards for their children. Accepting this fact, Adamson was content to let his teachers and his highly competent deputy, Harold Stewart, assume the responsibility for the broadly cultural and scholarly directions taken by the school.²⁰ The headmaster's energies were devoted to other courses, primarily demonstrating that sport was capable of transmitting the Christian message to his Wesley boys, and that it had the practical means to mould gentlemen.²¹

There was something of a missionary zeal in the way Adamson set about putting the best of the Rugby traditions to work at Wesley and hoping for their dissemination in the public schools of Australia.²² He was preoccupied with the educational ideal of training "gentlemen", imbued with the character traits of justice, "good form,, and the ultimate ability to "win decently and lose decently,, - concepts and themes that were to recur in his writings and speeches.²³ Arnold's legend, and his words, were used at various times to inspire the gentlemanly ideal: "Boys, it is not necessary that we should have a school of 200 boys, or of 100 boys, or even 50 boys, but it is necessary that we should have a school of gentlemen".²⁴ With his background of a classical training gained in an era which generated the

myth that the education of Ancient Greece developed the perfect and balanced personality, and that amateur sport was one of its most endearing characteristics, Adamson saw schoolboy sport as a higher form of ludic activity permeated with the virtues of nobility, bravery and integrity. Moreover, sport focused upon group loyalty and engendered patriotic feelings, sentiments that not only fitted Adamson's educational ideology, but had practical value in committing boys to Wesley and raising enrolment numbers at the school.²⁵ Understandably, sport was a medium and an environment which offered a man forced to leave England and its inclement climate for health reasons the opportunity of embracing some familiar parts of the culture which had shaped him.

The comments made by Adamson to Darling in 1930 concerning sport as the only difference between the public schools and the state secondary schools is equally revealing of the Wesley head's philosophy. Sport was an integral feature of social class, and it was the "purity" of amateur sport that appealed to Adamson. Gentlemen did not bet or take part in sports that involved the payment of its players, an attitude demonstrated by Adamson in 1911 when he refused S.B. Gravenall, a member of the Wesley teaching staff, permission to play for the St Kilda football club in a Victorian Football League game.²⁶ Adamson was concerned about the directions being taken by football in Victoria and he opposed the game's increasing professionalism and the "curse of large gate money" which was destroying the game.²⁷ A deputation from the St Kilda club which requested Adamson to reverse his decision on Gravenall met with no success, but it gained an impromptu lecture from the Wesley head on his absolute postulate: "that any game, in spite of its possible advantages, is useless, and to be avoided, unless it is regarded also as a moral training in controlling the temper, in unselfishness, and in the virtues of hardihood, chivalry, and learning how to lose decently".²⁸ Even though Adamson was motivated by his classical idealism, he was equally aware of the historical corruption in sport and that ludic activity wrongly organised was just as capable of producing immoral behaviour. His view was that when the medium was run as a business and for financial gain, "the players" were very much more exposed to the unsavoury aspects

of behaviour. Clearly, Adamson wanted sport for its social and collective qualities and he was opposed to the views that it could be conceived as activity that was highly individual and primarily personal. But overall he epitomised the ideals laid down in the rules of the Amateur Athletic Association in 1886:

An amateur is a gentleman who has never taken part in a public competition open to all, has never competed for money, has never been a teacher or trainer of sport and is neither a working man nor an artist or a journalist.²⁹

Unfortunately, Adamson failed to recognise that organised sport in the twentieth century was moving permanently away from the idea of participation "for the sake of the ribboned coat", and his call for 'reforms' in the Victorian Football League was a foreign voice few wanted to hear.

Independently wealthy, and extremely generous whenever the cause of Wesley arose, Adamson vigorously set in train in 1902 a series of activities that would create his atmosphere of a great public school. One of his first actions, however, showed the broader interests and concerns of the new Wesley headmaster. He donated the *Adamson Challenge Cup* for open competition in athletics between the secondary schools of Victoria. The first championship was held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 7 November 1902 before an enthusiastic crowd of 2500 spectators, and eighteen schools represented by 400 competitors.³⁰ The climax of the day was perfectly scripted: Wesley College won the initial competition and Adamson watched Lady Tennyson present the major prize. Yet more than anything else Adamson seems to have enjoyed the banquet dinners he gave in the school to honour the Wesley championship teams in football, cricket and rowing. The staging of these celebrations was carefully planned and considerable attention was given to all of the meticulous details likely to catch and increase the perceptions of the participants, and magnify the mood, of involvement in a momentous occasion. At the Football Champions Banquet of 1903 the school magazine described the evening -

The Head Master presided having on his right the Football Captain and on his left Mr. J.W. Eggleston. The Hall was a picture (a "dream", as some visitor to Adelaide put it). The Matron and her sisters,

the Misses Tremblett, may be congratulated on the delightful arrangements. The Form flags were hung round the walls, and the tables, "banquet-laden with a great banquet", were decorated with purple and gold ribbons, and vases of golden daffodils mingled daintily with the royal purple hyacinth and cornflower.³¹

The physical environment, with its Rugby overtones and carefully orchestrated programme, was seeded with the words and actions likely to arouse sentiment, especially in boys. Toasts were proposed to "The King", the "Football Champions", and these were followed by songs, cheers and speeches laced with language that heightened emotions: "pride, stronger men, great unselfishness, team's determination, dogged spirit, noble heritage of honour, gallant and manly fight".³²

Boarders' nights and break-up 'banquets' were additional opportunities for the headmaster to put his vision into practical expressions. He could sit, surrounded by boys and teachers, and join in the topical verses set to "Vive La Compagnie", listen to comical sketches, music, and applaud as loudly as anyone the recitation of Newbolt's "The Best School of All" and "Gillespie's Ride".³³ Few can doubt the general run of popularity and success that Adamson had at Wesley in the period leading up to the Great War. His deliberate policy that intensified the playing and interest of sport apparently drew no adverse criticism from Wesley boys, their parents, or members of the School Council. Rising enrolments, elevated status and greater publicity for the school, coupled to Adamson's growing prestige in the community for his efforts in the state's education system and amateur sport, made any level of criticism difficult. There was, however, only a slight chance of any concerted expression of concern at developments in the school being aired. Adamson's views on the potency of games and athletic competition as a means of improving character and moral behaviour struck the right chords in a community becoming increasingly worried at standards of morality. Furthermore, sport was booming in popularity throughout Australia as it involved more participants and caught up greater spectator interest. Sport was fashionable in Melbourne and the zealous business in sport at Wesley could be considered as no more than an antipodean

reflection of similar events that were occurring in the public schools in England.³⁴ At the turn of the century the imitation of English cultural patterns offered the new nation some degree of comfort and security.

There were, nevertheless, some difficulties associated with the development of the games cult at Wesley. The problems that arose confirm to a degree the fears that Darling came to voice at a later day about the inherent disadvantages of an athleticism that he believed placed undue emphasis on winning teams and the glorifying of a select elite. The complaint of some boys at the school was, paradoxically, that there were too few opportunities for competition in their favoured sport. In a Letter to the *Wesley College Chronicle* in 1905, a junior pupil suggested that "it is very evident that some reform in the present system of sport in the school is needed".³⁵ The correspondent, V. Upton-Brown, wanted a system of competition within the school that would cater for more boys wanting to play in matches. Form games were "an irregular event" and he proposed the scheme of "district" competitions in a wider range of sports - cricket, football, rowing and "even tennis". A disgruntled cricketer was more forthright in his disapproval of the sporting scene in 1906.' His plea was for more "match play", something rarely guaranteed unless one was a member of the first eleven. He wrote:

Many a boy who has turned out regularly to cricket practice this season has at the close of it wondered if he had wasted his time in so doing. In the first half there has been one match for the second eleven and one for the third eleven...When a boy plays in a match he gains experience and confidence - two large factors in cricket. Hoping then, that those who arrange the above matches will remember that "practice makes perfect".³⁶

These comments appear at odds with Adamson's earlier determination as sports master in the 1880s to provide more competition within the school and open up keener interest in inter-school matches. Strangely, the rest of the public schools and the other principal private secondary schools such as University High, Geelong College and Haileybury had, at least in cricket, a highly structured organisation involving second, third and fourth teams competing on a regular basis.³⁷

Such muted criticism of the internal structure of sporting competition at Wesley might be considered minor when set against the serious accusations made against the school, and Adamson's operations of sport, in 1910. On this occasion the emphasis on sport at Wesley gained the dubious distinction of being debated in the public press. Writing in the *Age* on the 24 May 1910, Dr. W. Kent Hughes, a prominent Melbourne practitioner, attacked the sporting policies at Wesley and questioned in his Letter the ethics of keeping boys on at school until they were nearly twenty years of age for the sole purpose of gaining a place in a team. The denouncement carried with it the implication that Wesley teams were indulging in practices and attitudes that smacked of professionalism.³⁸ Kent Hughes virtually stated that the Long run of success by the Wesley crews in the Head of River regattas was due to a boat rowed by over-age boys. Sport, and an unbridled desire to win at all costs, was a corruption and a flagrant interference in the Lives of boys who should have been pursuing their careers in the community. Naturally enough Adamson was at the forefront of the denials to Kent Hughes charges, but the whole topic of the place of sport in the public schools became an issue in the letters to the *Age*. Adamson denied the claim that boys were deliberately kept on at Wesley for the purpose of guaranteeing prestige from athletic glory. He accused Kent Hughes of misrepresenting the true facts and of being a "tuppenny sportsman who cannot take a beating decently": a plain reference to the jealousy generated through the invincibility of the Wesley crews at the time.³⁹

Quite plainly from the correspondence on the subject, Adamson had considerable support for his position, and the evidence he supplied to refute the charges of having an unfair advantage over other public school crews. The conscience of the Wesley head was clear. He had never advised boys to continue on at school simply to gain a place in a team. There had to be "worth-while" reasons for any boy to return to school beyond his eighteenth birthday and the "gain" could not be measured solely in sporting activity.⁴⁰ The issue of the balance between "work and play" had emerged two years before Kent Hughes' attack upon Adamson. In 1908 a leader article in the *Wesley*

College Chronicle considered the argument of the place of sport in the daily life of a school and the specific point "that the Public Schools devote themselves entirely to sport".⁴¹ The author of the article contended that success was an "alliance of brain and muscle" and "the boy who plays games and who takes proper exercise feeds his brain with a proper supply of healthy blood".⁴² To support this physiological theory the University examination results at Wesley from a five year period were attached and they compared more than favourably with the other public schools in Victoria. Yet more than anything else in the issue of the place of sport in schools Adamson realised that his Wesley boy was different to Rugby boys and that Melbourne middle class parents could not afford to keep their sons at school for sport alone.⁴³ They may have considered an "Australian gentleman" as a worthy ideal but for the most part scholarly endeavours and career prospects were more important. The economic collapse and depression in Melbourne in the early 1890s and the drought problems throughout the state at the beginning of the twentieth century were vivid reminders in the community of the harsh realities of earning a living.⁴⁴

The public exposure of questions and attitudes about the place of sport in public school education persuaded the schools to hold a conference at the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School in September 1910. The stated purpose of the meeting was to clear the air on the matter of the 'prominence given to school athletics'. Each of the headmasters from the six schools was backed up by two members for their respective Councils, a final delegation that was notable in its make up for the number of enthusiastic sportsmen.⁴⁵ Perhaps not surprisingly, the most important announcement from the conference absolved the schools from criticism of their conduct of sport. The point was simply expressed. All of the delegates were agreed that "undue time is not devoted to Public School sport".⁴⁶ Secondly resolutions did clarify the rules on the upper age limits to be applied in inter-school competitions and there was reaffirmed opposition to the employment of professional coaches and trainers in the preparation of teams, a statement of some sanctimony which revealed the ability of the schools to hold two contradictory beliefs. Nevertheless, a general forum attended by

influential and powerful personalities had produced its verdict sport was neither a vice within the Public Schools Association nor an ostentatious activity patently in need of greater restriction. If the schools did show a strong interest in sport the conference appeared to pass the judgement that it was a "pardonable sin".⁴⁷

The events of 1910 pushed Adamson more into the public limelight than at any other time and he was forced in the defence of his own position, and the reputation of Wesley, to expound his views on the aims of education and sport. The most valuable clues to his thinking and actions emerge during this period. Fundamentally, he was strongly opposed to the idea that schools should be "knowledge shops", a central argument Adamson put to a meeting of Wesley's parents that he called to rebuff Kent Hughes's accusations of his administration. What was crucial for boys was "a training in the art of life - the more abundant the life the better the school".⁴⁸ However much Adamson held to this belief he probably recognised that parents would need some greater reassurances on the destiny of their children. He provided these by a vision few in the audience could resist. He declared:

A great public school must then devote all its machinery towards sending out boys who are many sided; who have as far as possible the element of selfishness reduced or eliminated; who have, in fact, the capacity of a devotion to a cause; and its duty is to aim at the training of captains not clerks, - or if they start as the latter, they should still have the power to show the powers of the former should the opportunity offer.⁴⁹

In the moulding of the patrician's character and moral behaviour the ability to lead would depend upon the recognition and exercise "of justice - in small things as well as great", and those who had to serve the leaders should not have to suffer any unnecessary inconvenience.⁵⁰ It was in the training of this elite from a general populace that competitive sport could prove its value - the games field held vast potential for learning about fairness, integrity, honest effort and the qualities of Leadership. But Adamson also believed that it was only "athletics of a cleaner and better kind" that could provide these crucial lessons, hence his firm views on the importance

of amateur sport and his revulsion at the trends emerging in professional team games.⁵¹ Indeed, there was a puritanical streak in Adamson on the issue of professional sport. He made it known in 1911 that Wesley boys who wanted to attend "senior games of football" on Saturday afternoons could only do so in the company of "relatives and friends of mature judgement", a Ludicrous regulation difficult to police or enforce.⁵²

The leaders that Adamson wished to see emerging from Wesley and serve the causes of the new nation and an Empire under European threat were not to be confused by a morality based upon double standards. He had also concluded, at the start of his reign as headmaster, that leadership and sentiment would be enhanced by a greater devotion to military training at the school. Adamson was proud of his own family's military background and the school magazine gave prominent notice to the promotion of the headmaster's only brother to the rank of Colonel in 1903.⁵³ Shortly after his own appointment Adamson engaged one of the best military drill instructors in the state, Sergeant-Major Hart, and set him the challenge of reviving a cadet force that had shrunk to twenty volunteers in the whole school. Whatever the qualities of Hart, it is doubtful whether the cadet force could have expected a new lease of life without strong pressures from within the school. The cadet movement throughout Victoria was at a low ebb in its recruitment appeal after the Boer War, yet Adamson's influence resulted in an immediate rise in the fortunes of cadet training at the school. Service with the cadets was given enthusiastic support in the school magazine in April 1902 and it was plainly obvious from the notice that a recruitment drive was on among the boys.⁵⁴ By 1908 the Wesley College Corps could boast an impressive force of 216 cadets and their military activities were being given prominent publicity in the *College Chronicle*.⁵⁵ Rifle shooting was accorded "sport status" at Wesley and competition to get into teams was keen because of the incentive provided by various trophies - the Sargood Shield, the Cumming and Syme cups. When the compulsory system of university cadet training was started in all Australian schools in July 1911 by the Commonwealth Defence Department, Adamson was one of the scheme's most ardent supporters. As a show of strength of the new

citizen army nearly 18,000 senior cadets paraded through Melbourne's streets in November 1912, a muster that the Wesley headmaster hoped "would do much to silence critics of the scheme in this State".⁵⁶ Moreover, Adamson could not resist the opportunity of letting it be generally known that he was particularly proud of the fact that 258 boys from Wesley had taken part in the impressive march past in the city.⁵⁷

The concern Adamson showed for the construction of a strong military cadet force at Wesley, and his overall interest and support of a citizen army, cannot be simply explained as his way of providing an additional practical training for boys in the arts of gentlemanly conduct, leadership and collective loyalty. The political views of Adamson have not been widely reported, though on a visit to England in 1912 he was bold enough to announce that it was an Australian ideal, and one which he obviously supported, "to keep Australia for a white race".⁵⁸ There is no doubt, however, that Adamson was vitally caught up in the interests of England and the welfare of her Empire. During his visit to England in 1912 and the threat of war with Germany moving closer to a climax, Adamson dwelt on the fact that there was compulsory military training throughout Australia and the nation was prepared to make sacrifices for her ideals," as people must also for Empire ideals".⁵⁹ Furthermore, he preached the idea "that all sport should be auxiliary to and in connection with military work".⁶⁰ Clearly, military training for boys was not only an acceptable notion to Adamson, it was an essential concept in his construct of education, and schools had to accept their responsibility for developing the sentiments of military duty for service to the state.

Adamson was well aware that Federation in 1901 had sparked off a new sense of national identity in Australia in which there was a rapid evaluation of her capacity to defend the homeland and contribute to the defence of the Empire. Australian interest in the Boer War and the military service of her troops in South Africa had helped to awaken in the nation a new patriotic fervour which had forced the recently installed Federal Parliament to consider, as a matter of urgency, the problems of national defence. A militarily prepared Australia would,

however, ease the burdens of the mother country in the defence of her Empire and if need be, come to the help of defending it against its European enemies. Australia had its own supporters of Lord Roseberry's Liberal-Imperialist movement, begun in 1901 to ally the traditional Liberal view of individualism and Laissez-faire to an acceptance of state power as a means for the extension of the British Empire. Roseberry had called for the creation of an "imperial race", people of healthy bodies, energetic and industrious capacities, able to ensure the expansion and defence of the Empire. These sentiments were echoed by the militarist lobby in Australia and it became their crusade to promote schools as the nurseries of the "imperial race". These views and sentiments would have found fertile ground in the mind of Adamson.

Empire Days at Wesley were celebrated in considerable style, distinguished by the Wesley code of strenuousness and sentiment. The day was accorded the rank of a public festivity that was invariably highlighted by Adamson's readings of a series of patriotic poems by Kipling, Henley, Newbolt and Lyle, and the suitable response of "prolonged cheers" from the assembled boys.⁶¹ A regular procedure was followed annually whereby the whole school gathered at the front of the building to watch the march past of the cadets and the salute to the Union Jack. With this background and training it was therefore not surprising that Wesley pupils and old boys were some of the first to line up at the Melbourne recruiting offices in August 1914. In the initial contingent of 20,000 Australian troops that left in September to train in Egypt and fight in the Great War, there were seventy-eight "Wesley boys".⁶² Adamson gave them a farewell dinner at the school, bringing "our soldiers from the College" from the camp at Broadmeadows where they had been in training for less than a month. The programme for the evening was not unlike other banquet nights called to honour winning sport teams, only that on this occasion the players were to be sent off to 'the beginning of the Great Adventure'.⁶³ There were toasts drunk to "The King", "Our Empire's Cause", and "The Australian Imperial Force", all interspersed with a wealth of words from Henley, Churchill, Begbie and Newbolt, evoked in a justification of 'the cause' they were about to take up.⁶⁴

Henley's words were aptly prophetic. The hour had struck, the world was in arms and England, 'this breeder of Nations', was about to attempt to keep its seas.⁶⁵

In the College History published in 1921 Adamson took on the task of writing the chapter, "The School and the War". He was deeply affected by the long list of "his boys" who had lost their lives, and if Adamson still believed the war had been "the Great Adventure", and raised Australian troops "to an equality with our race's heroes", the murderous events at Gaba Tepe, Cape Helles, Lone Pine, Glencorse Wood, Pozieres and a hundred other places, had left an indelible mark upon him. His own words show something of the personal agony within him as he tried to recall the face of a boy and visualise the place of his death: "There are times when I can almost visualise the scene, having tried so many times in five years, and coming back to it again and again".⁶⁶ And perhaps more than anything he would have found it particularly hard to move around the school and glance at the serried rows of photographs showing Wesley's great sporting championship teams and count out the boys who had given their Lives. While the point may be argued, the profound influence of the Great War marked the end of an era in Adamson's own spectacular career. In the final decade and more of his headship the voice of Adamson in the educational affairs of Victoria, and in sport, was muted, and the period offers little in terms of comparison with the force of his convictions and efforts between 1902 and 1914.

To what extent then can Darling's accusations against Adamson hold up? Should he be held largely responsible for an athleticism that was seen to be exerting an exorbitant influence in the public schools of Victoria in 1930? Perhaps it should be admitted almost at once that Adamson set the pace and the fashion of the games cult early in the twentieth century and place his somewhat Lofty and romantic idealism in the vanguard of a resurgent athleticism. His penchant for the trappings and rituals of sport, his sense of sporting theatre, were major contributions in an enlarged importance of the games field and the river. However, Adamson's motivations and his actions should be judged against the background of the thoughts

and moods of his own day and not against any modern ideas and contemporary conventions. What he said and did early in the twentieth century appeared less overstated and colourful in those days than they seem today, or even in 1930. Darling was obviously disappointed that the schools had not seriously considered their role in the community and felt that a social obligation held greater priority than any commitment to sport. Yet social obligation had much less need of projection in Australia than it had in England.

The defence of Adamson against Darling's charges could mount an impressive case. The games cult that the Wesley head engendered, and Led, can hardly be conceived of, or rated, as a vice. An anti-intellectualism never appears to have operated at Wesley or at any of the other public schools, and Adamson was extremely careful to ensure that every boy who gained athletic success kept his feet on the ground. There was hero worship of the athlete at Wesley but the tight hold Adamson kept on all sporting proceedings did not allow for the over-bloated inflation of the successful athlete. Adamson was always aware of the wrong values that "over-athleticism" could spawn. The 1910 conference was also an opportunity for all of the schools to draw back from any excessive interest in games, yet there was unanimous agreement that the trends in sport and in competition were of no undue concern. In any case, games as part of public school education had been given, more or less, a national seal of approval in 1909. James Lee-Pulling, senior master at Sydney Church of England Grammar School, writing on "Sport in Relation to School Life" in the *Australian Journal of Education*, emphatically endorsed the games system in the public schools because it was invested with "moral tone" and gave masters the opportunity to influence the formation of character in boys.⁶⁷ But it is also doubtful to blame Adamson for the keen interest in games still evident in the Victorian schools as late as 1930. Australian public schools continued to take their cues from the trends set in the English public schools during the 1920s, and in the aftermath of the Great War, the games cult in the mother country "had risen to a crescendo".⁶⁸ Darling's complaints of Adamson and his educational doctrine of "strenuousness and sentiment" are

severe. In the Victorian public schools of 1930 there was, simply, nothing to take its place.

Sporting traditions in Australian schools, both public and government, have received little attention up to now. The energetic and possibly excessive interest taken in games and competitive sport by the public schools system has yet to be adequately described against the background of broad educational developments and within the context of curriculum progress. Some deeper analysis of the place of games and sport in schools education might then be attempted. Until that time statements on athleticism in the public schools, whether as a vice or a virtue, should be treated with caution. One author who has researched athleticism within the English public school system offers a warning to those ready to adopt positions based on modern conventional judgement and validity expressed by contemporary generalisations. He concludes: "If athleticism often degenerated into the self-absorption of Caliban, it frequently aimed to effect the selflessness of Ariel".⁶⁹ Adamson was prepared to recognise the existence of Caliban but he believed that every boy at Wesley College could become Ariel.

NOTES:

1. *Age*, 31 October 1932.
2. *Ibid*,
3. Quoted in F. Meyer, *Adamson of Wesley* (Melbourne 1932), pp.193-194.
4. B. Nairn and G. Serle (eds.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 7, 1891-1939 (Melbourne 1979), p.13.
5. Sir James Darling, 'Educational Recollections of the Thirties', in R.J.W. Selleck (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1968-69* (Melbourne 1969), p.1.
6. The six public schools were organised into the Victorian Public Schools' Association. Its select membership is usually recorded in the order of establishment and admission to the Association, viz., Scotch College, Geelong Grammar School, Melbourne Grammar School, Wesley College,

- Geelong College and Xavier College.
7. Darling, *op.cit.*, p.19.
 8. *Ibid.*, p.25.
 9. This phrase recurs in the speeches and writings of Adamson, and persisted in his final address to the school. See 'Farewell Address of L.A. Adamson M.A., Headmaster', Wesley College archives.
 10. Darling, *op.cit.*, p.21.
 11. Information quoted in T. Morgan, *Somerset Maughan* (London 1981), p.23.
 12. Carolyn Marvin, 'Avery Brundage and American Participation in the 1936 Olympic Games', *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1982, p.81.
 13. Meyer, *op.cit.*, p.47.
 14. *The History of Wesley College 1865-1919* (Melbourne 1921), p.34.
 15. G. Blainey, J. Morrissey and S.E.K. Hulme, *Wesley College, The First Hundred Years* (Melbourne 1967), p.104.
 16. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 35, April 1887, p.610.
 17. Blainey, *op.cit.*, p.77.
 18. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 65, April 1895, p.177.
 19. Blainey, *op.cit.*, p.108.
 20. *Ibid.*, p.104.
 21. Mandle makes the point that "sports carried the Christian message in both England and Australia". See W.F. Mandle, 'Games People Played: Cricket and Football in England and Victoria in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Historical Studies*, vol. 15, no. 60, April 1973, p.524.
 22. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 93, April 1902, p.2. "He set to work to transplant the best traditions of the public schools at home out here".
 23. 'Farewell Speech', notes 1932, Wesley College archives.
 24. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 93, April 1902, p.3.

25. Meyer, *op.cit.*, p.47. At the beginning of 1902, 100 boys were enrolled at Wesley. At the end of the school year the number had risen to 243.
26. *Argus*, 8 May 1911.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. Quoted in Colin Tatz, 'The Corruption of Sport', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, vol. 59, no. 4, Sept. 1982, p.6.
30. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 96, December 1902, p.23.
31. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 99, October 1903, p.4.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p.3.
34. J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge 1981), p.1. Mangan makes the point that athleticism reached its peak in the English Public Schools around 1905.
35. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 105, April 1905, p.14.
36. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 109, April 1906, p.14.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Age*, 24 May 1910.
39. *Age*, 28 May 1910.
40. *Age*, 1 June 1910.
41. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 118, June 1908, p.45.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Blainey, *op.cit.*, p.111.
44. *Age*, 4 June 1910.
45. *Australasian*, 10 September 1910.
46. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 127, October 1910, p.8.
47. *Herald*, 7 July 1910.
48. Report of Adamson's address to the parents of Wesley College boys, *Herald*, 7 July 1910.

49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 93, April 1902, p. 3.
52. *Argus*, 8 May 1911.
53. The promotion of Adamson's brother, J.G. Adamson, is reported in the *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 99, October 1903, p.2.
54. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 93, April 1902, p.37.
55. *The History of Wesley College, 1920-1940*, p.21.
56. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 136, December 1912, p.6.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Herald*, 16 July 1912. A report of Adamson's visit to England.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 106, June 1905, p.2.
62. Meyer, *op.cit.*, p.54.
63. Meyer, *op.cit.*, p.56.
64. Programme of Farewell Dinner, 9 September 1914, Wesley College Archives.
65. Henley's poem in *Ibid.*
66. Meyer, *loc.cit.*
67. J. Lee-Pulling, 'Sport in Relation to School Life', *Australian Journal of Education*, vol. 7, no. 5, 15 Nov. 1909, p.12.
68. Mangan, *loc.cit.*
69. Mangan, *op.cit.*, p.8.

RECREATIONAL AND SPORTING VALUES ON THE FRINGE OF AN IMPERIAL EMPIRE: THE RESHAPING OF A BRITISH HERITAGE IN COLONIAL NEW ZEALAND

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I

In the history of civilisation the English can claim as their most important exports to the world literature, language, parliamentary democracy, and sport. Indeed Anthony Trollope observed in 1868 that "England's influence in the nineteenth century would be seen not so much in the imitation of representative institutions, such as trial by jury or freedom of the press, but in public amusements".¹ The game sports were introduced to Scotland by English country gentlemen at the beginning of the 1800s and, during the century, the Scottish Highlands and Border country became a holiday base for the absentee English squires and landowners. English sporting country gentlemen sailed to America in the 1700s and their athletic interests flourished on the slave economies of Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas and Georgia.² Race days in the Bahamas of the early 1800s reproduced the affected manners, etiquette and social elitism of the Ascot meetings in England.³ Polo was played in India, croquet in Hong Kong, pigs were stuck from horseback in the Cape of Good Hope, cricket was played in the Falkland Islands. Wherever the British went sporting activities and recreational pastimes were exported to the British Empire and were an integral aspect of that cultural baggage.

It should be emphasised that it was not only the sports themselves, but the entire Victorian ideology of sport - its values, attitudes, assumptions, and class bias - that was an integral part of this cultural diffusion.⁴ This ideology, including the notion of Muscular Christianity, was a part of a broader ideological cluster that comprised a renewed militarism (from the Crimea to Mafeking); a devotion, indeed obsession, with royalty; an identification and worship of national heroes;

together with a contemporary cult of the personality; and racial ideas associated with Social Darwinism.⁵

India, the cornerstone of the imperial structure in the east, provides the most remarkable example of the fusion of style and spectacle into the institutional life-style of the Empire where recreation and sport were elevated to become the classic symbols of the English-man abroad. Morris describes the hunt clubs of the Nilgiri Hills dressed in "meticulous hunting pink, attended by elegant whippers-in and well-bred packs of fox-hounds, to hunt the slinking jackal".⁶ The Indian hill station epitomised in a "single impression the recreation of the imperial Establishment"⁷ and the sons of the rajahs played cricket with as much ease and familiarity as did Squire Brown's son Tom, at Rugby School.

This essay, however, addresses itself to the notion of the reshaping of a British heritage and the extent to which British forms of recreation and sport, while brought out lock, stock and barrel to colonial New Zealand underwent profound changes. In a young country like New Zealand, colonial in character and dependent by necessity, the seeping of influences from the mother country can determine to a large extent the nature of subsequent development. The new society is moulded principally by those institutions and ideas which have been inherited and transported to the new situation and thus form the basis of a new structure. Sporting practices are part of the cultural inheritance and the games and pastimes which are adopted reflect essentially the sporting characteristics of the mother culture.

New Zealand's British immigrants brought with them varying aspects of nineteenth century developments in recreation and sport depending on their individual situations and experiences before they left. Dependence as a state of mind can not easily be shaken off and cultural heritage is almost a continuing process as contacts and roots remain with the rules and regulations determined at their nucleus. The importation of sporting supplies, particularly from England, and the constant distribution of English books and the massive newspaper coverage devoted to British recreational and sporting developments,

ensured that parallel developments would occur. However, as with other facets of cultural life, the characteristics of recreation and sport undergo considerable changes in situations which are inevitably different from those in which they were initially developed. Hence in the case of the outposts of the nineteenth century British Empire - Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand - there were British recreations and sports which did not find a place in early colonial life, primarily due to both environment and lack of time and money. For example, fox hunting was impossible in New Zealand and Australia because there were no foxes to hunt! The recreations and sports which generally prevailed were those which could be more easily adapted to a rough and ready pioneering situation. An essential feature of colonial society is that its membership is not truly representative of the class structure from which it is transplanted. This provides a levelling influence within which the bounds of tradition are strained, threatened, and often abandoned as irrelevant. Inherited forms if found wanting, become impotent and are replaced by those in which present circumstances are reflected. Toynbee gives a classic overview of social change and adaptation inherent in migration.

In transmarine migration, the social apparatus of the migrants had to be packed on board before they can leave the shores of the old country and then unpacked again at the end of the voyage before they can make themselves at home on new ground. All kinds of apparatus - persons and property, techniques and institutions and ideas - are equally subject to this law. Anything that cannot stand the sea voyage at all has simply to be left behind; and many things - and these not only material objects - which the migrants do manage to take with them can only be shipped after they have been taken to pieces - never, perhaps, to be reassembled in their original form.⁸

II

For Great Britain in the nineteenth century it would be unwise to suggest that any particular sport was a national cult. Certainly cricket enjoyed great popularity throughout most of England and champion pugilists and pedestrians would have been household names for Highland crofters, Welsh coal-

miners and East London pick-pockets. Nevertheless, the impression is one of an ongoing enthusiasm for all manner of athletic endeavours. With colonial New Zealand it is clear that up until 1860 in the major townships, and for a much longer period in the rural areas, the preoccupation of the pioneers was coping with, and taming, if not a hostile environment, then one that necessitated a colossal drain on physical resources. The Protestant work ethic moulded the prevailing life-style in many respects and consecrated the values associated with labour, dedication, commitment and unflinching resolution. In this paper it is claimed that such a value system found a unique sporting outlet in "folk game" football of the 1870s, that evolved into *the nation's game* by 1890. Future socio-cultural studies are required to examine the hypothesis that in the twentieth century this national game underwent further changes that saw it elevated to an obsession, a national cult⁹ and a secular religion.¹⁰

The emergence of rugby as New Zealand's national game can be understood fully only with reference to the values and preoccupations of late nineteenth century New Zealanders. A recent study has observed:

At the heart of the matter was the concern of imperial-minded middle-class New Zealanders to preserve an Empire they believed to be under threat. They had come to see racial fitness as imperative if the Empire as they knew it was to survive... New Zealand males were indeed being prepared to do their bit for the Empire.¹¹

While this hypothesis may hold true for the game's administrators, what of the appeal of rugby to the farm labourer, the clerk, the teacher and the publican? A central causal factor that explains why rugby became a national ethos is that the game, although taking on many of the characteristics associated with the evolution of modern sport, retained its essence as a folk game. As a folk game it reaffirmed the value system of a young country that, while subjected to a degree of urbanization and industrialization in the nineteenth century, retained an agricultural stamp, and a passionate interest in robust activity in the open-air. By 1907, and the end of New Zealand's colonial role in the British Empire, a young, tough New Zealander could still display the pioneering virtues of courage

vigour, strength and group spirit on the rugby paddock. "The recurrent rituals of the football field reconciled a pioneering ethos with the complexities of a modern and urban society." ¹²

III

The impression of British recreation and sport as integrative structures is, at best, superficial and at worst, an illusion. In village cricket all classes took part but at the end of the match the squire returned to his four posted bed, mansion and estate while the labourer stretched out on a palliasse in his rented cottage. Prize fight spectators were roped off into sections for the lower classes while the aristocratic and affluent lounged in ring side hansom cabs, char-a-bancs and elegant coaches. Although pedestrianism at the end of the eighteenth century, and well into the nineteenth century, had aristocratic patronage and even upper class athletic involvement, by the 1860s it had moved to enclosed grounds where the interaction of a gambling sub-culture and the publican-as-sponsor made it predominantly a lower class sport. The field sports of shooting, fox hunting, and fishing, while developed in eighteenth century England, were refined, in terms of etiquette and protocol, in the nineteenth century. A major function of field and equestrian sports was the reassurance of privilege and patronage. The eighteenth century game laws, by imposing a property qualification on sportsmen, effectively denied all but county gentlemen the right to take game or even to possess a gun. Shooting as a sport for gentlemen and aristocrats and their guests took shape under the aegis of the landowner with his country house, estates in Scotland and parties of house guests. Such field sports were exclusively the recreational domain of the nobility, aristocracy and landed gentry.

It is significant that for the pioneer settlers of New Zealand, there were no divisive extremes of social class or restrictive game laws, or socially appropriate parameters of behaviour to inhibit informal hunting sports. Thus, while there were no stags to chase or foxes to hunt, there were many opportunities to shoot wild game and to develop the first truly

New Zealand field sport of pig hunting, which illustrates how a British enthusiasm for hunting was modified, altered and adapted to suit the New Zealand environment. A Scottish labourer writing home in 1849 announced:

As for myself, I would not return to Scotland to live permanently; true we have rough labour, but we can afford a day for recreation too, and where can there be a finer sport than a pig hunt.¹³

Spear fishing which took place on the Anglo-Scottish border was pursued by the first settlers to Otago and Canterbury, who, while denied the attraction of salmon, enjoyed the substitute targets of eels.

With neither game laws nor the spectre of draconian "poaching" penalties, game preservation was not to become a symbol of class conflict. The critical factor was the introduction of stocks of British game. For example, English trout and Scottish deer were shipped to New Zealand by regional Acclimatisation Societies so that the immigrant common man could relish a recreational liberty unknown in his homeland. The situation was so good by 1908 that W.P. Reeves could assert that there was enough game 'to enable an idle man to pass his time all the year round'.¹⁴ In New Zealand, by the 1870s, team games such as cricket and, even more so, rugby were not just symbols of unity and cohesion but, unlike in Britain, clearly operated to melt down class hostilities and generate a fraternal club-like atmosphere. Different occupational groups from contrasting suburbs and villages, with a limited choice of alternative cultural and recreational pursuits, found a shared, not diffuse, identity and a meaning and purpose through their involvement in local sport. This created a stable sporting base for 'team spirit' and regional loyalty. Moreover, rugby placed the emphasis upon the game not membership in an exclusive club or belonging to a particular coterie. A study of colonial New Zealand rugby supports the notion of the sport's democratic hallmark: "An analysis of some of the social aspects of rugby football in Manawatu [the North Island of New Zealand] between 1878 and 1910, shows clearly that rugby was played and administered by people from diverse social backgrounds"¹⁵ Indeed it is a reasonable claim that in colonial New Zealand society:

...the game of rugby brought together men from all over the district and from a variety of social backgrounds... Rugby also attracted a far wider audience than just the players and administrators. For these people too, rugby was a common meeting and talking point, that cut across other social barriers. Rugby did not discriminate between race, religion or class. Many people not actively involved, followed the game closely as spectators or through the extensive press coverage. At a time when few other social activities involved such a number or a range of people, the social function of rugby was especially important.¹⁶

One of the major reasons for the rapid growth of rugby during the 1880s, was the manner in which it appealed to all social groups irrespective of levels of occupational prestige. The game, unlike cricket, had a democratic hallmark with regard to its playing participants. For example, with the Otago Provincial side of 1884 an engineer, clerk, gunmaker and produce-maker played alongside a labourer and an architect. In 1888, the Otago side welcomed to its midst a coachbuilder, a boot-maker, a lithographer, a coppersmith as well as a surgeon, a sharebroker and a railway guard.¹⁷ For rugby's administrators the picture is more complex as the leading figures came from the professional middle classes, although there was significant representation from other social ranks. Thus, although key administrators were in the main university graduates with considerable administrative experience as physicians, civil servants, lawyers and senior school teachers, there were positions with the Otago Rugby Football Union in the 1880s for a hotelier, dairyman, plumber, shopkeeper, butcher, journalist, contractor and a clerk.¹⁸ It seems clear that, as rugby was heartily embraced by prominent social figures and given their unequivocal support, the activity itself was seen to have social importance, and that successful participation in it brought recognition and gave social status to players. There was not a hegemonic caste in sport administration although bureaucracies were based on achievement.

Best's work on Maori sports and pastimes, indicates the extent to which colonial New Zealand sought to impose a British cultural mould on the indigenous population.¹⁹ The influence by the Irish and American gold miners on Otago in the 1860s and 1870s led to the introduction of wrestling, boxing and poker playing in the recreational domain, but quantitative analysis was impossible because of insufficient primary sources and a nomadic pattern of changing communities. The impact of the Dutch, Yugoslavs and Americans - military personnel and Mormon missionaries - on New Zealand sport in the twentieth century still has yet to be examined by either sociologists or historians.

The extent to which the Maori culture was dominated by the British values of the pioneer settlers must be emphasised. The pre-colonial Maori had a large repertoire of games and pastimes to which considerable importance was attached. Running, climbing, wrestling, throwing the poi, canoeing and swimming all served to prepare the Maori male for both combat and hunting. Maori involvement in such sporting endeavours did not cease on the arrival of the European. Its form, however, did undergo considerable change. As with other European customs the sporting pastimes of the settlers were eagerly adopted by the Maoris in preference to their own. In the case of sport, missionary influence was strong as many of the traditional recreational activities of the Maori were regarded as elements of a heathen culture which should be eliminated. Although the Maori took part in the more pre-industrial informal Anniversary Days and gala festivals of the early years of colonisation, by the 1880s 'the organisation of sport... bore little resemblance to the cultural and societal forms of Maori life. Rather it reflected [the values] of the progressing European with whom the majority of the Maoris had little in common'.²⁰

The one exception was rugby which was heartily embraced by the Maori. In 1888-89 a predominantly Maori rugby team toured Great Britain and the game's characteristics reflected many of the Maori beliefs regarding bravery and manhood. A Canterbury

newspaper in 1882, in its lyrical treatment of rugby, presents a convincing rationale for the game's acceptance by the Maoris:

...every scrum is a hand-to-hand fight with all the excitement of battle and none of the bloodshed. Young fellows are trained to run swiftly, to charge with bravery, to bear pain silently, and to stand cold and wet and other experiences common in warfare with stoicism.²¹

V

The rituals, the Royal presence and the elitist traditions of the Ascot race meeting are vivid examples of the manner in which certain sports and their locations became considerable symbols of status. To appear at Ascot's Royal Enclosure in morning suit and top hat meant acceptance to the most aristocratic and influential circles of London society. Participation in the first eleven or fifteen at a "great" Public School had enormous life-long social status. To win an Oxbridge rowing blue was the acme of social achievement. Within New Zealand there was a very real sensitivity to social differentiation. This is not to make a facile case of "all men being equal" and happy with their status quo. There were clearly differences in education, income, and social aspiration. In the townships of the 1880s and the 1890s there were hill suburbs and "choice" locations that attracted a prospering, professional middle class. Nevertheless, in recreation and sport, there was not the snobbery, upper class English accent or exclusiveness associated with British "status sport". There was, however - and this is critical to an understanding of New Zealand society - high status attached to athletic performance and administrative ability in recreation and sport.

The British in the nineteenth century, lionised a number of figures such as the Duke of Wellington, Deerfoot, General Gordon, Lilly Langtry, Captain Webb, David Livingstone, Gladstone, W.G. Grace and so on. In a far off colony, such as New Zealand, these figures were equally revered, renowned and idolised. The phenomenon is that there was a conscious rejection of such deification for outstanding New Zealanders in any field

of endeavour: not just sport. Great lawyers, Prime Ministers, and leading figures in the community played down the cult of personality. There has been within New Zealand a resounding display of egalitarianism, that continues up to the present day. When Sir Keith Holyoake died in 1983, an obituary notice, on New Zealand's second-longest-serving Prime Minister, captured the "common touch,, that permeates so much of the fabric of society.

During the short walk from his official residence to Parliament each morning he stopped at three or four shops... to talk on the matters of the day and what would win the big race on Saturday... The ease with which ordinary New Zealanders could approach him seems almost unbelievable...the Prime Minister's number was in the phone book. He would take a call, even from a Saturday-night drunk.²²

"Play Up and Play the Game,, was one of a number of British aphorisms of the nineteenth century that illustrate how sport became an expression of a national and religious ethos. The athletic emphasis, however competitive the game, was to play well not necessarily to win. The difference for colonial New Zealand was that the dominant social activity was not cricket, a uniquely English synthesis of sport and morality but rugby. Cricket had always provided the analogy for the game of life-,, ...it's more than a game. It's an institution".²³ Cricket became the sport of the Empire and carried its ethical values with it. The phrases "fair play", "not cricket", and "a sticky wicket,, were used as familiarly by an educated Indian and out-back Australian on vast sheep-stations, as they were by an English schoolboy.²⁴ In New Zealand schools sport was taught and organised as if at British facsimile public schools.²⁵ However, New Zealand school graduates were not going out to the massive network of the colonies and the British Empire. They stayed at home, worked hard and played harder. Why was it that rugby football became the ethical exemplar of New Zealand social and spiritual life? The game had skill and courage, and physical violence, and physical contact. Moreover, it was a game with singular structural properties. Not only did classes meet, they were crushed together and bumped about. Lansbury sees the critical feature as "class" and argues the case that cricket "sustained the class structure of English society".²⁶ If this

is the case then rugby was appropriate for, and complementary to, New Zealand communities forged by a democratic press of "mateship" and familiarity. The game's philosophy mirrored society's perception of self-improvement. The battle cry on the farm, the factory floor and the rugby "paddock" was "get stuck in". An account of a rural game of rugby played in the 1890s epitomises this antipodean sporting motif:

Amongst the forwards, however, Harry Hertslet was always prominent if a scrum happened to be formed in the vicinity of the watercourse, which was still rising. Seizing the ball and shouting 'com on boys, scrum over here in the creek' he would head a procession of forwards to the deepest part he could find, and putting it down, the players, gathering round, would put the boot in for all they were worth.²⁷

Sporting symbolism was an inherent part of Victorian values which were to provide a dogmatic backbone for establishing English culture throughout the empire. Henry Newbolt's heroic poems of human spirit drew on images of manly striving in team sport. Journalist George W. Stevens in the Boer War saw British artillery crews working like a good soccer team:

...the patterning guns limbering up, now back at a disdainful walk, now pivoting to cover the next movement, like a cup-winning football team all playing together; passing, tackling, shooting.²⁸

VI

While sport in nineteenth century Britain lived with the paradox of W.G. Grace's technically amateur status, that allowed a considerable cricketering income to be amassed,²⁹ there was no such situation within New Zealand. The dividing line in colonial New Zealand was unambivalent. Only if money was received as a fixed income, over a sustained period of time, for professional services in recreation/sport, was amateur status denied. This meant that the New Zealand overseas rugby team of 1888-89 could receive expenses as it was understood that, after the tour was over, they would return home and continue their normal occupations. There were not, within New Zealand, the occupational barriers that prohibited River Thames boatmen from

sculling at the Henley Regatta in England. In New Zealand a chimney sweep was as acceptable as a land-owner in a rugby or rowing club. The exclusion, as it did for mountain guides and rugby leaguers, only came into force if the person accepted payments for his physical performance. The constitution of the New Zealand Amateur Rowing Association stated "an oarsman or sculler must be a paying member of a recognised rowing club and he must not himself have derived any pecuniary profits, indirectly or directly, from rowing..."³⁰ In England the amateur athlete did more than disapprove of payment for sports performance. He viewed the professional as an athletic leper - to play with a professional was "degrading for respectable men".³¹ In the Gentlemen versus the Players soccer match of 1886 this social distinction was compounded by the costumes worn by the "workers" and the "gentlemen". There were dark blue jerseys for the professionals and spotless white shirts for the amateurs.³² A most telling comment on the extent to which the class structure differentiated between the amateur and the professional in England stems from a decision by the "founding fathers" of the modern Olympics. Meeting at the Sorbonne in 1894, they rejected and "declared against the British restriction on manual labourers".³³ In New Zealand the amateur ethos was so firmly embedded that the awarding of financial compensation for lost working time was not allowed.³⁴ By World War I there was a propagandist tenor to the anti-professional debate in New Zealand. "Professional soccer players are not wanted in the trenches... their endurance is less than a third that of the ordinary soldier... their nerves are so acute that they cannot stand gunfire."³⁵

In the early years of the nineteenth century the word "amateur" in Britain had a clear class connotation. It meant merely a gentleman lover of the sport. Clearly there were categories of British sport that operated as class preserves in the nineteenth century. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St Andrews, the Quorn Hunt in Leicestershire, the Marylebone Cricket Club in London and the Royal Yacht Club at Cowes, were bastions of aristocratic influence and upper class exclusiveness. For colonial New Zealand, and especially so in the early pioneer years, there was a vehement disclaimer of class barriers.

There are many sources that illustrate the extent of New Zealand's "working class" society³⁶ although, it should not be forgotten, once the gold rushes of the 1860s created a buoyant economy, there were many opportunities to get ahead. Successful pastoral-capitalists became New Zealand's wealthy class and their influence on recreation and sport in the early part of the twentieth century merits future analysis.

VII

In nineteenth century pioneering New Zealand society there was a tremendous reliance upon the establishment of British imported values and attitudes. The resolution of the imported and the indigenous clearly lay in favour of the pervasive influence of the "homeland". Nevertheless, as has been outlined here, there were marked levels of adaptation and adjustment. By the 1880s an imported heritage had found its colonial expression. "While sports such as cricket, tennis, golf, and polo found their place in colonial society, far more popular were the pursuits that came to be associated with colonial occasions".³⁷ Horse racing meetings were festivals of informality, and fun laced with gambling and strong drink while the hurly-burly of the rugby game became the focal point of community interest. The openness of New Zealand did not lend itself to subservience. Although there were the wealthy and landowning groups in society the outlook of the settlers was typified by self-respect. Even by the depression years of the 1880s, when there was a growing reaction to New Zealand's landed gentry and newly emerging capitalist class, the foundation had been successfully laid for a "cherished colonial ethos of open opportunity for all".³⁸ The rugby club was open to all classes in society, the game itself was simple and easily understood and with the emphasis on group solidarity, rugby became the touchstone of an emerging New Zealand way of life rather than a reflection of the country's British heritage.

NOTES:

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