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Football, Migration, and Industrial Patronage in the West of Scotland, c. 1870-1900

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Abstract

This article examines the history of football, migration, and industrial patronage in the counties of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, Scotland, during the formative years of the Scottish Football Association (1870-1900). It begins with an overview on the formation of clubs and associations in the two counties up to 1900. The article focuses on two specific case studies: one investigates football's relationship to Irish migration in Larkhall, Lanarkshire, the other examines the patronage of football clubs by paternalist coalmasters Bairds of Gartsherrie. Throughout this article, local football is observed in the context of class and religious identity within the two counties, as well as analyses of both the significance and limits of elite patronage in early Scottish football.

This article will utilise a regional-historical approach towards examining the relationship between association football, migration and industrial patronage in the west of Scotland during the period 1870-1900. The histories of migration and industry are inextricably linked to early Scottish – and British – football; and, as early codified Scottish football emerged overwhelmingly from locations of heavy industry, it is important for historians to examine the cultural architecture of Scottish industry and the communities which served it. To that end, this article will contain specific case studies with regard to Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, two heavily-industrialised counties to the south and east of Glasgow respectively. This region, associated with heavy industry (especially coal mining), is known not only for producing some of British football's most successful managers, but for contributing overwhelmingly to the in-migration of Scottish footballing talent to English association football during its formative years.¹ The article will begin with a brief analysis of Scottish football's historiography to date, and an overview of the game in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire during the nascent years of the Scottish Football Association (SFA). The two case studies will investigate football's relationship to class and migration in the Lanarkshire pit town of Larkhall, and the patronage of football clubs by the coal/iron concern William Baird and Company. Throughout this piece there will be a continuous examination of football's place in regional identity, and why football reflected class and

sectarian tensions within the industrial communities of the west of Scotland. The approach applied in this piece is furthermore an empirical one, using previous regional studies of Scottish and British sport as a model for examining sport in specific localities.²

The historiography and social context of Victorian Scottish football

Recent years have seen an uptick in the number of historical examinations of Scottish football. During the 1980s and 1990s, several pioneering quantitative studies on Scottish sport were performed.³ For many years, however, the definitive text on the Scottish game had been Murray's *The Old Firm* (1984), a work examining the history of Rangers and Celtic Football Clubs.⁴ Other studies in Scottish football, particularly those by Finn, Bradley and Walker, critiqued and balanced Murray's work, and sought to give an alternative historiography of the Old Firm.⁵ The highest levels of the Scottish game have thus been well-covered. But in recent years, there has been a greater emphasis on regionally-based phenomena in the Scottish game, as well as examination of the game's institutions. The myriad topics in this now-vibrant field of enquiry have included: the origins of women's participation in Scottish football; the middle-class origins of 'no-hands' football codes in Edinburgh; the creation, maintenance, and motives of the Glasgow Charity Cup competitions; and – perhaps most pertinent to this article – a study of popular literature about junior football in the Scottish central belt, and a biography of a Victorian/Edwardian footballer born in the Ayrshire pit village of Annbank in 1881.⁶ Now that connections between Scottish football and locality are finally being addressed in more recent historiography, the understandable pull of academics towards the Old Firm is receiving a necessary corrective.

At the very least, it is surprising that Ayrshire football has received so little scholarly attention, given that, as the *Glasgow Observer* noted in 1895: 'Ayrshire can lay claim, along with Dunbartonshire, to be the great nursery of Scottish and (it might almost be said) of English football'.⁷ As Lewis states, nineteen of the 54 England-based Scottish professionals banned from participating by the SFA in 1884 were poached from Ayrshire clubs, compared with four from Dunbartonshire, ten from Renfrewshire, twelve from Edinburgh, and six from Glasgow.⁸ In part, the reluctance to examine Ayrshire and Lanarkshire might stem from the counties' lack of success in national football: Cambuslang (1888) and Kilmarnock (1898) were the only finalists to represent Lanarkshire and Ayrshire respectively in the Scottish Cup up to 1900, a small total when compared to Glasgow- and Dunbartonshire- based clubs.⁹ The history of football in the textile and shipbuilding communities of Dunbartonshire will be discussed in another article.¹⁰ However, Ayrshire's and Lanarkshire's failures were certainly not for lack of organisation at county level: the no-hands code was a known quantity in both counties by 1870, and 'folk'

football had a long history as a part of traditional Eastren's E'en fairs at Kilmarnock in the pre-SFA era.¹¹

To an outsider, it would appear that the first formal footballing institutions in the two counties were created by middle-class men and boys. These included Ayr and Hamilton Academies: previous to the institution of the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act, both were noted by contemporary reports as having middle-class student bodies, comprised largely of the children of shopkeepers and related professions.¹² The first association club formed in Ayrshire were Kilmarnock FC, a group of Kilmarnock Academy cricketers-turned-rugby players first organised in 1869, who were persuaded to join in the association game by Glasgow's Queen's Park, and who made the switch to 'soccer' for the maiden campaign of the Scottish Cup in 1873.¹³ Meanwhile in Lanarkshire, Hamilton Gymnasium, a club with close ties to Hamilton Academy, in 1869 became the first club in Scotland to field opponents against Queen's Park. Hamilton Academicals Football and Cricket Club would later be formed by school rector James Blacklock in 1873.¹⁴ More important in the spread of football amongst Scotland's well-off was Ayr Academy, first formed in 1872 – a club which, in several incarnations, would merge with weaker clubs to become formidable local power Ayr FC by 1879.¹⁵ Ayr Academy students in this period included famed Glasgow University athlete, footballer and teetotaler Rev. W.W. Beveridge and future Queen's Park men David Allan and John Smith.¹⁶ Smith is credited with bringing football to Edinburgh University, whose first soccer club – formed in 1878 – was based solely around graduates of Ayr Academy.¹⁷ These schools' early contacts in the nascent Scottish football scene were with Queen's Park – Scotland's first formal association club, formed in 1867 – and their close neighbours and friends, the 3rd Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers, both middle-class clubs with an educated pedigree.¹⁸ These clubs were entirely independent – at least initially – of the middle-class Edinburgh circle surrounding Conservative town councillor John Hope, one that played different variants of no-hands football in Edinburgh up to 1870.¹⁹

It would be unrealistic to assume, however, that the spread of association football within the two counties was due merely to the efforts of self-proclaimed football 'missionaries'. For example, it might be easy to credit John Wallace with the spread of football in Ayrshire. One of Kilmarnock FC's founders, Wallace was the first secretary of the Ayrshire Football Association, and was well-connected within the local business community. Crucially, his own business was based in Cumnock, an Ayrshire mining centre; the town, along with the surrounding colliery villages of Hurlford, Catrine and Tarbolton all had SFA-registered clubs by 1877.²⁰ But, while Wallace may have had the business expertise to run a successful organisation, it is more likely that the Saturday half-day holiday was responsible for giving labourers more leisure time to play football. And, if Cumnock was a centre of local football, this no doubt had as much to do with access to railways as to mere corporate acumen. Scottish railways proliferated in the mid-nineteenth century due to demand from industrial enterprises, most notably coal and iron

businesses, which required greater access to Glasgow and the River Clyde.²¹ While Vamplew states that railways were crucial in 'widening the catchment area' of spectators and participants in sport, the opposite was also true: areas outwith railway coverage struggled to maintain viable football cultures, and were frozen out of county and national fixtures.²² The Ayrshire seaside resort of Largs was one of these places: when Largs Western FC were drawn against Catrine for the inaugural Ayrshire Cup in November 1877, Western were forced to forfeit the game due to the impossibility of travel to the village.²³ Inevitably, footballers in industrial locations had greater access to transport, and therefore competitors. Codified football's 'arrival' in the coalfields of Cowdenbeath, Fife, in the mid- to late-1870s is credited to migrant labourers arriving from Cumnock, not private schoolboys.²⁴

A demonstration of the familiarity amongst the industrial working class with the no-hands code, and an argument against the middle-class 'diffusion' of the game, lies with another one of Queen's Park's first opponents, Airdrie FC (1870). The club was nicknamed the 'Hammer Drivers', and apparently was comprised of Irish players.²⁵ The two Scottish Premier League clubs in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire at the time of writing owe their existences to employees in heavy industry. In Motherwell, the Lanarkshire town dominated in the late nineteenth century by the Dalzell Iron Works and the Lanarkshire Steel Company, Motherwell FC – nicknamed 'the Steelmen' – were created in 1886 through the merger of Alpha and Glencairn FCs, employees of the Alpha Steam Crane and Engine Works and the Lanarkshire Steel Works respectively.²⁶ At the same time, Kilmarnock FC's origins as schoolboy cricketers can be misleading: the club's permanent move away from cricket in the late-1870s ensured that its supporter and player base changed considerably, so much so that by 1888 the club was referred to by the *Kilmarnock Herald* as 'miners'.²⁷

How did the two counties organise football tournaments and associations? County football associations in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire were formed in 1877 and 1879 respectively.²⁸ The Scottish Football League was created in 1890, based largely on England's Football League, and equivalent local competitions were administered throughout Scotland's central belt.²⁹ But the existence of the major clubs and associations is not the whole story with regard to the full participation of the industrial working class in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire football. The incredible participation in the Scottish game was reflected in the multi-tier system of what were termed 'senior', 'junior' and 'juvenile' football clubs. This was not an overnight development, but rather a gradual drift of village and neighbourhood clubs away from competitions dominated by major civic institutions like Kilmarnock and Motherwell FCs; the senior/ junior terminology calcified roughly around 1880, when separate junior associations began to be formed. The term 'junior' does not refer to the age of players; Taylor notes the Scottish appellation as roughly translating to 'semi-professional'.³⁰ The Lanarkshire Junior FA was formed in 1885, and two separate Ayrshire junior bodies – the Ayr Junior FA (1880) and the Kilmarnock Junior FA (1888) united

under one county association in 1889.³¹ The Scottish Junior Football Association (SJFA) was formally created in Glasgow in October 1886, but junior clubs were too numerous to be managed by a national umbrella organisation, and therefore local JFAs played a crucial role in administering national football.³² Professionalism – though long practised secretly – would not be officially recognised by the SFA until 1893, although it had been legalised by the Football Association in England since 1885, as British football moved uneasily towards the adoption of the sport as a commercial, professional enterprise.³³

If even the Ayrshire press noted local ‘mining’ clubs as something ‘other’, the Glasgow sporting newspapers were still further bemused by Ayrshire and Lanarkshire football. The early British sport press, at least initially, were overwhelmingly middle-class, many with private school backgrounds and a firm commitment to amateurism.³⁴ In Scotland, this manifested itself in a subtle bias in favour of Queen’s Park, upholders of the Corinthian ideal: their official history was written in 1920 by Richard Robinson, one of the first athletic editors of the *Glasgow Evening News* in the 1880s.³⁵ Football clubs in industrial communities, by nature of their financial situation, were plagued by volatility, and the press often underestimated the difficulties they faced. The middle-class media, however, and their counterparts on the pitch, were especially frightened of the challenges posed by miners in cup and league matches. *Scottish Athletic Journal* in 1882 gave an excellent summation of the psychology behind their fear:

The ‘Burnfoothill’ Ramblers, the ‘*Common Rangers*,’ (very modest, isn’t it?) the ‘Rankinstone Mountaineers,’ the ‘Galston Blue Bells,’ and many other at one time aspiring teams have ceased to exist in Ayrshire. In one sense, to the ordinary team of standing, the decease of this lot is not to be regretted. Too often it turned out that in visiting the localities where these heroes destroyed leather a horrible field was presented to them, and if it happened to be a cup tie, they got more abuse generally than gate money. In fact, it is on record that many a good team of standing has been thrown out of a cup tie – through bad grounds and personal abuse – in these mining villages, and one very prominent team of this kind has been known to boast... of their heavy charging and bad field.³⁶

Regarding one September 1884 match between two clubs from the Monklands area of Lanarkshire, Drumpellier and Airdrieonians, the *Scottish Umpire* believed that teams outwith Glasgow played a more violent game, stating that fighting on the pitch was ‘an evil which is becoming too prevalent among country clubs’.³⁷ Similar class-tinged language was used by the Newcastle-upon-Tyne press to describe the play and behaviour of collier-footballers in east Northumberland.³⁸ Indeed, play in these villages, as well as the language used by the footballers, may have been rougher than genteel clubs were used to, but they reflected a

dangerous, highly physical work environment of which the media and middle-class clubs may not have been aware.

The print media's sustained – and futile – campaign against professionalism once again placed footballers from the industrial regions surrounding Glasgow in the firing line. With regard to footballers in the north of England, Tischler states that local newspapers used the word 'professional' as a euphemism for 'working-class'.³⁹ With the notable exception of the *Scottish Umpire*, the Scottish print media were venomous towards English professionalism, and to those who went in search of its perceived riches.⁴⁰ As previously mentioned, Ayrshire and Dunbartonshire provided a great many of these football émigrés. The newspapers rarely entertained the notion that such moves had little to do with a desire to enter the arena of professional sport. Around 1860, the wages of Scottish workers were often 20% lower than within comparative trades in England. Low labour costs, indeed, were an incentive for industries with imperial connections to set up factories within the central belt. Low wages, however, were not the only push factor towards migration. By 1871, Scotland was overwhelmingly dependent upon industries that required an export market, producing wild fluctuations in rates of employment.⁴¹ One early Scottish professional in the north of England noted that Scottish footballers took up employment from English clubs – along with additional work – when 'trade' was bad in their home villages.⁴² Unlike Motherwell and Kilmarnock, many local clubs did not make the transition to professional football. Nevertheless, as this region was a conveyor belt of footballing talent to Britain's major clubs, it is crucial to understand the social climate which nurtured local football. This brings us to two case studies which examine football in the context of local life in these two counties: the first will examine the relationship of migration and sectarianism to football in the pit village of Larkhall, Lanarkshire.

The case of Larkhall

Larkhall's communal cohesiveness gave the town a distinctive character in the football world. One cannot talk about community football in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, and especially in Larkhall, without first discussing migration. From 1800 to 1850, the combined population of the two counties doubled to around 400,000, largely due to unprecedented migration, primarily from Ireland. By 1851, 11% of Ayrshire's population was born in Ireland, reaching its peak in Lanarkshire (including Glasgow) at 16.85%. Changes in industry precipitated those in demographics. As key as textiles were to the success of the local economy (especially in Ayrshire), the burgeoning mining industry brought about the greatest physical changes; by the beginning of the twentieth century, the region was producing around 25 million tons of coal annually. In Lanarkshire alone in 1851, 15,580 workers (almost 13% of the county's population) were employed by 139 collieries; by 1920, that number was 62,093 (8%) in 210 coal mines.⁴³

Further migration from Ireland outwith the Famine was fuelled by the explosion of the iron industry linked to coal extraction. The majority, but not all, of these migrants were Catholic. Scottish censuses did not take note of respondents' religions; and thus, it is impossible to get a wholly accurate picture on where Catholic and Protestant migrants settled in the country. There is little doubt, however, that the Irish Protestant population in Scotland increased dramatically from 1876 to 1881, when 83% of Irish migrants arrived from Ulster (and 58.7% of them from counties with clear Protestant majorities). Around this time, there was a sizeable membership increase for the Orange Order, with the mining communities of Coatbridge and Larkhall having a significant number of Lodge offices filled by Irish-born members.⁴⁴

Undoubtedly, Larkhall was a major centre of Protestantism in the west of Scotland. Only 3.4% of colliers married in Larkhall between 1855 and 1875 did so through the Roman Catholic Church, while the local Catholic congregation met in a hotel until the building of a permanent church in 1905.⁴⁵ Larkhall's Protestant homogeneity ensured a level of order that was not present in other localities in the region. Coatbridge in the Monklands, for example, which Campbell compares against the stable Larkhall, was a disaster of urban planning, largely due to the population explosion that followed the booming coal and iron industries in the 1830s. Coatbridge was a major centre of Irish immigration in Scotland; and, unlike other towns and villages in the area, settlement between Catholic and Protestant Irish, as well as native Scots, was highly disorganised, leading to a great deal of violent conflict.⁴⁶ This conflict, inevitably, existed on the football pitch as well.

Larkhall's Royal Albert FC, which exists at the time of writing as a junior club, was in the senior ranks for many years, and its place within Scottish football is revealing. Finn uses Royal Albert – founded in 1878 – as an example of a club from an 'anti-Catholic and anti-Irish' locale, stating that their nickname the 'Royalists' and their red, white and blue colours were proof of Scottish clubs' overt sensibilities regarding their political identities.⁴⁷ 'Royal Albert' refers not just to political loyalties, however, but to patronage; the club, an amalgamation of miners and players from Larkhall and Plotcock, took their name from the yacht of a local cup donor, Captain Boyd of Mafflat.⁴⁸ Where Finn's assertion becomes further complicated is in his contention that Royal Albert were anti-Irish: indeed, *Scottish Sport* in December 1890 seemed to believe otherwise, and treated a Scottish Cup tie between Royal Albert and Celtic at Raploch Park as an internal Irish affair. After a long train ride which saw Celtic's Irish supporters 'full of Parnell and cheap whisky', 'Pertinax' mocked Larkhall and its population, which 'consist[ed] almost exclusively of mining and other labouring classes – mostly Irish'. 'It was therefore', he said, 'a great day for Ireland when the Celtic mingled their followers with those of the Albert'.⁴⁹

When the game was replayed the following week (the original match having been postponed due to a muddy pitch), Royal Albert's supporters stormed the pitch, stopping the action with twelve minutes left and Celtic leading 4-0. The break-in was heavily criticised by *Scottish Sport*; however, the *Hamilton Advertiser* gave a more nuanced view of right and wrong, as well as to who among the supporters was truly 'Irish'. The paper depicted Celtic as charity mercenaries, stating that: 'The Celtic wanted the proceeds to go to charity; it was rather selfish. They might have said their share. The Albert do not draw large crowds regularly.' The paper also stated that during the game: 'Larkhall was besieged with Irishmen... and what would you have them when the Celts were there?'⁵⁰ The local papers, in this instance, made an ethnic distinction between Catholics and Protestant Irish that was not always immediately drawn by outsiders. Royal Albert and its supporters, whether 'Irish' or not, definitely shared an enmity with Catholic opposition. A more appropriate example than the Celtic incident involves the long, drawn-out 1889-90 Lanarkshire Cup struggle with Carfin Shamrock. The third attempt at settling the tie late in January 1890 at Byresknowe Park, Carfin, ended with Clelland of Shamrock being carried off the field, and the referee ordering yet another replay. The tense atmosphere at Meadow Park, Whifflet – site of the fourth attempt at solving the tie – erupted when two players from opposing sides attacked each other, precipitating a pitch invasion, with Shamrock apologising to the referee for bad language allegedly used by their players.⁵¹

The fact that Royal Albert had a well-connected patron – one who could donate a cup and afford a yacht – supports the idea that Campbell refers to as 'class collaborationist values' espoused within the associational world of Protestant Scots and Irish in Scotland's central belt.⁵² Tranter's research in central Scotland, and Bilsborough's research in Glasgow has shown that the overwhelming majority of working-class sport clubs in Scotland were artisanal; Finn makes the connection that 'unskilled', in the west of Scotland, usually meant 'Irish Catholic'.⁵³ In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the relationship between employers in west central Scotland and the various levels of skilled labour in their service was complicated, but not always antagonistic. Artisans were encouraged to participate in friendly societies, charity organisations and building societies. Employers largely did this as a means of maintaining good relations and avoiding work stoppages, as well as gaining the skilled workers' support in employers' attempts to halt the spread of Catholicism and socialism.⁵⁴ Maver places Victorian Scottish sport in a context heavily connected with workplace fraternalism. Friendly societies and fraternities, such as Freemasonry, were partly developed from a feudal burghal system that incorporated trade and craft guilds into the fabric of Scottish towns. This allowed organisations such as the Free Colliers, and even latecomers like the Orange Order, to act as support networks to the working class of the countryside long before non-sectarian trade unions strengthened in the late-nineteenth century.⁵⁵ In Protestant mining communities, there was a strong emphasis on the shared values of Protestant employer and Protestant worker, especially within the Orange Order.⁵⁶ In a community such as Larkhall, football clubs and other similar associations acted as

quasi-welfare bodies for newly-settled Protestant migrants, and helped to maintain a unique identity for workers.

In the case of football, industrialists' patronage of clubs was not forced, but typically requested by the clubs' members themselves, most notably with Renfrewshire's Greenock Morton FC.⁵⁷ Dumbarton FC, meanwhile, was patronised by the Denny family, the Unionist shipbuilding dynasty whose association with the local (successful) football club no doubt helped it win political battles in parliamentary elections.⁵⁸ Patrons' relationships with clubs were not typically ones of management; they were of *association*. It is no surprise to find that Irish Catholics were largely excluded from this circle, and that the loyalties and sensibilities of football clubs from locales such as Larkhall reflected the shared concerns of players and patrons alike. As Finn states, Catholic footballers took up football through their own churches and charities largely because there was little recourse for doing so in the 'secular' world of west of Scotland communities.⁵⁹ The names of football clubs in the region display the sectarian nature of the nineteenth-century culture of the Scottish workplace, and the parallel lives that Protestants and Catholics lived within towns such as Blantyre in Lanarkshire, which had room for both 'Victoria' and 'Celtic' junior clubs.⁶⁰ If footballing patronage represented a social contract between employers and employees in the west of Scotland, however, it is necessary to further examine patronage's overall ideology, and its relative success in transmitting a moral message. The Bairds of Gartsherrie, and clubs based in the villages of their iron works, provide an opportunity to do exactly that.

Football, the Bairds and the Eglinton Iron Company

With football's popularity came its grudging acceptance by employers and politicians in the region, though perhaps not for the same reasons that the working class embraced the game. As Hay states, the mere existence and popularity of the game was not part of a concerted attempt by elites at distracting the Scottish proletariat from worldly concerns; the phenomenon of football's popularity was one that industrialists *responded* to, but not one they necessarily had control over.⁶¹ That did not, however, prevent industrialists from patronising individual clubs. Amongst the unlikely supporters of the association game were the Baird family, the entrepreneurial dynasty behind William Baird & Company Coalmasters and the Eglinton Iron Company, two of the region's largest employers during the Victorian era. The financial, non-managerial support of the Bairds is instructive towards understanding the motivations of paternal employers in making use of a working-class recreation for goals beyond the general welfare of the game. The question remains: what is the ultimate legacy of football's industrial patronage in the two counties?

Coalmasters William Baird & Company were centred in Gartsherrie, near Coatbridge, Lanarkshire. By 1840, the Eglinton Iron Company, the front for the Bairds' iron business, produced 25% of Scotland's pig iron, making it the single largest producer in the world.⁶² Companies like Bairds played their own pro-active role in bringing migrants from Ulster to Scotland; the firm attracted Irish workers through advertisements placed in Belfast newspapers, with the promise of company housing and schooling for workers' children. Brothers James and William Baird, their nephew and successor Alexander Whitelaw, and other business associates recruited the Protestant Irish not only to obtain labour, but also to further their own political and religious aims. In 1873, James donated the 'princely' sum of £500,000 to the Established Church of Scotland 'to promote evangelistic and church work in connection with the Church'. The Bairds were staunch Conservatives, with James representing the Falkirk Burghs (including Airdrie, Hamilton and Lanark) in the UK Parliament from 1851 to 1857, and Whitelaw representing Glasgow from 1874 until his death in 1879.⁶³ James Baird's evangelism was thought to be of a highly robust, 'muscular' order, one heavily tied to his support of the Conservative Party 'in the burgh and counties connected with the works'.⁶⁴ To this end, the Bairds used the threat of eviction from company homes and starvation as a means of ensuring employee loyalty.⁶⁵ Education was considered essential in instilling the employers' values in the community at large. Even after the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act, which provided comprehensive schooling for Scottish children, the Bairds continued to operate their own village schools according to their own religious specifications, largely due to the efforts of Whitelaw.⁶⁶ Whitelaw was a key member of the Glasgow Working Men's Conservative Association, which was successful in its campaign to add an amendment to the 1872 Act allowing religious education in state schools at the request of the community, and his successful 1874 campaign for Parliament in Glasgow was largely based on his support of his 'Use and Wont' clause to the Act.⁶⁷

Kilwinning Eglinton FC was connected to the Eglinton Iron Works. The club, formed in 1893, were nicknamed the 'Furnacemen' due to the proximity of Blacklands Park to the Eglinton Iron Works in Kilwinning, Ayrshire.⁶⁸ In 1899, the address of club secretary R. Craig was listed as being the Eglinton Iron Works.⁶⁹ The *Scottish Referee* noted in 1895 that improvements at the club's ground were subsidised by William Baird & Company, who improved the field, and increased the ground's capacity to 10,000.⁷⁰ In 1898, Eglinton were perceived to be fast outpacing former local power Monkcastle FC in the standings and support, largely because Eglinton had 'at their backs the generous men who carry on the Eglinton Works down there'.⁷¹ As with Dunbartonshire's major clubs, including Dumbarton and Renton, ground provisions provided by local paternalist employers were perceived to have advanced the cause of certain clubs on the pitch.⁷²

Further south from Kilwinning, Lugar Boswell Thistle FC was formed in 1878. In the late nineteenth century this village club was considered a local force in senior circles (at the time of writing, it is still a junior club). The *Scottish Athletic Journal* in 1882 offered a class-based incentive to those clubs wishing to play friendlies against the ‘terriers of the moor’, stating: ‘City teams desirous of seeing a beautiful piece of country, and mining life in reality, would do well to visit Lugar, and they will be rewarded by having their curiosity satisfied’.⁷³ The *Kilmarnock Standard* was particularly intrigued by how well-kept the village seemed, and were positively amazed by the new football field, Rosebank Park, attributing this to the lack of a public house within the village; the pro-temperance Bairds limited employees’ access to alcohol.⁷⁴ It was not simply a lack of a public house, however, that made Rosebank Park beautiful. The park was built on the site of the old Rosebank Mine in 1882, with money provided by Robert Angus, partner of William Baird & Company, who funded the pitch’s completion, and the building of a clubhouse and a fence around the ground.⁷⁵

There is no evidence that either club were *works* clubs; once again, this was association, not management. Nevertheless, the company’s attitude towards sport must be viewed in the context of the firm’s more explicit overtures towards working-class leisure. The Bairds and their partners frequently used sport and recreation, along with education, to build a sense of solidarity amongst their workforce. The firm built workers’ institutes at Eglinton (Kilwinning), Lugar, Muirkirk, Gartsherrie and Twechar. The Gartsherrie Institute had swimming pools and a reading room, while in Lugar there was a reading room, a library, a swimming pond and tables for billiards.⁷⁶ The company also started its own musical bands and Total Abstinence Societies. The connection to patriotism and politics is made more overt through the firm’s involvement in raising an ‘artisan’ Volunteer unit, the 43rd Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers, at Gartsherrie in 1862.⁷⁷ New-money capitalists’ support of Volunteer units during the Victorian era represented aspirations for social control, and many Clydeside industrialists were enthusiastic about using citizen soldiering to build loyalty amongst their employees.⁷⁸ In some cases, the industrial patronage of football went hand-in-hand with Volunteerism: Renton FC’s patron, calico baron and Unionist MP Alexander Wylie, likened both to a patriotic form of ‘social physical exercise’.⁷⁹ In this context,

Kilwinning Eglinton’s and Lugar Boswell Thistle’s non-managerial support from the company would seem to indicate that they, too, were part of the Bairds’ moral mission. Kilwinning was certainly a logical location for the Bairds to link sport and religion, as the town was a centre for both Freemasonry and the Orange Lodge.⁸⁰ Kilwinning Rangers first appeared as a ‘juvenile’ club in 1899, sharing the Baird-built Blacklands Park with Eglinton in Rangers’ first year of existence.⁸¹ Kilwinning’s legendary status as the birthplace of Scottish Freemasonry no doubt had a bearing on the name of this new club. It cannot be a coincidence that a club with Protestant and Conservative affiliations, from a town with similar inclinations, chose the name of Rangers, the Glasgow club pledged to assist the Masonic cause by its Conservative patron,

John Ure Primrose MP, and whose late foundry owner (Whitelaw) was a former Rangers president.⁸²

If social control was the aim of this sporting patronage, it is impossible to analyse its relative 'successes' in forcing local footballers to accept the moral worldview of their patrons. As with Larkhall, it is natural that footballers, supporters and patrons in these communities were pre-disposed to support Protestant organisations such as Rangers in any case. As Catholics faced discrimination from Protestant work and cultural spheres, it is logical that they too would gravitate towards equivalent Catholic associations. This was part of an organic evolution into what Bradley refers to as the 'ethno-religious cleavage' that, in his words, defines modern football in the central belt.⁸³ There is, however, the wider sporting context to consider as well. In the case of the Eglinton Iron Company, and the football clubs which it patronised, there is little evidence of the Bairds or their associates speaking against the evils of professionalism, unlike similar paternalistic football patrons, such as Wylie, the Dennys, and – further afield – West Ham United's Arnold Hills.⁸⁴ Ayrshire and Lanarkshire junior clubs, confined to small localities with a working-class support, were in no position to pay for formal professionalism. More to the point, Tranter states that there is little evidence that elites in Britain during this time period patronised sport clubs with a view to their nuts-and-bolts management.⁸⁵ Elite patronage of sport in lowland Scotland was typically used as much to improve communities' perceptions of employers as it was to change the lives of their employees.⁸⁶ Industrialist-politicians needed not only to win their workers' loyalties, but also their votes, and the patronage of sport would not have hurt them in their quest to win favour amongst the respectable working-class. In the organised chaos of early Scottish football, finding a suitable football pitch was crucial to survival; and, in heavily industrialised locations, the lack of available space, and ease with which ground could be seized for development, doomed many young sporting clubs.⁸⁷ Throughout Britain, the stability of clubs was linked to the availability of work, and working-class clubs often could not afford the capital needed to purchase private grounds.⁸⁸ If the most crucial element of industrialists' support for west of Scotland football clubs was the supplying of *free* private grounds, there is little doubt that these clubs would have had a considerable advantage over those that did not enjoy this patronage. The pragmatic needs of these collier-footballers, then, outweighed the loftier considerations of the patrons. As Holt states, rational recreation schemes were attractive to working-class participants largely because they allowed an opportunity for *sport*; the moral improvement aspects were often ignored.⁸⁹ The Bairds' patronage of football, therefore, may have fed the beast of professionalism, and perhaps that, above all else, represents their contradictory legacy to Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, and Scottish football.

Conclusion

Analysis of football in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, given their close proximity to Glasgow, is necessarily connected to previous historiographical and sociological discourses on the Old Firm, and cannot be divorced from the west of Scotland's history of migration, sectarianism and conflict. At the same time, however, this study welcomes recent attempts to analyse the history of Scottish football beyond Rangers and Celtic, as the two major Glasgow clubs cannot be understood in their proper context without first examining the organic development of codified football throughout Scotland. The gaps in knowledge with regard to the history of Scottish football remain large, and this article takes a step towards addressing the tension between local identities within the greater national football culture. At the same time, it stresses that well-known processes in the historiography of *British* sport, such as rational recreation and industrial patronage, have not been analysed to an adequate degree within Scottish football. It may be difficult to evaluate the relative success of sporting patronage given by firms such as Bairds of Gartsherrie, but this paternalism was nevertheless indelibly linked to migration from Ireland, and the need to formulate a common Protestant identity between owners and workers. The further study of these and other phenomena will help to give historians and practitioners not only a better understanding of regional Scottish history, but also a more complete history of British sport. Footballers from Ayrshire and Lanarkshire played their own role in the development of British football, and one cannot begin to understand the formative years of the codified game without first deconstructing the lives and circumstances of those who played the sport.

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¹ Bill Shankly, Matt Busby and Jock Stein were colliers-turned-footballers who were natives of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. All three were born within fifteen years of each other in the first quarter of the twentieth century: Tony Mason, 'Busby, Sir Matthew (1909-1994)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54785>> [accessed 29 June 2007]; Archie MacPherson, *Jock Stein: The Definitive Biography* (Newbury, Berks: Highdown, 2004); Philip Waller, 'Shankly, William [Bill]', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40246>> [accessed 6 June 2007]; Bill Shankly, *Shankly* (London: Arthur Baker, 1976).

² Neil Tranter, 'The Chronology of Organized Sport in Nineteenth-century Scotland: A Regional Study I – Patterns', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7 no. 1 (May 1990): 188-203; Idem., 'The Chronology of Organized Sport in Nineteenth-century Scotland: A Regional Study II – Causes', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7, no. 2 (September 1990): 365-87; Idem., 'The Patronage of Organised Sport in Central Scotland', *Journal of Sport History* 16, no. 3 (Winter 1989): 227-47; Idem., 'The Social and Occupational Structure of Organized Sport in Central Scotland during the Nineteenth Century', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 4, no. 1 (May 1987): 301-14; Alan Metcalfe, 'Football in the mining communities of east Northumberland, 1882-1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 5, no. 3, (1988): 269-91, Idem., *Leisure and Recreation in a Victorian Mining Community: The Social Economy of Leisure in North-East England, 1820-1914* (London: Routledge, 2006).

³ Wray Vamplew, 'The Economics of a sports industry: Scottish gate-money football, 1890-1914', *The Economic History Review* 35, no. 4, (November 1982): 549-67; Peter Bilsborough, 'The development of sport in Glasgow, 1850-1914' (M.Litt thesis, University of Stirling, 1983); Idem., 'The commercialisation of sport: Glasgow, 1870-1914', *Momentum* 9, no. 2 (1984): 7-13; Tranter, 'Chronology I', 188-203; Idem., 'Chronology II', 365-87; Idem., 'Patronage', 227-47; Idem., 'Social and Occupational Structure', 301-14.

⁴ Bill Murray, *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984, 2000).

⁵ Gerry P.T. Finn, 'Racism, Religion and Social Prejudice: Irish Catholic Clubs, Soccer and Scottish Society – I The Historical Roots of Prejudice', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 8, no. 1 (1991): 70-93; Idem., 'Racism, Religion and Social Prejudice: Irish Catholic Clubs, Soccer and Scottish Society – II Social identities and conspiracy theories', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 8, no. 3 (1991): 370-97; Idem., 'Scottish Myopia and Global Prejudices', in *Football Culture: Local Contests, Global Visions*, ed. Gerry P.T. Finn and Richard Guilianotti (London, Frank Cass, 1999), 54-99; Joseph M. Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Scotland: Culture, politics and football* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995); Graham Walker, '"There's not a team like the Glasgow Rangers": football and religious identity in Scotland', in *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland*, ed. Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 137-59.

⁶ Jessica Macbeth, 'The development of women's football in Scotland', *Sports Historian* 22, no. 2 (November 2002): 149-63; John Hutchinson, 'Sport, Education and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-century Edinburgh: The Emergence of Modern Forms of Football', *Sport in History* 28, no. 4 (December 2008): 547-65; Joyce Kay, 'The Archive, the Press

and Victorian Football: The Case of the Glasgow Charity Cup', *Sport in History* 29, no. 4 (December 2009): 577-600; Joyce Kay and Wray Vamplew, 'Beyond altruism: British football and charity, 1877-1914', *Soccer & Society* 11, no. 3 (May 2010): 181-97; Wray Vamplew, "'Remembering us year after year': The Glasgow Charity Cup 1876-1966", *Record: Revista de História de Esporte* 1, no. 2 (December 2008): 1-27; Alan Bairner, 'Memory and the Literary Imagination: Religion, Politics and Football in Robin Jenkins's *The Thistle and the Grail*', *Sport in History* 29, no. 2, (June 2009): 171-89; Roy Hay, *James 'Dun' Hay, 1881-1940: The Story of a Footballer* (Teesdale, Victoria: Sports and Editorial Services Australia, 2004).

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⁹ Between 1873-74 and 1899-1900, Glasgow clubs won the Scottish Cup seventeen times, coming in second eleven times. Dunbartonshire, meanwhile, had six winners and twelve runners-up: Hugh Keevins and Kevin McCarra, *100 Cups: The Story of the Scottish Cup* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1985), 228-32.

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¹³ David Ross, *Killie: The Official History – 125 Years of Kilmarnock F.C.* (Kilmarnock: Kilmarnock Football Club, 1994), 12-7.

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¹⁹ Hutchinson, 'Nineteenth-century Edinburgh', 547-65.

²⁰ *Scottish Football Association (SFA) Annual 1877-78*, quoted in *A Scottish football review of 1877/78*, ed. Stuart Davidson (Paisley: Stuart Davidson, 2002), 44-5.

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²² Wray Vamplew, *Pay up and play the game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 47-50.

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³⁸ Metcalfe, 'Northumberland', 289.

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⁴³ John Strawhorn, and William Boyd, *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Ayrshire* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1951), 35-6; George Thomson in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: The County of Lanark*, ed. George Thomson (Glasgow: Collins, 1960), 42-3, 114-20, Alan Campbell, *The Scottish Miners, 1874-1939 – Volume One: Industry, Work and Community* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 22.

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⁴⁶ Alan Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners: A Social History of Their Trade Unions* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), 117-21, 178-201.

⁴⁷ Finn, 'Racism I', 82.

⁴⁸ McLellan, *Larkhall*, 80.

⁴⁹ *Scottish Sport*, 2 December 1889.

⁵⁰ *SS*, 9 December 1889; *Hamilton Advertiser*, 13 December 1889.

⁵¹ *HA*, 25 January 1890; *HA*, 8 February 1890; *SS*, 4 February 1890.

⁵² Campbell, *Scottish Miners*, 256-69. Campbell also examines specific coal mining villages, such as Annbank and Larkhall, where coalmasters and their officials lived alongside their workers.

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⁵⁶ Campbell, *Scottish Miners*, 343-4.

⁵⁷ Industrialist James Morton's patronage was initially requested – by skilled working-class footballers – for the aptly-named Greenock Morton FC at the club's 1874 formation, largely due to Morton's stand on temperance: Vincent P. Gillen, *Greenock Morton 1874-1999* (Greenock: McLean Museum & Art Gallery, 1998).

⁵⁸ McDowell, "'Social physical exercise'?".

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⁶⁴ *Ayr Observer* ed., *Reminiscences of Auld Ayr* (Ayr: Ayr Observer, 1907), 67-70.

⁶⁵ Campbell, *Lanarkshire Miners*, 205-27.

⁶⁶ Andrew MacGeorge, *The Bairds of Gartsherrie: some notice of their origin and history* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1875), 93-4.

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⁶⁸ Jim Cochrane, *Amongst the ruffs and tuffs: the history of Kilwinning Rangers FC, vol. 1* (self-published, 1999), 1-5.

⁶⁹ *SFA Annual, 1899-00*, 68.

⁷⁰ *Scottish Referee*, 2 August 1895.

⁷¹ *SR*, 17 January 1898; *SR*, 28 January 1898 (quote).

⁷² McDowell, ““Social physical exercise”?”.

⁷³ *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 29 September 1882; *SAJ*, 6 October 1882.

⁷⁴ *Kilmarnock Standard*, 26 August 1882; Campbell, *Lanarkshire Miners*, 224.

⁷⁵ Dane Love, *The History of Auchinleck, Village and Parish* (Cumnock: Carn Publishing, 1991), 123; Robert D. Corrins, ‘Robert Angus’, in *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography*, Vol. 1, ed. Slaven and Checkland, 17-8.

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⁷⁹ Alexander Wylie of Cordale, *Labour, leisure and luxury: a contribution to present practical political economy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884). 9 (quote); Idem., *Physical Recreation: An address delivered under the auspices of the Scottish Clerks’ Association* (Perth: Cowan & Co., 1890), 10. For more information on Wylie, see McDowell, ““Social physical exercise”?”.

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⁸¹ Cochrane, *Ruffs and tuffs*, 13-4.

⁸² Strawhorn and Boyd, *Ayrshire*, 304; Gerry P.T. Finn, ‘In the grip? A psychological and historical exploration of the social significance of freemasonry in Scotland’, in *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland*, ed. Walker and Gallagher, 179-80.

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⁸⁴ Charles P. Korr, ‘West Ham United Football Club and the beginnings of Professional Football in East London, 1895-1914’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 13, vol. 2 – Special Issue: Workers’ Culture (April 1978): 211-32; McDowell, ““Social physical exercise”?”.

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