

Uncle, Grandpa and the Boys: Re-imagining Relationships and
Masculinities within 1890s English Cycling Clubs

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Abstract

This thesis explores the distinctive intergenerational relationships which existed between middle-class male members of 1890s English cycling clubs. Drawing on Gary Alan Fine's sociological research into small societal groups, it examines how clubs formed, maintained and protected shared group cultures which enabled their members to indulge common enthusiasms for cycling and desires for sociability with each other. By exploring these processes, it outlines how cycling clubs were sites in which clubmen of different ages remodelled and re-worked intergenerational interactions that middle-class men typically experienced in home and work environments. The relations present within clubs, are recognised to have provided unique opportunities for members in different life stages to explore a variety of ways in which they could 'do' and 'position' their masculinity. These discussions are used to develop existing historical research into mid to late nineteenth-century middle-class sports clubs, provide new insights into the lives of middle-class men living through this period, and outline new ways in which historians can approach studies of voluntary sporting institutions.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Introduction

*'It is no uncommon thing to see the man of forty, in company with a party of younger men, acting in a manner that seems positively childish, when considered, though, perhaps, at the time the circumstances would hardly warrant you thinking so...When you see bearded men-rulers among men we may say- beyond the prime of life, vaulting five barred gates, turning somersaults, and otherwise sacrificing the dignity and decorum that is generally supposed to pertain to age for the frolicsomeness of youth, you cannot help believing that cycling does in reality give men a new lease of life.'*¹

*'The polytechnic racing boys of to-day look up to Leach as a kind of benevolent father figure, whose advice must be followed at any cost, and the good show, made by the Polyites in their recent match with the Catford, was to a great extent, due to the fatherly solicitude of Leach.'*²

Taken together, these two quotes capture in a nutshell why 1890s English cycling clubs are such intriguing and interesting sites of historical study. The carefree, relaxed and 'childish' behaviours evidenced by the older man in the first quote, certainly do not marry up with the 'benevolent father figure' described in the second. In tandem, these two sources highlight how cycling clubs were sites simultaneously removed from, and attached to, other areas of their members' lives.

Such an understanding is the perfect starting point for any study of these institutions. The fact that cycling club life was focussed around groups of men jointly indulging common enthusiasms for cycling, meant that the activities which members engaged in, and relationships they experienced, could be well removed from their home and work lives. However, as with most family units, and many workplaces, members of cycling clubs shared a similar class status, belonging to the middle and lower middle classes. Similarly to family life, many of their activities were focussed around eating and drinking together. And as with both these institutions, they were home to individuals whose position on the lifecycle might vary considerably.

This range of ages is evidenced in every club journal which form the source base for this thesis. The Hull St. Andrew's Cycling Club (Hull S.A.C.C.) was home to members who had

¹ *Cycling*, Issue 120, (May 6th, 1893), 276

² *Cycling*, Issue 127, (June 24th, 1893), 386

engaged in competitive sports since the mid-1860s, as well as a number of ‘youngsters’.³ The Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club (Bristol B.T.C) contained young men ‘scarcely out of their teens’, whilst also possessing a number of ‘boys of the old brigade.’⁴ Census records reveal that the ages of members of the Anfield Bicycle Club (Anfield B.C.) ranged from late teens to early forties.⁵ The photo on the cover of this thesis of the Nottingham based Boulevard Cycling Club, and the two photographs of the Peterborough Cycling Club in the appendices, further highlight the intergenerational mixing which existed with 1890s cycling clubs.

It is not the variety of ages within their memberships which make these institutions so distinctive. As well as the home and the workplace, there were plenty of other spaces in which middle-class men in different life stages would mix and interact with each other during the late nineteenth century, such as schools and universities. Rather, the distinctiveness of these clubs stemmed from the relationships which existed between members in dissimilar stages of the lifecycle. As is suggested in the two quotes above, cycling clubs were sites in which middle-class men of different ages would often form close bonds with other, and enjoy relationships defined by sociability, admiration and affection.

Of course, similar types of intergenerational relationships would have been present in these other environments. The fact that the older member of the Polytechnic C.C. was praised for his ‘fatherly solicitude’ clearly evidences this point. Older men in more senior positions at workplaces could also have ‘solicitously’ guided and mentored their younger colleagues. The same is true of school teachers and university professors, and the students under their charge.

However, previous studies of these sites have focussed far more on the tensions which existed between middle-class men in different stages of the life cycle. Paul Deslandes’ *Oxbridge Men* has highlighted the uneasy relationships which were often present between Oxbridge dons and students during the late nineteenth century. Deslandes argues that Oxbridge undergraduates in this period cast their dons as older and decidedly inferior

³ *The Cyclorn: Official Organ of the Hull St. Andrew’s C.C.* 3, Issue 2, (May, 1896), 4

⁴ *The Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Monthly Gazette* 1, Issue 4, (April, 1897), 29

⁵ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, ‘Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1892’ 15, *1901 UK Census* (database online). Ukcensusonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 10th 2015]

versions of manhood, contrasting their own vigour and alertness to their dons supposed lethargy and feebleness.⁶ He states that,

‘The administrative and academic power of the college fellow, tutor, dean and university official was always seen as a threat to youthful manhood. Undergraduates...expressed a general distrust of all dons, regardless of chronological age or athletic propensities, and in doing so they fostered generational tensions and emphasised the impossibility of egalitarian friendships between these two segments of the university community.’⁷

Whilst recent studies of middle-class Victorian fathers have argued that they rarely conformed to the cold, tyrannical ‘paterfamilias’ found in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, it is still recognised that they rarely enjoyed the same loving, nurturing relationships with their children as their wives.⁸ These differences are commonly seen to be a consequence of changes which occurred during the late eighteenth century, when shifting modes of employment brought about by the Industrial Revolution increasingly saw fathers working in occupations which took them away from the home. Whereas previously it had primarily been a husband’s responsibility to run and manage a household, from the early nineteenth century onwards this was a task increasingly taken on by their wives, as men’s identities became strongly associated with the shop, the office or the factory.⁹ These changes led to middle-class mothers spending far more time with their children, and having greater responsibilities for their spiritual, physical and educational welfare than their fathers.¹⁰

Although John Tosh has established that Victorian middle-class fathers could enjoy intimate relationships with their children, his three other models for middle-class fatherhood in this period, in absent, distant and tyrannical, suggest very different intergenerational relationships to those evidenced in the two articles quoted at the beginning of this Introduction.¹¹ Tosh recognises that the long periods of time middle-class fathers would

⁶ Paul Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 49-78

⁷ *Ibid*, 60

⁸ Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers, ‘Introduction’, in *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4-6

⁹ Natalie McKnight, ‘Introduction: Undermining the Victorian Father’, in *Fathers in Victorian Fiction*, ed. Natalie McKnight. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 1-6

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1-6

¹¹ John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 93-99

spend away at their workplaces, coupled with their uncertain role in the home, placed barriers in the way of them forming close, intimate relationships with their children.¹²

There has been very little research exploring the workplace relationships which existed between middle-class men of different ages during the nineteenth century. However, the authority and power often held by men in later life stages in these environments, means it is highly unlikely that their relations would have been defined by the same friendship and sociability as was the case in cycling clubs. This is evidenced in the work of Christopher Hosgood, who has highlighted how late Victorian shop-keepers would closely monitor the behaviours and activities of their employees in a manner which is described as 'tyrannical'.¹³

As such, I would argue that the informal and sociable intergenerational relationships which existed within 1890s cycling clubs, distinguishes these institutions from other sites in which middle-class men of different ages would interact and spend time together. This assertion immediately raises the question, of what were the factors which encouraged and facilitated this intergenerational bonding and sociability? Initial answers to this query can be found by returning to one of the articles quoted at the beginning of this Introduction. Before describing the 'frolicsome' activities of the 'man of forty', *Cycling* stated how,

'It is not unusual to see the swarthy, bearded man, the sober head of a business house, perhaps, and perchance the father of grown up children, cutting capers that would put to shame the rollicking fledgling of some sixteen summers.'¹⁴

Clearly, joining up with his local cycling club was something which enabled the 'swarthy, bearded' man to move beyond identities which he constructed in his home and workplace. Rather than being 'the sober head' of his business, or the responsible father to grown up children, he was instead able to act in a way which was much more carefree and less restrained. As such, it can be recognised that cycling clubs were spaces in which middle-class men of different ages both enjoyed distinctive relationships with each other, and also built identities which could differ markedly to those which they constructed in their homes or workplaces.

¹² Ibid, 93-99

¹³ Christopher Hosgood, 'Mercantile Monasteries: Shop Assistants and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *The Journal of British Studies* 38 (July, 1999), 322-352

¹⁴ *Cycling*, Issue 120, (May 6th, 1893), 276

However, as discussed previously, it cannot be said that these were sites completely removed from the home or work lives of members. That the older member of the Polytechnic C.C. was described as a 'benevolent father figure', highlights how cycling clubs were sites in which members would build identities and experience interactions which bore parallels to other areas of the lives. This is a point further evidenced in the familial nicknames given to members of the Stanley C.C., which ranged from 'the boys', to 'uncle' and 'grandpa'.¹⁵

This thesis will therefore be arguing that cycling clubs were not spaces in which members simply escaped identities which they constructed, or relationships that they experienced, in home and work environments. Rather, it will conceptualise these institutions as being spaces in which members re-worked, re-imagined and negotiated, interactions and selves from these two other settings.

However, before exploring and making further sense of these processes, it is first necessary to place 1890s cycling clubs within their broader historical context. Any study of these institutions needs to recognise how they were a part of two much broader developments and social changes which occurred during this period. The first is the huge surge of popularity which was enjoyed by cycling over the course of this decade. Whilst there were roughly 500,000 cyclists in Britain in 1890, this number had increased to around a million and a half by 1895, and remained at a high level until the decade's end.¹⁶ Secondly, cycling and cycle clubs, were also a part of a much larger mid to late nineteenth-century phenomenon, in the increased popularity of sports and leisure activities amongst members of middle classes.¹⁷

By placing cycling clubs within their wider historical context, this thesis is also looking to expand its scope and reach. Discussions so far have conceptualised cycling clubs as being distinctive spaces when compared to middle-class homes, workplaces and universities. However, if similarities can be recognised to have existed between these institutions and other voluntary sports clubs which emerged in this period, then this suggests that these arguments could be extended to include these other institutions.

¹⁵ *The Stanley Gazette: The Official Organ of the Stanley Cycling Club* 8, Issue 91, (August, 1899), 57

¹⁶ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', *Victorian Studies* 21, (Autumn, 1977), 50-51

¹⁷ Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain*, (London: Harper Press, 2006), 454-459

The next section will now begin these discussions by analysing how the growth in middle-class leisure activities during the mid to late nineteenth century, impacted on the popularity of cycling during the 1890s.

Cycling and mid to late Nineteenth-century Middle-class Leisure

Whilst it cannot be said that leisure was 'invented' during the mid-nineteenth century, it is recognised that this period saw leisure activities becoming increasingly plentiful, sought after, institutionalised and controversial.¹⁸ It was, by and large, the middle classes who were the instigators and beneficiaries of this growth, which continued up until and after the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁹

'Leisure activities' can be defined as pastimes and amusements which took place in the free time of individuals, and were valued for the enjoyment, refreshment and satisfaction which they brought to them.²⁰ As such, when discussing the growth of middle-class leisure activities during this period the historian is referring to a diverse range of different pursuits and recreations, which ranged from seaside holidays, excursions to large scale department stores, and visits to music halls and theatres.²¹ Cycling was an activity which belonged to a specific branch of mid to late nineteenth-century leisure, in sports games and pastimes. John Lowerson has highlighted how, from the 1870s until the end of the century, members of the middle classes increasingly used their leisure time to participate in sports such as football, cricket, rugby union, hockey, tennis, rambling, golf and cycling.²²

There are a range of reasons why both sporting, and wider forms of leisure activity, became increasingly popular amongst members of the middle classes from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Greater access to free time, particularly for young men whose entry into the world of work was delayed to a much greater extent than their fathers by public schooling and possibly university education, is recognised to have played a significant

¹⁸ Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England, Rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885*, (London: Methuen, 1987), 68-69

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 1-7

²⁰ Alexander Sager, 'The Philosophy of Leisure' in *The Routledge Handbook on Leisure Studies*, ed. Tony Blackshaw. (London: Routledge, 2013), 4-5

²¹ Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, 72-73

²² John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993)

role.²³ As well as this, increased prosperity and rises in real wages amongst members of the lower middle classes, also gave them the means to participate in various leisure pursuits and pastimes. Writing in 1886 T.H.S. Escott commented that,

‘A social movement quite as remarkable as that which has been going forward among the better portion of the English middle class, has been taking place, and is now steadily progressing on a lower social stratum. This class would once have been called the small shopkeeper class, and its present condition is almost the growth of yesterday...Only the commercial prosperity of England could have generated the new order from which the chief patrons of theatres and outdoor amusements are drawn.’²⁴

Growing enthusiasms for leisure were also sustained by efforts to embed various pastimes and recreations within wider middle-class value systems. As outlined by Peter Bailey, leisure represented a problematic area for the Victorian middle classes. For a class whose identity had been established on the value and imperative of work, activities which gave a heavy emphasis to promoting individual enjoyment and pleasure, represented an invitation to indolence and prodigality. These were qualities which middle-class society had traditionally associated with an ill-disciplined working class, and an overly privileged aristocracy. As such, there was a need to marry leisure and its enjoyment with values of hard work, self-improvement and self-discipline.²⁵

A wide range of methods were used to achieve this end. A consequence of the processes of industrialisation which had occurred over the course of the nineteenth century, was a huge growth in the numbers of England’s population living in urban environments. Within mid to late nineteenth-century English society, it was widely held that the rapid growth and expansion of cities had dramatically increased the pace and stresses of modern life. Cities were often associated with pollution, over-crowding, and modes of employment which afforded few opportunities for rest and relaxation.²⁶ It was commonly held that before the Industrial Revolution, when the majority of England’s population had lived and worked in rural areas, daily life had been much less hurried and strained.²⁷

²³ Peter Bailey, ‘A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures’: The Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure’, *Victorian Studies* 21, (Autumn, 1977), 10

²⁴ T.H.S. Escott, ‘A Foreign Resident’, *Society in London*, (London, Chatto and Windus, 1886) 166-167, quoted in Peter Bailey, ‘A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures’, 10

²⁵ Peter Bailey, ‘A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures’, 7-28

²⁶ Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*, (London: Phoenix, 2005)

²⁷ Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions*, 419-425

As such, forms of sporting and leisure activity, could be portrayed as deserved and necessary, as they allowed individuals to return to work and duty refreshed and relaxed after spending time away from industrial environments. The term 'recreation', commonly used to describe middle-class leisure pursuits, presented these pastimes not as idle amusements, but rather as a means of re-newing and 're-creating' men and women.²⁸

Cycling was a leisure activity which easily tied into these discourses. Because it took individuals out of towns and cities and into the countryside, it would often be presented as an effective means of dealing with the pressures of modern urban life. Commenting on cycling in 1893, the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Harcourt, stated that, 'Many thousands of persons with small incomes are thus able to obtain fresh air and exercise, and to escape the influences of large towns, and also to carry on with less labour and fatigue their ordinary lives.'²⁹

Similarly, the Dean of Bristol stated his support for cycling in 1897 because of the ways in which it allowed individuals to escape, 'the present strained life and high pressure', and allowed them to return to their occupations in, 'the spirit in which all honest and earnest men would wish to do their work', after being, 'refreshed and recreated in spirit'.³⁰

As such, the growing numbers of middle-class cyclists during the 1890s, can be understood as being underwritten and supported by factors which fed the wider take-up of middle-class leisure activities in the mid to late nineteenth century. Increased prosperity and access to leisure time, is commonly recognised to have enabled large numbers of men and women from the lower middle classes to take to cycling during the 1890s.³¹ As well as this, the fact that cycling was a pastime which could take individuals away from urban environments and into the countryside, meant it easily tied into wider discourses used to justify members of the middle classes participating in leisure activities during this period.

However, the popularity which cycling enjoyed during the 1890s was not simply the result of these societal level changes. Equally, if not more important, were a series of technological developments which took place during the late 1880s. 1885 saw the invention of the 'safety' bicycle, whose design we would recognise today, with two equal sized wheels, a chain driven rear wheel and a diamond frame. These developments were a

²⁸ Peter Bailey, 'A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures', 21-23

²⁹ *Cycling*, Issue 104, (January 14th, 1893), 448

³⁰ Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette 1, (January 1897), 3

³¹ David Rubinstein, *Cycling in the 1890s*, 60

marked improvement on previous 'ordinary' bicycles, or 'penny farthings'. Compared to 'ordinaries', safeties were much more comfortable to pedal, and as suggested by the name, posed far fewer risks to the person riding them.³² As well as this, they could easily be mass produced, which over the course of the 1890s, saw the price of bicycles fall sharply. Whilst cheap 'safeties' might have cost £10 in 1890, a growing second hand market saw prices fall to as low as £2 by the decade's end, putting them within reach of members of the working classes.³³

This period also saw the invention of pneumatic tyres and the introduction of the detachable tyre, which allowed individuals to fix punctures themselves. Pneumatic tyres did much to increase the popularity of cycling, as machines fitted with them required much less exertion of pedal, and were far more comfortable to ride than they had been previously.³⁴ Writing on pneumatic tyres in 1896, F.T. Bidlake argued that,

'No other invention has so popularised cycling, for it reduced the labour of propulsion enormously, and minimised the jolting of the wheels to an extraordinary extent'.³⁵

Another key event which fed the growing numbers of cyclists in this period was also the so-called 'cycling craze', which occurred roughly from 1895 to 1897. During this period members of the aristocracy took to cycling in great numbers, which quickly led to cycling becoming a highly fashionable form of leisure activity.³⁶ That members of the aristocracy were riding bicycles in very public spaces such as Battersea and Hyde Park, was the cause for a huge amount of public discussion, and did much to override previous arguments that cycling was not a 'respectable' activity for middle-class women to engage in.³⁷

As such, whilst cycling can be understood as being a part of the growing interest and take-up of leisure activities by members of the middle classes during the mid to late nineteenth century, as a pastime it also had a number of distinctive and distinguishing factors. During the 1890s the numbers of cyclists, both male and female, grew at a much faster rate when compared to other sports and pastimes. This rapid increase in the popularity of cycling,

³² David Herlihy, *Bicycle: The History*, (London: Yale University Press, 2005), 182-247

³³ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', 57-58

³⁴ Andrew Ritchie, *King of the Road, An Illustrated History of Cycling*, (London: Ten Speed Press Berkeley, 1975) 132

³⁵ F.T. Bidlake, *Cycling*, (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd, 1896) 15

³⁶ Zoe Lawson, 'Wheels Within Wheels- the Lancashire Cycling Clubs of the 1880s and '90s', in *Lancashire Local Studies in Honour of Diana Winterbotham*, ed. Alan Crosby. (Preston: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 1993) 137-141

³⁷ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', 49-50

combined with the fact that, unlike sports such as football, cricket and tennis, it took place in highly public spaces, meant that during the 1890s it represented a hugely commented on and discussed form of leisure activity.³⁸ An article written for the socialist publication *The Clarion* in 1897, proclaimed how,

‘The man of the day is the Cyclist. The press, the public, the pulpit, the faculty all discuss him. They discuss his health, his feet, his shoes, his speed, his cap, his knickers, his handle-bars, his tyres, his rims, and everything that he is, down unto his shirt. He is the man of *Fin de Cycle*- I mean siècle. He is the King of the Road.’³⁹

These discussions raise the question of how did the activities of cycling clubs, compare to other middle-class voluntary sporting organisations in this period? Did the popular attention given to cyclists in the 1890s, combined with the highly public nature of cycling as an activity, mean cycle clubs represented a distinctive type of middle-class sports club? The next section will begin to explore these questions by introducing the sources which will form the basis of this thesis, in the monthly gazettes of cycling clubs from this period.

Cycling Clubs and Club Gazettes

The historian can find out a huge amount about cycling club life during the 1890s by studying the monthly ‘gazettes’ of clubs active in this period. These were fairly small scale publications, typically around six to twelve pages long per month, and were aimed primarily at their own membership. Gazettes were used to inform members about upcoming club events, and dedicated much of their space to articles written by members detailing excursions and activities which had occurred over the course of the previous month.

However, whilst gazettes were principally inward facing publications, copies would often be made available to a wider audience. Many cycling clubs sent their gazettes to other clubs whom they were familiar with, and copies may have also found their way to local newspapers and nationwide cycling magazines.⁴⁰ The first publication of the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C., received positive reviews from the *Bristol Mercury*, whilst articles from the

³⁸ Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain*, 454-459

³⁹ ‘King of the Road’, *Clarion* (October 18th, 1897) 6, quoted in Geraldine Biddle-Perry, ‘Fashioning Suburban Aspiration: Awheel with the Catford Cycling Club, 1886-1900’, *The London Journal* 39, (November 2014) 198

⁴⁰ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (February, 1897), 10

monthly gazette of the Stanley C.C. would be commented on in national cycling publications, such as *Bicycling News* and *Cycling*.⁴¹

The more general readership of club gazettes could lead to articles detailing the less 'reputable' activities engaged in by members being vetted. Arthur Dowling, upon being made editor of the Stanley C.C.'s monthly publication, described how 'from time to time I have been censured by the club's executive' for producing articles deemed to be 'prejudicial' for the 'interests of the club.'⁴² However, whilst this wider circulation may have resulted in gazettes not fully reporting on all the activities engaged in by members, the fact that articles were, first and foremost, written by members for members, means that these publications provide very revealing, vivid and lively accounts of 1890s cycling club life.

This thesis will draw on the gazettes of clubs who were based throughout England, with the aim of providing a nationwide picture of the goings on of cycling clubs active during this period. The proceeding chapters will analyse the gazettes of the Stanley C.C. from Derbyshire, the Tottenham C.C. and Argus B.C. from London, the Bristol B.T.C, and the Hull S.A.C.C., along with the rule books of the Knowle C.C. from Bristol and the Canterbury C.C. Although rule books were far less detailed than club gazettes, they provide an effective overview of how members were expected to engage in their club's activities. The annual circular of the Anfield Bicycle Club (Anfield B.C.) from Liverpool, an end of year publication which succinctly summarised the club's activities from the previous year and listed their active members, will also be studied.

Finally, analysis of these club publications will run alongside a regular use of articles which appeared in *Cycling*, the largest English cycling magazine from the 1890s, which had a peak readership of 41,000.⁴³ *Cycling* frequently ran pieces and features which detailed the goings on of clubs, and as such helps provide an even broader picture of cycling club life during this period.

What light then do these sources shed on questions raised at the end of the previous section? How did 1890s cycle clubs compare to other middle-class sports clubs? The sources listed above do all reveal that the activities of clubs were heavily influenced by one of the most distinguishing features of cycling in this period. However, this was not the huge

⁴¹ Ibid, 10 and *Cycling*, Issue 114, (March 25th, 1893) 182

⁴² *Stanley Gazette* 5, Issue 60, (January, 1897), 101

⁴³ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', 49

amount of public debate which surrounding cycling, nor the fact that it took place in highly public spaces. Rather, it was the unique nature of cycling as a form of physical activity.

On the one hand, because bicycles are vehicles which allow their user to cover large distances whilst requiring relatively little physical exertion, they can be enjoyed in a leisurely and relaxed manner. More sedate forms of cycling both allow individuals to fully appreciate the countryside which they are passing through, and also to engage in other hobbies and enthusiasms, such as photography, sight-seeing and botany. At the same time, it is possible to cycle in a manner which is much more energetic, focussed around either racing against others, or looking to reduce the amount of time which it previously took you to cover a certain distance, as style of cycling commonly described as 'scorching' in the 1890s.⁴⁴ These two different uses of the bicycle were recognised in a *Cycling* editorial published in 1894, which stated how,

'Whilst the racing brigade are to be seen along the mainways, fiercely and emulatively scorching for all they are worth, the roadsters, with mudguards, wallets, cameras and sticks all on, are to be found in numbers, quietly ambling down the tree-arched lanes.'⁴⁵

Cycling clubs during the 1890s looked to cater for the different enthusiasms which their members had for riding bicycles. The central feature of clubs in this period were 'club runs', which were weekly events running from March to October, in which members would go on a group ride, typically twenty to sixty miles in length over the course of a Saturday afternoon. 'Runs' would usually involve fifteen to twenty-five members of a club, and would nearly always include at least one stop for food and drink at a pub or an inn. As was stated by a member of the Argus B.C.

'The raison d'être of cycling clubs is the pleasure attendant on quiet country runs. It is the great end, or should be the great end and aim of every club.'⁴⁶

To ensure that members found pleasure on 'quiet country runs', cycling clubs would often give a heavy emphasis to members cycle at a leisurely pace which they did not find to be too strenuous or over-exerting. To achieve this end, clubs such as the Hull S.A.C.C., Knowle C.C. and Canterbury C.C. appointed a club captain, who would set a moderate pace which

⁴⁴ Phillip Mackintosh and Glen Norcliffe, 'Men, Women and the Bicycle: Gender and Social Geography of Cycling in the Late Nineteenth Century', in *Cycling and Society*, eds. Dave Horton, Paul Rosen and Peter Cox. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 153-163

⁴⁵ *Cycling*, Issue 170, (April 21st, 1894), 216

⁴⁶ *The Argus Bicycle Club Gazette* 2, Issue 13, (October 31st, 1891), 150

all members were expected to conform to.⁴⁷ Captains would also be responsible for arranging breaks, which members could use as opportunities to sit down and socialise whilst smoking pipes, as well as indulging their enthusiasms for activities such as photography, zoology and botany.

Other clubs gave more opportunities for members to engage in forms of fast paced cycling over the course of runs. Many clubs implemented the same model as the Bristol B.T.C., who had a fast and a slow division who took different routes to pre-arranged destinations.⁴⁸ Members of the Tottenham C.C. and Stanley C.C. and would also be given the freedoms to go off 'scorching' over the course of runs. An article in the Tottenham C.C.'s gazette described how during one of their excursions,

'All went well till we were near the Boar's Head when a stranger whizzed past us; the look then went from one to the other, as much to say 'Shall we?' then just one began to draw out, then another and it ended in a general dust up until the stranger was hauled up and identified. The 'craving' being satisfied, we gathered up our scattered members and resumed our journey.'⁴⁹

However, even those clubs who looked to prohibit 'scorching' on club runs still provided other opportunities for members to indulge their desires to engage in competitive forms of cycling. Most cycling clubs offered opportunities for members to win 'badges', which were awarded to those who were able to cover a set distance in a certain amount of time. For instance, the Hull S.A.C.C. awarded a 'hundred miles badge' to any member who was able to travel this distance in under twelve hours.⁵⁰ Clubs might also come together to arrange 'race meets', in which their members would compete against each other on a hired out race track.⁵¹

The wide range of activities engaged in by members of 1890s cycling clubs, I would argue distinguishes them from other middle-class sporting associations from this period. Whilst all sports have the potential to be enjoyed in a more competitive or leisurely manner, cycling clubs were institutions which could accommodate individuals with vastly different needs and wants in ways in which other organisations would have not been able to.

⁴⁷ *Canterbury Cycle Club, Rules and Byelaws 1893-94*, (Canterbury: Cross and Jackman, 1893), 7

⁴⁸ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 6, (June 1897), 52

⁴⁹ *The Tottenham Cyclist. The Official Organ of the Tottenham Cycling Club* 1, Issue 6, (August, 1897), 4

⁵⁰ *Cyclorn* 1, Issue 6, (October 1894), 4

⁵¹ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 3, (March 1897), 22

Unlike team sports such as football, cricket and rugby, the main activities of clubs, in 'club runs', did not require members to compete against an opposition. This gave far more scope for members to participate in their club's excursions in a leisurely, relaxed manner, and also use them to engage in other hobbies such as botany, photography and zoology. At the same time, the fact that the bicycle could be used as a competitive vehicle distinguished cycling clubs from rambling clubs, whose activities lent themselves far less to forms of individual competition. Although athletics clubs would have afforded similar opportunities for members to race against others, they would not have enabled them to engage in leisurely, relaxed activities in the manner of cycling clubs.

I would argue that these multiple uses of the bicycle, was a central reason why cycling clubs were institutions which contained members in various stages of the life cycle. This feature of cycling allowed clubs to cater for members who possessed varying levels of fitness, and wanted to use their bicycles to engage in a range of different activities. The Bristol B.T.C. recognised that their club would appeal to both 'the jovial gentleman blessed with the gregarious spirit of mankind' who could enjoy 'the excursion parties, picnics and teatable gossip', as well as the 'the young man scarcely out of his teens', who would possess, 'The spirit of emulation, and the desire to vie with his fellows, and to surpass them on the road, the path or in other directions'.⁵²

This is not to say that members in their thirties would not have also wished to 'vie with their fellows'. Rather, it is to recognise that the range of possible uses of the bicycle, meant that membership of cycling clubs would have appealed to men of a broader range of ages, abilities and interests, than would have been the case with other middle-class sports clubs active in this period.

This raises the question of to what extent can arguments made in this thesis be extended to other middle-class sports clubs active during the mid to late nineteenth century? Do the differences outlined above mean that 1890s cycling clubs are institutions which fall outside other studies voluntary sporting institutions in this period? Exploring these questions will be the focus of the next section.

Cycling Clubs and other Voluntary Sporting Associations

⁵² *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 4, (April 1897), 29

It can firstly be recognised that although members of cycling clubs were able to engage in a particularly diverse set of activities, this does not mean that other middle-class sports clubs would have not also contained members of a range of ages. Sports such as cricket and tennis have traditionally been played by men in various stages in the lifecycle.⁵³ Although there is a need for further research in this area, it can be acknowledged that intergenerational mixing would have, to a certain extent, existed in a number of other sports clubs and institutions.

As well as this, I would argue that there would have been noticeable similarities in the relationships which existed within 1890s cycling clubs and other voluntary sporting institutions. Caution is needed before arguing that mid to late nineteenth-century middle-class sports clubs were sites in which a common set of intergenerational relationships existed. However, it can be confidently argued that the relationships between members of cycling clubs, would have borne noticeable similarities and parallels to those present in other middle-class sports clubs from this period.

Firstly, it can be confidently argued that cycling clubs were primarily middle-class institutions. During the 1890s cycling was an activity predominately engaged in by the middle and lower middle classes.⁵⁴ Compared to working class men and women, they were much more likely to be in a financial position to afford the costs of purchasing a bicycle. Combined with their greater access to paid holidays, and the sedentary nature of their occupations, this meant that during the 1890s 'it was the middle classes who had the time, money, and desire to take up cycling in large numbers'.⁵⁵

These factors strongly contributed to the fact that members of cycling clubs in this period were typically men from middle-class backgrounds. Geraldine Biddle-Perry's recent study of the Catford Cycling Club highlights how members of this institution were men from the middle and lower middle classes, working in occupations such as mercantile clerks, managers, journalists and commercial artists.⁵⁶ Census records of the Stanley C.C. also reveals that members were drawn from similar backgrounds, working as clerks, insurance

⁵³ Joseph Levy, 'Leisure and Retirement in the New Age Wave Society', *World Leisure and Recreation* 34, (1992), 5-9

⁵⁴ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', 58-59

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 58-59

⁵⁶ Geraldine Biddle-Perry, 'Fashioning Suburban Aspiration', 193

agents and tailors.⁵⁷ Cycling clubs can therefore be conceived as institutions who belonged to the wider world of mid to late nineteenth-century middle-class sports clubs.

Secondly, as with most of these institutions, the activities of cycling clubs typically took place in all male environments. Although tennis clubs may have had a mixed membership, and leisure activities such as croquet could involve both men and women, middle-class sports clubs in this period are recognised to have been 'primarily masculine affairs'.⁵⁸

This is not to say the activities of cycling clubs would always take place in all-male environments. Clubs would typically organise 'Ladies Days' at least once a year, in which the wives, sisters and fiancées of members would accompany them on a group ride, or meet them at a pre-arranged point before spending an afternoon together, often in the grounds of a country house. As well as this, one of the results of the growing numbers of female cyclists during this period, was that many previously all-male clubs began to welcome female members, and created 'women's sections' within their club.⁵⁹

However, by creating a separate section of the club for female members, male members were able to carry on engaging in club activities in homosocial environments. 'Ladies days' were also infrequent events, and club journals suggest that these were excursions which many male members would look to avoid.⁶⁰ The all-male nature of 1890s cycling club life, places these organisations alongside most other middle-class voluntary sporting institutions active in this period.

Thirdly, similarly to other middle-class sports clubs, the relationships between members of cycling clubs were strongly influenced by a common enthusiasm and interest in the physical or sporting activity which they were engaging in. Although members might have looked to engage in a wide range of different activities on their bicycles, they would have all possessed a common interest in cycling, and a willingness of give up their time and money to engage in their clubs' activities. As with other sports clubs, meeting up with like-minded individuals to engage in an activity which was a source of mutual pleasure and enjoyment, greatly facilitated sociability and camaraderie between members.⁶¹ This can be seen in an

⁵⁷ *Stanley Gazette* 8, Issue 88, (June, 1899), 1901 UK Census (database online). Ukcensonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 10th 2015]

⁵⁸ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 189

⁵⁹ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', 69

⁶⁰ *Argus Bicycle Club Gazette* 2, Issue 5, (June 27th, 1891), 54

⁶¹ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 187-189

article titled, 'A model club run and how we enjoyed in', which appeared in *Cycling* in 1892. The writer of the piece described how,

'Everybody connected with this club run thoroughly enjoyed himself. It was marvellous how well we all got on together, how we agreed on all subjects, both connected with the sport and pastime of cycling, how we all coincided on the beauties of the scenery we passed through, and how we all seemed to enjoy it spontaneously. Amidst the Surrey hills with their soft verdure and brilliant foliage, a halt was made, a pipe smoked, and reminiscences of prior club-runs raked up and exhaustively dealt with.'⁶²

It must also be recognised that this friendliness and conviviality was not the unexpected outcome of members' shared interests. Sports historians have long recognised that a defining feature of sports clubs is the focus they give to members relaxing and enjoying themselves whilst in each other's company. Because their activities take place during men and women's leisure time, there is a shared desire amongst members to socialise and enjoy themselves in each other's company. They are, in the words of Holt and Mason, 'quiet harbours of casual exertion and sociability.'⁶³

Cycling clubs during the 1890s conform to these models. These were institutions which looked to promote sociability between members by not only holding weekly 'runs', but also 'tours' throughout the year, in which members would spend a few days cycling further afield, whilst staying overnight in inns and hotels. As with most middle-class sports clubs active in the mid to late nineteenth century, a regular feature in the calendars of cycling clubs were also 'smoking concerts', in which members would spend an evening singing comical and risqué songs whilst drinking and smoking heavily.⁶⁴ The ways in which 'smokers' facilitated sociability and conviviality between members of cycling clubs was recognised in an article which appeared in the gazette of the Argus C.C., which described how,

'The chief ingredients of a good smoking concert are plenty of smoke, high-class singing, jovial companions and sufficient liquids to combine these together in one fellowship.'⁶⁵

⁶² *Cycling*, Issue 83, (August 20th, 1892), 66

⁶³ Richard Holt and Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain 1945-2000*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 38

⁶⁴ Simon Brown, 'Early Cinema in Britain and the Smoking Concert Film', *Early Popular Visual Culture* 3, (2005), 165-178

⁶⁵ *The Argus Bicycle Gazette* 2, Issue 14, (November 14th, 1891), 161

Taken together, I would argue these similarities mean that cycling clubs should be understood as organisations which belonged to and were a part of the wider growth in middle-class voluntary sporting institutions during the mid to late nineteenth century. Possessing this understanding does much to expand the scope and reach of this thesis. It allows it to both interact with other histories of sports clubs, and look to develop this field of historical research, which is recognised to be under-studied and under-theorised.

Richard Holt's 1989 study, *Sport and the British*, recognised that sports clubs were sites which have often been 'neglected' by historians.⁶⁶ These arguments were furthered by Jeffrey Hill in 2002 when he argued that the functions and effects of sports clubs, 'have not been subject to a great deal of scrutiny by historians'.⁶⁷ Nearly a decade later, in 2011, he retained this opinion, as he stated that sports clubs remain a 'neglected field', which represent, 'one of the gaps in our knowledge of the history of sport.'⁶⁸

A 2013 special edition of *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, which focussed on, 'The Sports Club in History', again acknowledged that these institutions represent an under-conceptualised area of historical research. Wray Vamplew's article, *Theories and Typologies: A Historical Exploration of the Sports Club in Britain*, argued that,

'There has been relatively little British academic research exploring sports clubs in aggregate as sociocultural, political, or economic forces. There have been many histories of individual clubs in many sports...but the authors, often themselves members of the club, tend to focus on events at the club rather than having a broader contextual view.'⁶⁹

The reasons why sports clubs remain a neglected field of academic research I would argue does, to a large extent, stem from the strong association they have with facilitating conviviality and sociability between members. This association can feed a perception that sports clubs are primarily being sites of escape, focussed around allowing individuals to escape day-to-day pressures and identities. Hamish Telfer's study of late nineteenth century Scottish Harriers Clubs has argued that,

⁶⁶ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 346-47

⁶⁷ Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 144

⁶⁸ Jeffrey Hill, *Sport in History: An Introduction*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 49

⁶⁹ Wray Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies: A Historical Exploration of the Sports Club in Britain'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, (2013), 1569-70

‘For most Scotsmen sporting sociability had long provided a potentially cathartic outlet, an escape from the seriousness of work, from household and family affairs, and from the potential prison of ‘respectable behaviour.’’⁷⁰

From this perspective, it is difficult to outline how sports clubs are institutions which are relevant to other fields of historical research. If they are conceptualised as being cut-off from the home, the workplace and ‘respectable behaviours’, then there is a danger of presenting clubs as having little to contribute to wider areas of historical study.

Moreover, such a perception does not fully account for the nuances highlighted at the beginning of this Introduction. Certainly, the fact that the activities of cycling clubs were focussed around promoting conviviality between members, does much to explain why these were sites in which a distinctive set of relaxed and sociable intergenerational relationships existed. However, by themselves these arguments cannot explain why members would be described in familial terms, which strongly suggests that the relationships between members of different ages resembled those which existed in middle-class homes in this period.

How then can the historian account for the overlaps, as well as the differences, between 1890s cycling clubs and the home and work lives of members? To explore this question, the next section will begin by exploring John Tosh’s research into nineteenth-century middle-class masculinities.

John Tosh and Middle-Class Masculinities

Tosh’s research into middle-class masculinities during the Victorian period is heavily informed by an understanding that in modern Western societies, men showcase and affirm their masculinity in three specific social contexts. These are argued to be the home, the workplace, and all-male associations such as cycling clubs.⁷¹ Tosh’s model is one which has been widely accepted and drawn upon by historians and sociologists in the twenty years since its original formulation, and can be used to develop arguments from the previous section.⁷²

⁷⁰ Hamish Telfer, ‘Ludism, laughter and liquor: homosocial behaviour in late-Victorian Scottish harriers clubs’ in *Disreputable Pleasures: Less Virtuous Victorians at Play*, eds. Mike Huggins and J.A. Mangan. (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 193

⁷¹ John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *History Workshop* 38, (1994) 184-187

⁷² Neil Penlington, ‘Masculinity and Domesticity in 1930s South Wales: Did Unemployment Change the Domestic Division of Labour?’, *Twentieth Century British History* (2010) 1-19, Valerie Pedlar, ‘The

Tosh's work on masculinities is informed by the research of Judith Butler, who has argued that gender is not something one 'is' but is rather something one 'does'. Whilst individuals can be said to be either male or female in a biological sense, Butler argues that they do not inherently possess the qualities and attributes which their society recognises to be either 'masculine' or 'feminine'. Rather, they learn what it is to 'be' 'manly' or 'feminine' by interacting with wider societal understandings or 'discourses', which outline acceptable and desirable ways for men and women to behave.⁷³

However, if individuals are not born 'manly' or 'feminine', this raises the question of why is it that they will come define and understand themselves through their gender? Butler argues it is only by interacting with others, that we are able to build a gendered sense of self. The process of 'being' manly, is one which requires men to 'enact' or 'showcase' recognised 'masculine' qualities to others, and then have them affirm their possession of these attributes.⁷⁴

For example, living in a society in which energy and physical strength are recognised 'masculine' qualities, I can 'be' manly by finding ways of demonstrating these qualities to others, such as by being the first to reach the top of a hill when out cycling with a group of friends. Having others recognise that I am the fittest and fastest member of the group, in turn allows me to assert my possession of acknowledged 'manly' qualities, and is a means by which I can affirm my 'masculine' identity.

Butler's work recognises that the environment and audience to whom people 'enact' gendered qualities, will change the ways in which they 'do' their gender. The relationships that men have with others, strongly influence which 'manly' qualities they will 'perform' or showcase to them.⁷⁵ H.L. Malchow's research into Victorian businessman can be recognised to draw on these arguments when he states that,

'The middle-class person was not defined by the traditional norms of a single status group, and possessed no recognisable corporate identity. There was, instead, a multiplicity of partial or one-dimensional relationships, each claiming for a specific purpose some part of

Most Dreadful Visitation': Male Madness in Victorian Fiction, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006) 16 and Eva Illouz, *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Examination*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012) 71-72

⁷³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Tenth Anniversary Edition*, (London: Routledge, 2012) vii-xxvii

⁷⁴ Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Construction: An Essay in Phenomenology and Femininity Theory', *Theatre Journal* 40, (December, 1988), 519-531

⁷⁵ Sarah Salih, *Judith Butler*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 62-64

the whole person. The Victorian bourgeois...created for himself layered identities- he was one thing at this club, another in the bosom of his family and so on.⁷⁶

The argument that men will 'be' manly in different ways depending on the environment they find themselves in, is supported by the notion of 'multiple masculinities', which states that in any society there are a wide range of different qualities and behaviours which are considered to be 'manly'. 'Masculinity' is not a uniform or coherent concept, but rather one which is multi-faceted, containing multiple understandings, or 'discourses' of what it means for me to 'be' manly.⁷⁷

Tosh's model closely ties into these discussions. Because men experience a different set of relationships in homes, workplaces and all-male associations, when spending time in each of these sites they will 'do' their masculinity in distinctive and unique ways. Moving between these different social contexts, allows men to explore and try out new ways in which they can 'position' their gender, as they experience a new set of relations with others.

I would therefore argue that Tosh's formulation provides an excellent conceptual tool for exploring and further developing arguments made earlier in this Introduction. It highlights that the relationships which existed between members of clubs, which both resembled but also differed from those which middle-class men would have typically experienced in home and work environments, would have enabled them to re-work, develop and re-imagine 'manly' identities which they built in these two other settings.

Such an understanding will give this thesis its two main focusses. The first is an attempt to make sense of the relationships which existed between members in different stages of the life cycle. What were the factors which meant that members of different ages would relate to each other in ways which would mirror middle-class homes and workplaces? By contrast, to what extent did the fact that members shared common enthusiasms for cycling, and desires to enjoy their leisure time, change and alter these relationships and interactions?

The second, will look to explore how these distinctive sets of relations created opportunities for members in different life stages to develop and re-imagine 'manly'

⁷⁶ H.L. Malchow, *Gentleman Capitalists: The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessman*, (Basingstoke: MacMillan Academic and Professional Ltd, 1991), 8

⁷⁷ Dianne Richardson, 'Youth Masculinities: Compelling Male Heterosexuality', *The British Journal of Sociology* 61, (2010) 738-739, Chris Brickell, 'Masculinities, Performativity and Subversion: A Sociological Reappraisal', *Men and Masculinities* 8, (2005), 24-39

identities which they would have constructed in their home and work lives. To what extent were cycling clubs sites in which members would remain connected to ‘masculinities’ which they would have typically built in these two other environments, and to what degree did they create opportunities for members to explore and practice new ways in which they could ‘do’ their masculinity?

This thesis will draw strongly on the work of Tosh when exploring these processes. As well as providing the model discussed above, from 1991 to 2005, Tosh produced a number of highly influential studies on nineteenth-century middle-class masculinities, with the most noticeable being his 1999 book *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*.⁷⁸ As such, his work offers an excellent overview for any study exploring the masculinities constructed by men from the middle classes during this period.

However, it must be recognised that there are limitations to using Tosh as a means of examining how members of 1890s cycling clubs interacted with and negotiated discourses of middle-class masculinity. Whilst Tosh has recognised that the interactions between men in all-male associations will be defined by ‘competition and camaraderie’, he has not produced a detailed study of these institutions to support and further develop this assertion.⁷⁹ His model of ‘competition and camaraderie’, is one not sufficiently complex to examine the intergenerational relationships which existed within clubs, and the processes by which members of cycling clubs would re-work and develop ‘manly’ identities which they constructed in other areas of their lives.

Other historians have explored in much greater detail the masculinities constructed by members of middle-class sports clubs during this period. For instance, Geraldine Biddle-Perry’s recent study of the Catford Cycling Club from 1886-1900, examines how members of this institution constructed ‘manly’ identities through their use of fashionable leisure clothing.⁸⁰ Biddle-Perry argues that the outfits and uniforms worn by members of the Catford C.C., such as ‘military styled jackets and caps’,

⁷⁸ John Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?’, 179-202, John Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrialising Society: Britain 1800-1914’, *Journal of British Studies* 44, (April 2005), 330-343, John Tosh, ‘Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 455-472 and John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain*, (London: Pearson, 2005)

⁷⁹ John Tosh, ‘Hegemonic masculinity and the history of gender’ in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* eds. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 54

⁸⁰ Geraldine Biddle-Perry, ‘Fashioning Suburban Aspiration’, 187-204

'Referenced links with both a contemporary fashionable masculinity and the cachet of aristocratic equestrianism in response to wider shifts in popular consumer habits and more transient style trends.'⁸¹

A different approach is taken in Melanie Tebbutt's, 'Rambling and a Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Peak, 1880s-1920s' and Peter Hansen's 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain'.⁸² These articles explore how the physically demanding activities of these institutions, enabled their members to affirm their possession of normative middle-class 'masculine' attributes such as physical strength and vigour, and mental toughness and resilience.⁸³

Each of these works provide valuable insights into the 'masculinities' constructed by members of middle-class sports clubs in the mid to late nineteenth century. However, they all take a different approach to the one which will be used by this thesis. None of the articles listed above explore in great detail the relationships which existed within clubs, instead giving a much greater emphasis to their physical activities, or the outfits which their members wore. As such, they have a limited use when looking to make sense of the processes by which members of cycling clubs would use the distinctive set of intergenerational relations that were present in their institutions, to re-work 'manly' identities which they would have constructed in home and work environments.

When analysing these processes, this thesis will draw not on the work of a historian, but rather Gary Alan Fine, a sociologist who has spent much of his academic career studying small societal groups and associations. The final section to this Introduction will outline how the work of Fine provides a useful conceptual tool for exploring both the relationships which existed between members of cycling clubs in the 1890s, and the identities which they built.

Gary Alan Fine and 'Idiocultures'

⁸¹ Ibid, 201

⁸² Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and a Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Peaks, 1880s-1920s', *The Historical Journal* 49, (December, 2006), 1125-1153 and Peter Hansen, 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 34, (July, 1995), 300-324

⁸³ Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and a Manly Identity', 1132-1144 and Peter Hansen, 'Albert Smith', 304-324

Fine's studies of small societal groups began in 1979, with an article exploring the activities, structures and relationships which existed within little league baseball teams.⁸⁴ Since then, he has produced a number of works which have further analysed a variety of 'tiny publics', from mushroom collectors to members of online gaming communities.⁸⁵ Cycling clubs from the 1890s conform to Fine's basic definition of a small group, in that they were collectives in which members knew each other as distinctive individuals.⁸⁶ Fine argues that it is these close, personal relationships which define small groups, and it is through these interactions that groups create their own distinct cultures, which he terms 'idiocultures'. Fine defines a small group's idioculture as,

'A system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs shared by members of an interacting group, to which members refer and employ as a basis for future interactions. Members recognise that they share experiences, and these experiences can be referred to with the expectation that they will be understood by other members, thus being used to construct a social reality for the participants.'⁸⁷

Fine's concept of 'idioculture' highlights that when members of a cycling club met up for a club run on a Saturday afternoons, the ways in which they related to each other, and the behaviours they engaged in, were strongly influenced by a common group culture, or 'system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs'. For example, the 'idioculture' of the Hull S.A.C.C., who had a club captain controlling the pace of members, was different to that of the Tottenham C.C., whose members might often go off 'scorching'. Whilst the 'system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' gave members of the Tottenham C.C. the freedom to race and compete whilst on club runs, the same was not true of the Hull S.A.C.C., whose members would have been aware that such behaviours would be widely considered as inappropriate by their fellow clubmen.

Drawing on discussions from earlier in this Introduction, it can be recognised that members of 1890s cycling clubs would commonly look to form 'idiocultures' which enabled them to both find enjoyment and satisfaction in their leisure time, and also socialise and bond with

⁸⁴ Gary Alan Fine, 'Small Groups and Cultural Creation: The Idioculture of Little League Baseball Teams', *American Sociological Review* 44, (October, 1979), 733-745

⁸⁵ Gary Alan Fine, *Shared Fantasy: Role Playing Games as Sociological Worlds*, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002)

⁸⁶ Gary Alan Fine and Brooke Harrington, 'Tiny Publics: Small Groups and Civil Society', *Sociological Theory* 22, (September, 2004), 344

⁸⁷ Gary Alan Fine, 'The Hinge: Civil Society, Group Culture and the Interaction Order', *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77, (2014), 7

each other. These themes can be seen in an article which appeared in the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C. The author argued that members should, in future, engage in club runs in a more leisurely and relaxed manner, stating that,

'To find oneself miles from anywhere, with blue skies overhead and the mossiest of banks inviting a loll, a smoke, and a quiet chat with congenial clubmates- to experience these things is to taste the real sweets of the cyclists existence.'⁸⁸

The writer of the piece recognised how lolling of mossy banks whilst smoking pipes was both a pleasurable activity, and one which would help promote friendly and sociable relations between members. He used the article to argue that this was an activity which should be incorporated into the system of 'knowledge, beliefs, behaviours of customs' of the club, as it would help ensure that members would find gratification through their cycling excursions, and at the same time would encourage convivial relationships between them.

The article reflects Fine's argument that whilst the shared experiences of members help construct a 'social reality' for them, not all experiences of a group are absorbed into their 'idioculture'. Rather, members are continually debating which experiences should form the basis of their future actions.⁸⁹ The fact that the member who wrote this piece was looking to persuade other members to come round to his point of view, highlights how the 'idiocultures' of clubs were the product of constant negotiation and deliberation between those who were a part of a particular institution, and did not arise spontaneously from the shared experiences and wants of members.

As such, Fine's notion of 'idiocultures' highlights to the historian how the friendly and convivial relationships which existed between members of clubs, would have been a part of a much broader set of interactions and relations. It is from this perspective that his work provides an excellent conceptual tool for understanding how cycling clubs were sites in which members would experience relationships and interactions which were both removed from, but at the same time attached to middle-class homes and workplaces. Fine's own studies of voluntary leisure organisations have explored how the processes by which members of these institutions create, maintain and protect shared group cultures, means the relationships which exist between members will be much more complex than being

⁸⁸ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 4, (April, 1897), 26

⁸⁹ Gary Alan Fine, 'The Sociology of the Local: Action and Its Publics', *Sociological Theory* 28 (2010), 355-376

defined by a shared enthusiasm for the activity they are engaging in, or common desires for sociability.

For example, in *Morel Tales*, which examines the activities of small groups of mushroom collectors, Fine outlines how certain members are required to take on extra responsibilities to ensure the successful running and maintenance of their clubs.⁹⁰ Fine dubs these individuals as ‘sociability managers’, who are responsible for organising meetings between members, choosing where their ‘forays’ take place and then securing the permission to use pieces of land from park authorities or private landlords. He recognises that creating ‘idiocultures’ which enable groups of mushroom collectors to indulge their enthusiasms for mushrooming, and desires for sociability with each other, necessitates some members managing positions of added authority and responsibility.⁹¹

From such a perception, the historian can begin to understand why cycling clubs in the 1890s were sites in which a familiar, yet distinctive set of intergenerational relationships existed between middle-class men. Creating ‘idiocultures’ which enabled members to socialise, relax and bond with each other would have seemingly at the same time, required certain members to take on roles of added authority and responsibility. If it was older members who took on these roles, then this suggests that the structures of clubs would have resembled middle-class family units and workplaces from this period, as members in later stages of the life cycle would be recognised as being more senior and authoritative than those younger than themselves.

The first chapter of this thesis will explore these themes in much greater detail. It will examine the processes by which members of cycling clubs created, sustained and protected ‘idiocultures’ which both allowed them to form convivial and sociable relationships with each other, and enabled members to indulge their shared enthusiasms for cycling. By doing so, it will look to outline how the relationships and interactions which existed between members of different ages would have both drawn on models which could have been found in middle-class homes and workplaces, but would also have moved on and re-shaped these models.

The second chapter will then further examine the work of club officers, who as will be outlined in Chapter One, played crucial roles in the running and maintenance of cycling

⁹⁰ Gary Alan Fine, *Morel Tales: The Culture of Mushrooming*, (London: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 174-176

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 174-176

clubs in the 1890s. It will explore how the work of officers, and the relationships they experienced with their fellow clubmen, created opportunities for members to re-work and develop 'manly' identities which middle-class men would have typically constructed in home and work environments. As was discussed in the previous section, when studying the masculinities constructed by members of middle-class sports clubs in the mid to late nineteenth century, historians have often focussed on the physical activities and goings on of these institutions. By examining the work of club officers, this chapter will therefore look to provide new insights into the range of masculinities which were constructed by members of sports clubs in this period.

Finally, Chapter Three will explore the masculinities which members of clubs constructed when participating in their clubs' cycling excursions. These discussions will further draw on the work of Fine and his concept of 'idiocultures'. From an understanding that members of clubs were creating their own, distinct small-group cultures, it can be recognised that the ways in which individuals 'positioned' their gender would have been closely related to the 'idioculture' of their club. The process of creating 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', necessitated members to collectively form shared understandings of which behaviours were and were not 'manly'.

This chapter will therefore look to explore the reasons why members understood certain qualities and traits as being acceptably and desirably 'manly' during club runs and tours. By examining the masculinities which members build when participating in these activities, it will aim to both further analyse the distinctive set of intergenerational relationships which existed within cycling clubs, and outline the importance and appeal of these institutions to those who were a part of them.

Chapter One- Forming Idiocultures, Facilitating Enthusiasms and Promoting Sociability

*'Man is said to be a gregarious creature; and therefore he must have a club. Whenever two or more persons are found with similar tastes and kindred pursuits, they straightaway form themselves into a club. The basis of club life is sociability following similarity of pursuits, and no club can last long if it abandons the first law of its existence.'*⁹²

The purpose of the first chapter of this thesis is to begin exploring the complex set of relationships, and in-particular, intergenerational relationships, which existed within 1890s English cycling clubs. As was discussed in the Introduction, cycling clubs during this period were sites in which middle-class men in different life stages would interact and relate to each other in ways which both resembled, but also differed from, models which could be found in middle-class homes and workplaces.

The last section of the Introduction highlighted how the work of Gary Alan Fine, and his concept of 'idiocultures', can be used to make sense of these processes. Fine's sociological studies of small societal groups, demonstrate how members of these institutions will create their own distinct cultures, or 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', which strongly influence how members both engage in group activities, and interact with each other.⁹³ There are noticeable parallels between the quote above, which appeared in *Cycling* in 1896, and Fine's own writings on 'idiocultures', in which he states,

*'At the inception of any group, an idioculture does not exist; however, the formation of a culture may occur from the opening moments of group interaction. When individuals meet, they begin to construct a culture by asking for names and other biographical points which can be referred to subsequently. Eventually idioculture becomes self-generating, and direct solicitation and reciprocal information are no longer necessary for social solidarity. Over time, rules are established, opinions expressed, information exchanged, and members experience events together.'*⁹⁴

It has been recognised that the 'idiocultures' of cycling clubs during the 1890s were, as suggested by the article which appeared in *Cycling*, heavily focussed around their members' enthusiasms for cycling, and desires for sociability with each other. By arranging

⁹² *Cycling*, Issue 306, (November 28th 1896), 395

⁹³ Gary Alan Fine, 'The Hinge', 5-13

⁹⁴ Gary Alan Fine, 'Small Groups and Culture Creation', 737

weekly 'club runs' which involved regular stops for food and drink, organising 'race meets' and holding social events such as smoking concerts, clubs created 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' which both catered for their members' varied interests in cycling, and desires to experience friendly, convivial relationships with each other.

As previously discussed, Fine's work on 'idiocultures' provides an excellent conceptual tool to make sense of the complex relationships which existed between members in different life stages. His studies provide a means of exploring how clubs created and sustained sociable relationships between members, and how this would have in-turn made their intergenerational relations more relaxed and convivial than those which usually existed in middle-class homes and workplaces.

At the same time, by drawing on Fine the historian can recognise that interactions between members, extended beyond their shared enthusiasms for cycling and desires for sociability with each other. The processes of creating, maintaining and protecting the 'idiocultures' which catered for these interests, would have introduced a range of other aspects to their relationships, which could connect them to home and work environments. As was discussed in the Introduction, Fine's studies of mushroom collectors highlights how the successful running and maintenance of these organisations relies on certain individuals taking on roles of extra responsibility and authority, as they are required to organise and structure their club's activities.⁹⁵

This chapter will analyse two particular ways by which members of 1890s cycling clubs sustained and protected the 'idiocultures' of their institutions. The first is the 'gatekeeping' tactics employed by clubs, and the measures they took to manage and control their memberships. In his studies of The Mason Family in America, Fine talks about the importance of boundary maintenance for maintaining small group cultures.⁹⁶ The introduction of individuals who want to engage in activities in a different manner to pre-existing members, will inevitably threaten and potentially undermine a group's 'idioculture'. Carefully controlling who is allowed to participate in group activities, is therefore a means of maintaining and protecting shared 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs'.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Gary Alan Fine, *Morel Tales*, 174-176

⁹⁶ Gary Alan Fine, 'The Mason Family: The Folklore Traditions of a Small Group', *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 18, (January-April, 1982), 48-50

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 48-50

Discussions in the first half of this chapter will draw on and further develop these arguments by examining how members of cycling clubs ensured their activities took place in both socially exclusive, and all-male environments. It will explore how these measures both helped promote sociability and conviviality between members, but would also have meant that their interactions could remain connected to other environments in which middle-class men spent time together.

The second half will then examine the hierarchies and organisational structures of cycling clubs, and the processes by which certain members were required to handle positions of extra authority and responsibility. These discussions will both outline how club officers played a crucial role in the basic running and maintenance of their clubs, and look to explore how the responsibilities they held, and the relationships they experienced with their fellow clubmen, would have compared to authority figures in middle-class homes and workplaces.

Managing Memberships and Homosociality

To become a member of a cycling club during the 1890s was no easy process. Club gazettes, and articles in *Cycling*, reveal that prospective members often had to pass through a strict selection process, which required them to be ‘proposed’ by two existed members, and submit an application form to a club’s committee. The rules of the Anfield B.C. stated that,

‘Candidates for membership must fill up a form provided by the Club, which must also be signed by a proposer and seconder, (both having been active members of the Club for at least two months) and forward same to the secretary, who shall place it before the next committee meeting.’⁹⁸

Moreover, cycling club committees could take a hardnosed approach to new members. Biddle-Perry’s study of the Catford Cycling Club reveals that ‘undesirable recruits’ were turned away with some frequency,⁹⁹ whilst *Cycling* commented how the Stanley Club was one where membership was ‘strictly limited’.¹⁰⁰ These structures resembled many other middle-class sports clubs active in this period, who also had committees responsible for

⁹⁸ *Anfield Bicycle Club, Report and Accounts*, 1894, 26

⁹⁹ Geraldine Biddle-Perry, ‘Fashioning Suburban Aspiration’, 193-194

¹⁰⁰ *Cycling*, Issue 411, (December 3rd 1898), 465

making decisions on prospective members.¹⁰¹ Gentleman's clubs and debating societies also implemented similar processes to vet and manage their memberships.¹⁰²

One of the results of cycling clubs, and other voluntary middle-class voluntary organisations taking these measures, was that they ensured members engaged in activities in exclusively male environments.¹⁰³ As was discussed in the Introduction, although cycle clubs would sometimes form their own 'ladies sections', creating these two distinct sections allowed male members to continue to participate in club runs and other social events in homosocial settings.

The exclusion of women from club activities, can be recognised as being a means by which clubs created 'idiocultures' that facilitated and promoted sociability between members. That the presence of women could detract from members enjoying relaxed, convivial relationships with each other can be seen in a poem which appeared in the gazette of the Stanley C.C., which described how participating in a 'ladies day' would alter the behaviours which were usually indulged in by their fellow club mates. As was outlined in the Introduction, 'ladies days' were events which involved members' wives, sisters and fiancées either joining them for a group ride, or meeting them for an afternoon of quiet sociability in environments such as the grounds of a country house. The poem described how for the average member,

'When a ladies day draws near, he leaves off smoking, gives up beer, and dons immaculate Sunday 'gear', all for the sake of the ladies.'¹⁰⁴

It can be recognised that the reasons for these changes in behaviour, would have stemmed from the strong association which existed between middle-class women, and discourses of 'respectability' during the late nineteenth century. In this period ideologies of 'respectability', which focussed on individuals behaving in a self-improving, disciplined and socially responsible manner, were predominately constructed and maintained by middle-class women.¹⁰⁵ Mike Huggins has stated that,

¹⁰¹ Hamish Telfer, 'Ludism, laughter and liquor', 193

¹⁰² Antonia Taddei, 'London Clubs in the Late Nineteenth Century', *University of Oxford: Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History* 28, (April, 1999) 13-14

¹⁰³ Amy Milne-Smith, 'A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentleman's Clubs of London, 1880-1914', *Journal of British Studies* 45, (October, 2006) 796-818

¹⁰⁴ *The Stanley Gazette* 6, Issue 66, (July, 1897) 1

¹⁰⁵ Mike Huggins, 'More Sinful Pleasures? Leisure, Respectability, and the Male Middle Classes in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History* 33, (2000) 587

'Women acted as ideological filters and transmitters, upheld local 'standards', developed the appropriate language and exercised class-based judgements about associational life.'¹⁰⁶

As such, the involvement of women in club activities, would have done much to alter the behaviours and activities of clubmen. As was recognised in the poem which appeared in the gazette of the Stanley C.C., participating in a 'ladies day' resulted in members behaving in a much more 'respectable' and decorous manner. Creating exclusively male environments was therefore a means by which members of clubs built 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' which encouraged more relaxed and boisterous forms of sociability between them.

The inclusion of women in club activities could also detract from group conviviality and camaraderie in other ways. An article in *Cycling* described the changes which had occurred during their club's weekly 'runs' after they had invited a female member to join their institution. The piece stated how,

'Lately a subtle change has taken place amongst us...Several of the fellows have discarded their old suits and appear in immaculate rigouts; extraordinary politeness and suspicious glances have taken the place of good fellowship which formerly existed between us.'¹⁰⁷

It is unclear whether the article was written from the author's actual experiences, or if they invented the events described. However, even if the piece was fabricated it can be recognised to showcase wider fears which were present within 1890s cycling clubs, of how women attending 'club runs' could introduce unwanted elements of competition and rivalry to members' relationships. The processes by which they might look to impress and flirt with their female counterparts, were seen to have the potential to undermine the 'good fellowship' which would otherwise exist between them.

As such, I would argue that the ways in which clubs managed their memberships, and ensured their activities took place in exclusively male settings, did much to create 'idiocultures' which facilitated convivial relationships between members. All-male environments both created opportunities for members to engage in far more relaxed and sociable behaviours than would have been possible in mixed-sex groups, whilst also removed the possibility that the presence of women could be a source of competition or tension between them.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 587

¹⁰⁷ *Cycling*, Issue 159, (February 3rd, 1894) 45

However, these discussions shed little light on why cycling clubs were sites in which members constructed identities, and experienced relationships, which attached them to their home or work lives. Whilst the work of Huggins highlights how the homosocial nature of cycling club life would have promoted convivial relationships between members as they engaged in boisterous behaviours removed from ideologies of 'respectability', the focus of his studies is on how middle-class leisure activities enabled men to move away from identities which they built in other areas of their lives.¹⁰⁸ He has argued that,

'The hold of respectability was...far less strong in certain locational contexts away from the tyranny of neighbours, church and respectable workplace. The anonymity possible in large urban areas, and the range of pleasures on offer, were highly likely to open up multiple leisure identities.'¹⁰⁹

How then can the historian account for the processes outlined in the Introduction, which showcased how cycling clubs were sites in which members re-worked and developed, but did not completely escape, identities and relationships from home and work environments? To explore this question, the next section will further examine how vetting new recruits enabled clubs to create 'idiocultures' which promoted sociability between members.

Managing Memberships and Social Exclusivity

As has been established, 1890s cycling clubs were institutions whose members were predominately men drawn from the middle and lower middle classes. This can be seen to be a consequence of the price of bicycles in this period, which at the start of the decade were most cheaply available for around £10. However, by 1900 second hand 'safeties' were commonly available for around £2, meaning that ownership of bicycles, and membership of cycling clubs, would have been within the reach of many men from the working classes.¹¹⁰

I would argue that the reasons why clubs remained exclusively middle-class institutions did, to a large extent, stem from the ways in which they managed their memberships. Club gazettes provide little evidence as to whether a man's class background influenced his chances of being accepted into a club. However, the fact that new members had to be 'proposed' by those already at a club, would have done much to ensure that they were of a

¹⁰⁸ Mike Huggins, 'More Sinful Pleasures?' 585-600

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 592

¹¹⁰ David Rubinstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', 57

certain social standing. It can be recognised that the environments in which new recruits would have become familiar with existing members, whether workplaces, family units, or wider friendship groups, would have all been spaces in which men of a similar class status spent time together.

Managing memberships so that it was highly likely that incoming recruits possessed a similar social background to pre-existing members, can be recognised as being a means by which clubs formed shared group cultures which promoted sociability and conviviality. Hamish Telfer's research into late nineteenth-century Scottish harriers clubs has highlighted how their social exclusivity was a means of 'reinforcing' sociability between members, as it helped ensure that they shared in similar tastes and interests.¹¹¹ Similar themes can be seen in an article published in *Cycling* in 1891, which stated how,

'My ideal club would be one with a membership of about 100, they should all know each other well and whilst not being too exclusive, be all within a measurable mark of each other as regards their social standing. This is one of the best safeguards against cliquism.'¹¹²

Clearly, cliques forming within cycling clubs would have undermined the processes by which they formed shared 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs'. Both the work of Telfer, and the article in *Cycling*, highlight how ensuring that new recruits were within a 'measurable mark' of the social standing of pre-existing members, was a means of avoiding this occurrence. Taken alongside discussions from the previous section, this further demonstrates how the processes by which clubs managed and controlled their memberships, was a central means by which they maintained and protected 'idiocultures' that encouraged sociability between members.

Moreover, discussions in this section also reveal how these friendly and convivial interactions, existed as a part of a broader set of relationships between members, which meant that cycling clubs were by no means completely detached from other areas of their lives. Whilst these institutions may have offered escape from sites strongly associated with 'respectability', relations between members would still have been influenced by a shared recognition of their common class status.

This can be seen in an article from *Cycling*, quoted in the previous section, which described the changes brought about by the introduction of a female member to the writer's club.

¹¹¹ Hamish Telfer, 'Ludism, laughter and liquor', 193

¹¹² *Cycling*, Issue 2, (January 31st 1891), 22

The piece stated how after she became a member, '*extraordinary politeness*' replaced the 'good fellowship' which had previously existed within their club. That the politeness between members had now reached 'extraordinary' levels, suggests that the 'good fellowship' which had previously existed between them was still in some way tied into notions of 'respectability', and did not involve members simply abandoning polite behaviours whilst in each other's company.

As well as this, I would argue that members' shared class backgrounds would have exerted a strong influence on the relationships between clubmen of different ages. As was outlined in the Introduction, middle-class homes and workplaces in the late nineteenth century were spaces in which middle-class men in later life stages would have represented much more responsible and austere figures than those younger than themselves. That such dynamics were still, to a certain degree, present within clubs is revealed in an article from the gazette of the Stanley C.C. The writer of the piece, who was an older member of the club, described how during a club run the members stopped at a park they were passing through, and,

'Under the chestnut trees I focussed the boys, and then they rushed away to the top of Bury Hill. Magnificent scenery all around here but too much for my poor camera.'¹¹³

It can firstly be recognised that the quote, and the article which it appeared in, highlights how the relationships between 'the boys' and the older member of the club, were much more relaxed and sociable than would have been the case in home and work settings. As well as making little attempt to control the activities of the club's younger members, further on in the piece the writer described how he enjoyed 'mysterious liquors' with them during a stop at a pub.¹¹⁴ The fact that clubmen were out to make the most of their leisure time, and were doing so whilst in homosocial environments, can be recognised to have helped encourage greater amounts of intergenerational sociability and conviviality than would have typically existed in home and work environments.

However, that the writer of the piece briefly organised his younger club mates so he could photograph them, and also chose to steer clear of their more energetic and lively behaviours whilst out cycling, highlights how intergenerational dynamics from middle-class homes and workplaces were still partly present within the club. The familial nickname given to these younger members in 'the boys', further showcases how members' shared

¹¹³ *The Stanley Gazette* 8, Issue 88 (June, 1899) 42

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 42

experiences of the interactions which occurred between men of different ages in middle-class homes, informed the ways in which they interacted with and related to each other. This is also evidenced in the nicknames of 'Uncle' and 'Grandpa', given to Stanley C.C. members in later stages of the life cycle.¹¹⁵

Moreover, I would argue that relationships between members of cycling clubs were not only influenced by their common class backgrounds. In many instances, they would have also actively known each other away from club life. Because in most clubs new recruits needed to be proposed by two who already belonged to an institution, this makes it highly likely that clubs' memberships included middle-class men who were either related to each other, or were a part of the same workplace.

That male members of middle-class family units might become a part of the same institution, is highlighted in the list of members of the Anfield B.C. from 1899. There were three separate instances in which two clubmen shared the same surname, and another three in which three members possessed a common last name.¹¹⁶ Whilst it cannot be said with certainty that all these club mates were related to each other, it seems highly likely that in at least a few cases they belonged to the same family unit.

It can also be acknowledged that many men from the middle classes would have joined clubs after getting to know existing members through their occupation. An article published in *The Cyclist* in 1879, recognised that cycling clubs were sites in which senior figures in workplaces would mix with young clerks who belonged to both their own and their friends' businesses.¹¹⁷ The gatekeeping processes employed by clubs during the 1890s, means it is very probable that they remained sites in which work colleagues with shared enthusiasms for cycling would mix and socialise.

These discussions tie in closely to arguments made earlier in this section. Ensuring that new recruits not only shared in a similar class status to those who belonged to a club, but also knew at least a couple of members in some pre-existing capacity, would have further supported the processes by which clubs created shared group cultures that promoted and facilitated sociability between members. This can be seen further on in the article on

¹¹⁵ *The Stanley Gazette* 7, Issue 73, (February, 1898) 46

¹¹⁶ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, 'Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1899', 35

¹¹⁷ S.H. Moxham, *50 Years of Road Racing (1885-1935), A History of the North Road Cycling Club Ltd*, (Bedford: Dimer and Reynold Ltd, 1935) 2

managing memberships which appeared in *Cycling*. The article described how in a club in which all members, 'would know each other well', that,

'Every race, ride, tour and club-room meeting would not simply be a club fixture, a means of cycling without personal trouble and on the cheap, but would further have the additional charm of being so many hours spent in the company of real friends of long standing and known kindred tastes.'¹¹⁸

As well as this, it can be recognised that cycling clubs were not just sites in which members re-worked relationships that they experienced with other middle-class men in their home and work lives. Rather, they were also spaces in which fathers and sons, uncles and nephews, and work colleagues could re-imagine the ways in which they usually related to each other. This can be seen in an article which appeared in the gazette of the Stanley C.C., in which a member described how during a club run,

'I saw Charles Grant and Mr Charles Grant Junior, the young 'un 'hanging on' to the (well, not so very old 'un) in gallant style.'¹¹⁹

The piece demonstrates that the relationship between father and son remained partly attached to the one which would have existed within their home, with Charles Grant Senior taking the lead and setting the pace, and not his son. However, the fact that he was described as the 'not so very old 'un', and Charles Grant Junior was given the title 'Mr', is also highly significant. I would argue that these descriptions stemmed from the fact both father and son were engaging in fast-paced, competitive cycling. This helped remove differences and highlight similarities between the two of them, such as their common enthusiasm for 'scorching', and also their shared possession of strength and stamina.

Having their relationship more strongly focussed around mutual interests and shared qualities, would have helped create new intergenerational dynamics when compared to the home. Whilst Charles Grant Junior might be 'hanging on' to his father, these rides would have also held the possibility of him testing and challenging Charles Grant Senior in ways which would have not been possible in domesticity, an environment in which a middle-class father's authority and seniority over his son would not be called into question.¹²⁰ Jointly engaging in more competitive forms of cycling was a means of removing some of these notions of seniority, and would have in-turn seemingly facilitated greater

¹¹⁸ *Cycling*, Issue 2, (January 31st 1891), 22

¹¹⁹ *The Stanley Gazette* 6, Issue 66, (July 1897) 44

¹²⁰ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 93-99

amounts intergenerational bonding and sociability when compared to domestic environments.

Taken alongside previous discussions, this further highlights how 1890s cycling clubs were institutions in which a distinctive set of relationships existed between middle-class men in different stages of the life cycle. The all-male nature of club activities, combined with members' shared enthusiasms for cycling and desires for sociability with each other, meant that these were sites in which middle-class men of dissimilar ages would experience more equal, relaxed and friendly relations than would have been the case in their home and work lives.

At the same time, it must also be acknowledged that their interactions still in-part drew on models which would have been found in these two other environments. As evidenced by Charles Grant Senior setting a pace which his son was expected to follow, or the older member of the Stanley C.C. photographing his 'boys', intergenerational dynamics from middle-class homes and workplaces were still very much present within cycling clubs.

However, discussions in this section have not just looked to argue that the sociability and camaraderie which existed within clubs, altered interactions which members' experienced, and identities they constructed, in their home and work lives. They have also recognised that this was a mutually dependent relationship, in which the latter also fed into and supported the former. By ensuring that new recruits shared in similar class backgrounds to existing clubmen, and also possessed prior connections to them, whether as friends, work colleagues or relations, clubs were able to sustain and protect 'idiocultures' which encouraged and promoted sociability between members.

This two-way relationship, helps reinforce and develop a central argument of this thesis, in that 1890s cycling clubs should not be conceptualised as sites in which members would simply find escape and release from other areas of their lives. Exploring the processes by which clubs in this period created and maintained shared group cultures, highlights to the historian how the sociability and conviviality which existed between members, was inextricably tied into a much broader set of interactions and relations, that in-turn connected them to home and work environments.

To further develop these discussions, the second half to this chapter will now provide a wider analysis of how cycling clubs created 'idiocultures' which enabled member's to both indulge their shared enthusiasms for cycling, and desires to socialise with each other.

Whilst discussions so far have done much to highlight how cycling club's promoted friendly and genial relationships between members, they have provided few insights into how they catered for their common interests in cycling.

How then did clubs create systems of 'knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' which enabled their clubmen to indulge their common enthusiasms for cycling, as well as their desires for sociability with each other? To explore this question, the next section will begin by examining the difficulties which came with creating 'idiocultures' which enabled members to find gratification through their cycling excursions, before exploring how by implementing hierarchies and structures of authority, clubs looked to tackle these problems.

Problems Provisioning Enjoyment and Satisfaction

As was outlined in the Introduction, during the 1890s cycling was a pastime which could facilitate individual pleasure and enjoyment in a variety of ways. For many, the chief appeal of the bicycle was that it allowed them to travel through and appreciate in the English countryside, whilst also visiting sites of historical and cultural interest. Others would combine their excursions with additional hobbies, such as photography, botany or zoology. By contrast, there was also the possibility for individuals to go off in 'scorching', and engage in forms of racing and competition.

The varied reasons why men from the middle classes developed enthusiasms for cycling, created a number of problems for clubs whose central activity was weekly group rides or 'club runs'. How could you cater for the range of ways in which members might wish to engage in their cycling activities when riding as a collective body? As has been outlined by Fine, in leisure organisations whose activities can be engaged in on an individual level, there will always be a tension between collectivism and individualism.¹²¹ Participating in pastimes as a part of a group inevitably places some limitations and restrictions on the ways in which members can partake in activities, which are not found when they engage in them individually.¹²²

These restrictions will not only detract from personal enjoyment. Because the sociability and conviviality which exists in leisure groups is closely tied into members engaging in an

¹²¹ Gary Alan Fine, 'Mobilizing Fun: Provisioning Resources in Leisure Worlds', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 6, (1989) 319-324

¹²² Gary Alan Fine and Lori Holyfield, 'Secrecy, Trust, and Dangerous Leisure: Generating Group Cohesion in Voluntary Organisations', *Social Psychology Quarterly* 59, (1996) 23

activity which brings them enjoyment and satisfaction, boundaries and constraints can easily undermine group camaraderie and amiability.¹²³ If members were unable to indulge their particular enthusiasms for cycling, then it would be highly likely that they would come to resent, rather than enjoy the company of others.

As such, meeting members' varied interests in cycling was not just a means of ensuring individual gratification. It was essential if clubs wanted to create 'idiocultures' which facilitated and encouraged sociability between members, which was quite arguably the central appeal of joining a cycling club when compared to going out for a ride on a Saturday afternoon by yourself. To retain members, and ensure their long term survival, it was absolutely necessary for clubs to tackle the problem of how, when riding together as a group, they could cater for their members' diverse enthusiasms for pedalling bicycles.

Nowhere was this issue more apparent than in the pace at which clubs engaged in their 'runs'. Whilst the 'idioculture' of the Stanley C.C. gave individuals the freedom to cycle at whatever speed they wished, their runs were two day events, in which members would spend the Saturday evening and Sunday morning socialising with each other. These opportunities for sociability did not exist within most other clubs, whose 'runs' took place over the course of a Saturday afternoon. Consequently, they placed a much heavier emphasis on members cycling together as a group. It was commonly felt that if their clubmen went off 'scorching', then this would both create frictions and rivalries, and limit the amount of time that members spent socialising together, therefore undermining group camaraderie and unity.

However, by engaging in 'runs' as a collective body, clubs ran into the set of problems outlined above. Asking members to cycle at a speed which they found to be uncomfortable or limiting could detract from individual enjoyment and pleasure, and subsequently undermine levels of sociability which existed within their institution. To find a solution to this problem, clubs typically implemented one of two different approaches.

The first, used by the Bristol B.T.C., involved creating a 'fast' and a 'slow' group.¹²⁴ These two different sections would take alternative routes to a pre-arranged destination, where clubmen would then eat and drink together. By forming these two groups, members of the Bristol B.T.C. looked to create a 'system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs'

¹²³ Gary Alan Fine, 'Mobilizing Fun', 319-324

¹²⁴ *The Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (Issue 6, June 1897) 50, *The Stanley Gazette* 8, Issue 91, (August 1899) 57

which enabled them to cycle at speeds which they found to be manageable and unrestricting. By contrast, the Hull S.A.C.C., Knowle C.C. and the Canterbury C.C., all engaged in 'club runs' at the same pace, with a captain who was not allowed to be overtaken riding at the front.¹²⁵ This approach was used both to make sure that members rode at a moderate pace which did not wear out slower rides, and to ensure that there would be an individual who could effectively manage those who wished to cycle faster.

Despite easily recognisable differences, there are still noticeable similarities between the two measures outlined above. Most noticeably, both approaches gave certain members positions of added responsibility and authority over their fellow clubmen. Although 'fast' and 'slow' groups did not ride together, it was expected that they would later rendezvous at an exact location by a specific time. This meant that particular individuals were responsible for making certain that their 'section' would not arrive too late, and also ensuring that members did not get lost along their pre-arranged route.¹²⁶

A captain would handle similar responsibilities, as they led members along planned routes which took them to organised stopping points. As well as this, they were required to set a pace which suited all the riders of a club, and deal with any members who wanted to ride at a faster rate. This aspect of their role made club captains more authoritative figures than those who led out 'fast' or 'slow' divisions, as they were much more likely to deal with individuals dissatisfied with the speed at which the club were travelling. An article in the gazette of the Hull S.A.C.C. which looked back at their previous year's captain, stated how, 'Perhaps some of the youngsters (scorchers) at times voted him slow, and thought the pace might have been a trifle faster, but then you know it has to be regulated to suit the slowest rider, so the captain was hardly to blame.'¹²⁷

The authority involved in a captain setting the pace of a club run and, to a lesser extent, certain members managing 'fast' and 'slow' divisions, builds on discussions from the previous section. It further highlights that the relationships between members were not simply defined by shared interests in cycling, or common desires for sociability. Rather, when out riding together on club runs, other factors would have influenced the ways in which club mates interacted with each other.

¹²⁵ *Cyclorn 2*, (Issue 6, September 1895) 6, *Knowle Cycling Club: Rules and Fixtures, Season 1897*, 9, *Canterbury Cycle Club, Rules and Byelaws 1893-94*, (Canterbury: Cross and Jackman, 1893) 7

¹²⁶ *The Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette 1*, (Issue 6, June 1897) 50

¹²⁷ *Cyclorn 3*, (Issue 2, May 1896) 4

As with the preceding section, it can be recognised that these 'other factors' would have connected members' relationships to those which middle-class men commonly experienced in home and work environments. As has now been well established, in both of these settings middle-class men in later life stages would have typically been clearly recognised authority figures over those younger than themselves. The article from the gazette of the Hull S.A.C.C. highlights how similar dynamics were present within their club. The ways in which the club's captain was required to manage, monitor and, in some form discipline 'the youngsters' whilst on club runs, can be recognised to have borne resemblances to the roles and responsibilities of middle-class fathers and employers.¹²⁸

However, I would also argue that the emphasis which clubs gave to promoting sociability and mutual enjoyment between members, would have led to captains and their younger clubmen re-working the types of intergenerational interactions which they usually experienced in these two other environments. Compared to middle-class fathers or employers, there was much less scope for the captain of the Hull S.A.C.C. to sternly manage those younger than himself. Doing so would have detracted from the primary purpose of cycling clubs, which was ensuring that members found enjoyment and pleasure during their leisure time. It was therefore necessary for him to utilise softer, less authoritative approaches when handling those younger members who 'thought the pace might have been a trifle faster'. This can be seen in another article from the club's gazette, which described how on a club run,

'Andy (the captain) was explaining something about the stars, and so interested the members that even the youngsters were spellbound and had not the desirability to scorch.'¹²⁹

The next chapter will explore in much greater detail how relationships such as these could also have existed in home and work environments. However, it can initially be recognised that although middle-class fathers and employers might have also mentored and guided their sons and employees, club captains would have been much less able to draw on the types of strict, authoritative behaviours which could have been utilised by these individuals.¹³⁰ Similar to discussions in the previous section, it can be recognised that the fact that members were out to socialise and make the most of their leisure time, changed

¹²⁸ Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy*, 2-19

¹²⁹ *Cyclorn* 2, (Issue 6, September 1895) 6

¹³⁰ Christopher Hosgood, 'Mercantile Monasteries', 322-352

and altered intergenerational dynamics which would have typically existed in middle-class homes and workplaces.

Moreover, the discussions above further highlight the mutually dependent nature of these processes. By trusting individuals to positions of authority on weekly runs, in which they ensured that clubmen travelled at a pace that suited slower riders, and effectively managed those who wanted to ride faster, clubs looked to ensure that all members found enjoyment and pleasure during these excursions. Intergenerational dynamics from middle-class homes and workplaces, fed into and supported the processes by which clubs formed 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' that promoted enjoyment and gratification among their memberships.

The final section of this chapter will now explore in greater detail how the organisational structures of clubs, helped create 'idiocultures' which ensured that clubmen found pleasure and satisfaction when participating in the activities of their institution. As will be outlined, the ways in which club structures and hierarchies enabled members to both enjoy their cycling excursions, and to socialise with each other, were more complex than certain individuals being trusted to positions of authority during club runs. To begin these discussions, the next section will start by analysing the wider problems which were faced by 1890s cycling clubs when looking to cater for members' varied interests and enthusiasms for cycling.

Maintaining Enthusiasms through Club Structures

The pleasure which members of cycling clubs found over the course of club runs, can be recognised to have been influenced by a diverse range of factors. As well as the speed which they travelled at, the environments that they travelled through, would have also done much to inform the extent to which they enjoyed their clubs' weekend excursions. This is an area of discussion which further ties into the work of Fine, who has argued that the activities of small groups are heavily influenced by the environments and settings in which they take place. He states that,

'Every local scene is shaped by the constraints, opportunities, and understandings made possible through the physical (or virtual) space in which it unfolds: an arena of action...just as groups colonise settings, settings colonise groups.'¹³¹

¹³¹ Gary Alan Fine, *The Sociology of the Local*, 34-36

Such an analysis is highly relevant when analysing the weekly group rides of 1890s cycling clubs. As has been established, members of these institutions possessed a wide range of different enthusiasms for cycling, from the opportunities riding a bicycle opened up for exploring the countryside and taking photographs, to engaging in forms of racing and competition. It can be recognised the extent to which they were able to engage in these activities, would have been strongly influenced by the environments that they were passing through.

Clearly, routes which were particularly scenic, and afforded plenty of views, would have provided far better opportunities for members to appreciate, photograph and enjoy the English countryside than ones which did not. Similarly, roads which were wide and carried little traffic, would have lent themselves to racing and competition in ways that narrow, busy ones would not. That the spaces which members of clubs cycled through opened up opportunities for them to engage in certain activities and behaviours, was recognised in a letter written into *Cycling* in 1892, in which the author described how on their favourite cycling route,

‘The cyclist can find true cycling enjoyment, whether he be artist, angler, engineer, florist, historian, hill-climber or speedman.’¹³²

Successfully organising weekly runs therefore required clubs to ensure the environments which members travelled through would enable them to fully indulge their various enthusiasms for cycling. As well as this, the fact that a cycling club’s season would typically begin in late March and finish at the end of September, meant it was also necessary for clubs to plan a varied and diverse range of routes. If they only organised a select number of runs, then the lack of variation would have done much to lessen members’ motivation to attend weekly fixtures later in the year. This was recognised in an article on club runs which appeared in *Cycling* in 1896, which stated how,

‘Above all, the runs should be diversified. Constant dropping wears away the stone, and constant visitation of the same spots and constant riding along the same roads wears away the enthusiasm.’¹³³

Diversifying club runs, and ensuring that planned routes would see members travelling through environments which catered for their assorted enthusiasms for cycling, required

¹³² *Cycling*, Issue 53, (January 23rd, 1892) 6

¹³³ *Cycling*, Issue 306, (November 28th, 1896) 395

clubs to implement more intricate structures and hierarchies than were discussed in the previous section. Effectively carrying out club runs on a month by month basis necessitated more than just a 'captain' leading members, or individuals managing 'fast' and 'slow' divisions. It also required others who belonged to an institution to take the time to plan a multiplicity of routes, which would maintain their club mates' interests throughout the course of a season.

Most frequently, these responsibilities rested with a club's secretary, whose role would also involve them planning and arranging various other aspects of cycling club life, such as club tours and social events such as smoking concerts.¹³⁴ However, the processes by which clubs organised weekly runs might also involve their committee, typically containing six to eight members, who would be responsible for supporting the work of a club's secretary, and providing input and advice into decisions concerning the running of clubs.¹³⁵

These discussions closely tie into Fine's studies of voluntary leisure organisations. As was outlined in the Introduction, Fine's research into groups of mushroom collectors has highlighted how the successful running of these organisations will require certain individuals to take on the responsibilities involved with planning and organising their clubs' activities. In his wider research into leisure groups, Fine has recognised the crucial role that organisational structures play in creating 'idiocultures' which enable members to both enjoy the pastime which they are participating in, and to socialise and bond with each other. He argues that,

'People are free to choose from a virtually unlimited number of leisure activities, but that freedom is possible because others have laid the organisational groundwork that facilitates these choices...Leisure opportunities do more than follow communal interests; a structure channels and promotes leisure.'¹³⁶

The need for 'organisational groundwork' is apparent in all aspects of 1890s cycling club life. As well as needing to carefully plan how members could find pleasure and gratification on club runs, another difficulty faced by clubs lay in the fact that their cycling activities would typically stop between the months of October and March. Cold and wet winter weather not only took away much of the enjoyment which cycling would normally offer, but also worsened road conditions to such an extent that many would become unusable

¹³⁴ *Cycling*, Issue 56, (February 13th, 1892) 54

¹³⁵ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, 'Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1899', 28

¹³⁶ Gary Alan Fine, 'Mobilizing Fun', 322-323

during this period.¹³⁷ That such a break could threaten group solidarity and cohesion was recognised in an article in *Cycling* in 1898, which stated that,

‘If nothing is done to interest members during the close time, they become scattered, and get other ties; when, after Christmas, active club life is resumed, they are missing, and their names have to be removed from the books.’¹³⁸

To avoid this scenario, club officers would plan and arrange busy social calendars during winter months, with one particularly popular event being smoking concerts. As was discussed in the Introduction, ‘smokers’ would see members spending an evening together in the room of an inn or hotel, singing comical and risqué songs to a piano accompaniment, whilst smoking and drinking heavily. Writing on the smoking concerts held by cycling clubs in 1894, Paul Creston commented that that would,

‘Degenerate too often into little better than a drinking bout; and the spectacle of numbers of young men sitting the long evening though in a reeking and tobacco-laden atmosphere, while they fill themselves with liquor to the accompaniment of vulgar and often obscene songs, is certainly the reverse of edifying.’¹³⁹

Whilst Creston may have associated ‘smokers’ with groups of young men, club gazettes reveal that older members would also be active participants in these events. For instance, an article in the gazette of the Stanley C.C. described how during their most recent smoking concert ‘Grandpa’ had ‘been in his best form’.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, although these events may have been ‘the reverse of edifying’, it can be recognised that drinking alcohol whilst singing ‘vulgar and often obscene songs’ would have done much to encourage and promote sociability between club mates. This can be seen in a piece from the gazette of the Stanley C.C., which described how during one of their ‘smokers’,

‘We touched a handy ting-a-ling-a-ling
And ordered scotches round;
The man who wouldn’t sing-a-ling-a-ling
His purse strings then unwound
Each to his glass did cling-a-ling-ling
And join in wild chorus.

¹³⁷ John Woodforde, *The Story of the Bicycle*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) 1-3

¹³⁸ *Cycling*, Issue 411, (December 3rd, 1898) 465

¹³⁹ Paul Creston, ‘Cycling and Cycles’, *Fortnightly Review* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1894) 679

¹⁴⁰ *The Stanley Gazette* 7, Issue 84, (January 1899) 97

Ting-a-ling-a-ling, oh! ting-a-ling-a-ling,
And so say all of us.¹⁴¹

Whilst smoking concerts represented opportunities for clubmen to engage in more boisterous and less restrained behaviours, they were events which required large amounts of careful planning. Arranging a 'smoker' would not only require the work of a club's secretary and committee, but also their treasurer, who was responsible for collecting annual subscriptions from members and managing a club's finances. A treasurer would be required to calculate how much a club could afford to spend on hiring a venue to host the concert, which was usually a room in a hotel or inn. Contacting these establishments, publicising the event to members, and arranging other forms of entertainment for the evening, which might include singers, comedians and musicians, would also require other officers, most likely a secretary, to put in extra amounts of work and effort.¹⁴²

Taken together, discussions in this section have further highlighted how creating 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', which enabled cycling clubs to successfully cater for their members' twin enthusiasms for cycling and sociability, were heavily dependent on certain clubmen taking on and handling positions of added responsibility. If clubs wanted to maintain and grow their membership, it was essential that some individuals were prepared to lay the 'organisational groundwork' for weekly group rides, and the wider social calendars of their institution.

As well as this, it can be recognised that the responsibilities and duties of club officers, which saw them managing finances, planning and organising their club's activities, and exercising authority over others, had a number of similarities with those which would have been required of men working in middle-class occupations. These parallels were recognised in an article published in *Cycling* in 1892 titled 'Pay the Workers', which argued for, 'The payment, in some kind, of those club officials upon whose shoulders the bulk of the important work connected with the successful working of a big club devolves.'¹⁴³

Cycling's description of club officials as 'workers', and its argument that their 'important work' was deserving of payment by larger clubs, highlights the similarities which were recognised to exist between serving as a club officer, and being employed in a middle-class

¹⁴¹ *The Stanley Gazette* 6, Issue 66, (July 1897) 49

¹⁴² Eva Mantzourani, 'The Aroma of the Music and the Fragrance of the Weed': Music and Smoking in Victorian England', *Musicology of Lithuania* 13, (2012) 118-139

¹⁴³ *Cycling*, Issue 100, (December 17th, 1892) 384

occupation. This helps to reinforce the central argument of this chapter- that the relationship between members' enthusiasms for cycling and sociability, and their home and work selves and relationships, was a two way one. In this instance, skills and attributes which club officers would have developed through their workplaces, were highly relevant for the processes by which they planned and organised the physical and social activities of their clubs.

However, earlier discussions have also established that members' shared class backgrounds, the fact that they might have belonged to the same family unit or workplace, and intergenerational dynamics which existed in these environments, were all means by which clubs could form shared group cultures which promoted enjoyment and gratification amongst their memberships. They were 'building blocks' by which clubs could form 'idiocultures' which both catered for members' various interests in cycling, and helped to ensure that they would form friendly, sociable relationships with each other. Just as the emphasis which clubs gave to sociability and individuals indulging their interests in cycling, influenced and altered members' home and work selves and relationships, so these identities and interactions fed back into and supported the processes by which clubs were able to meet their members' enthusiasms for cycling and sociability.

The conclusion to this chapter will now ask how these arguments can provide new insights into historical studies of voluntary leisure organisations, and outline how they will be developed in future chapters.

Conclusion

This various sections in this chapter have begun to explore the complexities in the identities constructed by, and relationships which existed between, members of cycling clubs during the 1890s. They have firstly recognised that members' mutual desires for sociability with each other, and their shared enthusiasms for cycling, helped remove some of the notions of seniority which would usually be attached to middle-class men in later life stages in home and work environments. Combined with the fact that the activities of clubs took place in homosocial environments, these factors enabled men from the middle classes to demonstrate much more boisterous and sociable behaviours when spending time with their fellow clubmen, than they would have typically showcased in these other two settings.

At the same time, it has also been established that the identities constructed by members, and their relations with each other, were multifaceted, and were not simply defined by lively camaraderie and conviviality. By drawing on the work of work of Gary Alan Fine and his notion of 'idiocultures', discussions throughout this chapter have outlined how intergenerational interactions between club mates drew on models which could be found in middle-class homes and workplaces. It has been established that members' home and work selves and relationships, were building blocks on which clubs create and maintain shared 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', which enabled them to both enjoy sociable relationships with each other, and indulge their various enthusiasms for cycling.

I would argue that these discussions provide new ways in which historians can approach studies of sports clubs. There have been very few historical studies which have looked to explore and theorise the sociability, camaraderie and enjoyment which these institutions are renowned for providing to their members. Whilst it is commonly acknowledged that sports clubs are, 'quiet harbours of casual exertion and sociability', efforts to further conceptualise how clubs have been able to indulge their members' enthusiasms for their particular pastime, and sociability with like-minded others, have been few and far between.¹⁴⁴ The extent to which this chapter has drawn on the work of a sociologist in Gary Alan Fine, reflects the lack of historical research into this subject.

This is not to say that this is an area which has been completely neglected by historians. Hamish Telfer's 2004 article on late-Victorian Scottish harriers clubs, outlined how engaging in their sporting and social activities, which could easily be portrayed as 'somewhat hedonistic pursuits', required clubs to 'navigate through the difficult waters of respectability'.¹⁴⁵ Telfer argues that the patronage these institutions received from well-known local figures, their involvement in charitable activities, and their use of 'reputable' hotels to host social events, were means by which they could affirm their 'respectable credentials'. As such, he highlights how harriers clubs' ability to indulge their members' enthusiasms for running and sociability, were a part of a much broader set of interactions, activities and rituals, which showcased and affirmed their 'respectability'.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Malcom MacLean, 'A Gap but not an Absence: Clubs and Sports Historiography', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, (2013) 1688-1689

¹⁴⁵ Hamish Telfer, 'Ludism, laughter and liquor' 202-203

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 185-203

Whilst arguing that harriers clubs were not simply sites in which member's would escape 'respectable' home and work identities, Telfer's study suggests that there were strong differences between the 'public' and 'private' faces of these organisations. He argues that although the ways in which clubs positioned themselves publically did much to affirm their 'respectable credentials', activities such as smoking concerts were often strongly removed from discourses of respectability. This helps support Telfer's assertion that, 'for most Scotsmen, sporting sociability had long provided a potentially cathartic outlet, an escape from the seriousness of work, from household and family affairs, and from the potential prison of 'respectable behaviour''.¹⁴⁷

Certainly, I would agree that during the late nineteenth century, 'sporting sociability' would be valued by men from the middle classes for the 'cathartic outlets' which it offered. When members of the Stanley C.C. 'ordered scotches round' and 'joined in wild chorus' during their smoking concerts, it is hard not to argue that they were experiencing the forms of release and escape outlined by Telfer. However, this chapter has looked to outline that, for members of 1890s cycling clubs, these forms of sociability existed as a part of a much broader set of relationships and interactions. By exploring the wider processes by which clubs were able to indulge their members' interests in cycling, and desires for sociability with each other, it has looked to more clearly identify the connections between these sites, and the home and work lives of clubmen.

I would argue that such an approach not only helps develop existing studies of sports clubs. It also allows the historian to make a much stronger case for why these sites are deserving of more academic research and investigation. As was outlined in the Introduction, sports clubs are seen to be a 'neglected field' of historical study, which represent 'one of the gaps in our knowledge of the history of sport.'¹⁴⁸ Exploring how the sociability and mutual enjoyment within clubs were closely tied into a broader set of interactions and identities not only helps fill this 'gap in knowledge'. It also opens up studies of sports clubs so that they are far more relevant to other fields of historical research and scholarship.

For example, when discussing the 'gatekeeping' tactics employed by clubs, and how these promoted sociability between members, this chapter highlighted how this meant that fathers and sons who shared enthusiasms for cycling could often become members of the same institution. I would argue that further analysis of the relationships which existed

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 191

¹⁴⁸ Jeffrey Hill, *Sport in History*, 49

between fathers and sons within 1890s cycling clubs, could do much to develop existing scholarship on middle-class fathers, and their relationships with their children during this period.

Existing studies in this area, such as Tosh's, *A Man's Place*, Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers' edited collection, *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* and Valerie Sanders', *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood*, provide little recognition or attempt to explore how middle-class fathers' relationships with their children would extend beyond the sphere of the home.¹⁴⁹ This strongly contributes to the fact that each of these works, whilst recognising that fathers could enjoy close, friendly relations with their children, tend to focus much more on the difficult and often distant relationships which existed between them.¹⁵⁰ This is seen to be a result of both the large amounts of power and authority associated with middle-class fathers in this period, and also their uncertain position within the middle-class home, which was seen to be a 'women's sphere' that a father would often be absent or away from, due to the demands of work and business.¹⁵¹

Further exploring the ways in which fathers and sons, such as Charles Grant Senior and Junior, interacted with each other whilst indulging common enthusiasms for a particular pastime, has the potential to develop and provide new insights into these studies. As was outlined earlier in this chapter, jointly engaging in activities which brought mutual enjoyment to fathers and their children, would have done much to alter dynamics typically present in the middle-class home. By removing some of the notions of authority usually attached to middle-class fathers, these pastimes would have created new and distinct opportunities for intergenerational bonding and sociability.

Moreover, these are arguments which are not just relevant to cycling clubs. It seems highly likely that, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, fathers and sons who developed interests in a particular pastime may have often become members of the same sporting institution. Cricket, tennis and angling clubs, whose activities are typically engaged in by men of a wide range of ages, would have all provided opportunities for middle-class fathers and sons to find new ways of relating to and interacting with each other. This understanding allows sports clubs to be theorised as institutions which can contribute to

¹⁴⁹ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers, Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

¹⁵⁰ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 93-99, Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy*, 191-196, Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers, 'Introduction' in *Gender and Fatherhood*, 4-23

¹⁵¹ Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers, 'Introduction', 4-23

and inform fields of historical research usually detached from histories of sport and sports clubs.

Certainly, exploring this area in greater detail would enable the next chapter to further analyse how cycling clubs were sites in which men from the middle classes would re-imagine identities they constructed, and relationships they experienced, in home and work environments. However, this thesis has always looked to examine these processes from a more general, club-wide level. It can be recognised that, in many instances, members of cycling clubs would not have known each other away from their particular institution, as new recruits only needed to be proposed by two existing members.

Moreover, the ways in which family members related to each other when participating in their clubs' activities, are rarely revealed in club gazettes and articles in *Cycling*. These sources tend to focus much more on the collective goings-on of clubmen when they engaged in events such as 'club runs', and only provide occasional glimpses into interactions which occurred between fathers and sons.

I would argue that a more fruitful area of enquiry can be found in discussions from the second half of this chapter, which explored the roles and responsibilities of club officers. Not only do the activities of officers, and their relationships with others who were a part of their club, provide a wider overview of how members would develop home and work selves and interactions, but they are also detailed much more extensively in the sources being used by this thesis. As such, the focus of the next chapter will be to examine in greater depth the identities constructed by those who served as captains, secretaries, treasures and committee members, and the relationships which they experienced with their fellow clubmen.

Chapter Two- Club Officers and Middle-Class Masculinities

The aim of this chapter is to further explore the rich and varied set of identities and relationships, which have been recognised to have existed within 1890s cycling clubs. It will do this by drawing on studies of late nineteenth-century middle-class masculinity, making particular use of John Tosh's widely accepted argument that men 'do' their masculinity in three specific social contexts- the home, the workplace and all-male associations such as cycling clubs.¹⁵²

As was outlined in the Introduction, Tosh's model draws on the work of Judith Butler, who argues that gender is not something one 'is' but is rather something one 'does'.¹⁵³ Butler's highly influential studies have argued that being 'manly' requires men to act in the world, and have their possession of qualities which their society understands to be 'masculine' recognised and affirmed by others.¹⁵⁴ Drawing on the same example used in the Introduction, when out cycling with a group of friends I can 'be' manly by being the first to cycle to the top of a steep hill. Living in a society in which physical fitness and strength are commonly regarded as 'masculine' qualities, having my friends recognise that I am the fittest and fastest member of our group, is a means of affirming and asserting my manliness.

The work of Butler therefore understands the processes by which men construct 'manly' identities as being an inherently social one, which requires men to perform or 'enact' recognised masculine qualities to others. This understanding strongly underpins Tosh's three legged model. Because men experience a different set of relationships and interactions in homes, workplaces and all-male associations, they will 'enact' a different set of manly qualities when spending time in each of these environments.¹⁵⁵ When out cycling with my friends, the fact we are engaging in physical activity means I will be confident that they will understand my physical fitness and strength as being desirably 'masculine' qualities. By contrast, when spending time with my family I will be aware that I need to 'position' my masculinity differently, as they will value me showcasing a different set of 'manly' behaviours and attributes.

¹⁵² John Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', 184-187

¹⁵³ Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution', 519-531

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 591-531

¹⁵⁵ John Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', 184-187

These discussions tie in closely to the concept of 'multiple masculinities', which states that within any society 'masculinity' will not represent a uniform or coherent concept, but rather one which is multi-faceted, containing a range of different understandings or 'discourses' of what it means for men to be manly.¹⁵⁶ It is these multiple understandings of which traits and attributes are 'masculine', which enable men to 'perform' their masculinity in different and distinct ways when moving between homes, workplaces and all-male associations.

These arguments provide an excellent means of developing arguments from the second half of the previous chapter, which explored the activities of club officers, and the relationships they experienced with their fellow clubmen. It was recognised that the work of officers, and their interactions with others, both drew on models which could be found in middle-class homes and workplaces, but at the same time moved these models on.

For instance, the responsibilities of club officers, which saw them managing others and ensuring the successful running and maintenance of their clubs, had a number of parallels to those typically required of middle-class fathers and men working in middle-class occupations. At the same time, it was also highlighted how the emphasis which clubs gave to members enjoying their leisure time, meant that club captains represented much 'softer' authority figures than would have usually been found in middle-class fathers and employers.

These discussions strongly suggest that members serving as club officers would have constructed 'masculinities' which both resembled, but also differed from those which middle-class men typically built in their homes and workplaces. Members would have seemingly valued their club captains, secretaries, treasurers and committee members 'enacting' masculine qualities which they would have also showcased in their home and work lives. At the same time, the distinctive set of relationships which existed within 1890s cycling clubs, means it is very probable that serving in these positions enabled men from the middle classes to find new ways of 'doing' their masculinity.

Further exploring and analysing these areas will be the focus of this chapter. By examining the masculinities constructed by cycling club officers, it will look to develop and provide new insights into arguments made during the previous chapter. The sections below will aim to provide a more detailed analysis of the relationships which existed between club officers

¹⁵⁶ Dianne Richardson, 'Youth Masculinities', 738-739, Chris Brickell, 'Masculinities, Performativity and Subversion', 24-39

and their fellow clubmen, and explore how these interactions enabled members of clubs to re-work and re-imagine identities which they would have constructed in home and work environments.

To begin these discussions, this chapter will start by examining the strong connections between a middle-class man's work and his 'manly' identity during the late nineteenth century, and the 'masculine' qualities which middle-class society associated with men succeeding and getting on in their careers. By further exploring the work of club officers, the first half of this chapter will outline how members working in these positions won the respect and esteem of their fellow clubmen through their possession of qualities which they would have also demonstrated in their occupations, but would also be praised for 'enacting' a wider set of 'manly' behaviours and attributes.

These discussions will then lead to a more careful analysis of how officer positions enabled members to re-work 'masculine' identities which they would have constructed in their home lives. As outlined in the previous chapter, members who served as officers, and in particular as club captains, would handle duties similar to those of required of middle-class fathers, as they managed and controlled the behaviours of their younger clubmen. Subsequently, it will be examined how the 'manly' identities of club officers would have compared to those typically constructed by middle-class fathers in the late nineteenth century.

After further exploring the relationships which existed between officers and their younger clubmen, this chapter will then analyse how these interactions created opportunities for members in their late teens and early to mid-twenties to construct distinctive 'manly' identities. The final section will then examine to what extent members in earlier life stages were also given opportunities to serve as club officers, and how these roles required them to undertake responsibilities and duties which would have rarely been asked of them in their workplaces. Taken together, these different discussions will look to outline how the roles of club officers, and the diverse set of relationships they enjoyed with their fellow clubmen, enabled members of cycling clubs to try out, practice and explore a variety of ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity.

Discourses of Middle-Class Masculinity, the Workplace and Club Officers

During the late nineteenth century, a middle-class man's occupation was an integral part of his 'masculine' identity. This strong association can be traced back to the processes of

industrialisation that occurred at the beginning of the century. Whereas previously men had typically worked from or near the home, from the early nineteenth century onwards their occupations increasingly took them away from the domestic sphere and into offices, shops and factories. The separation of work from home life is seen to have strongly informed discourses of 'separate spheres', which expected middle-class men to be the sole providers for their families, and presented the workplace as an exclusively male 'sphere'.¹⁵⁷

Whilst these ideologies were under significant pressure during the late nineteenth century, a period which saw women increasingly entering middle-class occupations as clerks, typists, nurses and school-teachers, these challenges did little, if indeed anything, to remove the association between work and a middle-class man's 'manly' identity.¹⁵⁸ As Martin Danahay has outlined, over the course of the Victorian period the compulsion to work became increasingly represented as a 'natural masculine desire to labour as part of a healthy psyche'. By the 1880s, the obligation a middle-class man felt to work was seen as a moral issue, and a question of his masculine character.¹⁵⁹

However, discourses of middle-class masculinity did not just associate any type of work as being recognisably and suitably 'manly'. It firstly had to provide a man with an income by which he could support himself, and if he was married, his dependents, enabling them to lead a lifestyle appropriate to their social status.¹⁶⁰ Middle-class occupations were also sharply distinguished from forms of working class employment by the fact that they did not require men to undertake forms of manual labour.¹⁶¹ As well as this, it was expected that a middle-class man's work would be 'dignified', meaning it should be free from any notions of servility or dependence on patronage. Compared to members of a privileged and supposedly work-shy aristocracy, ideals of middle-class masculinity stated that the status and success which men achieved through their work should be the sole result of their own efforts and exertions.¹⁶² As has been argued by Tosh,

¹⁵⁷ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Revised Edition*, (London: Routledge, 2002) xiv-xxx

¹⁵⁸ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 207-208

¹⁵⁹ Martin Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 7-8

¹⁶⁰ John Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do With Masculinity?', 184-186

¹⁶¹ Mike Savage, James Barlow, Peter Dickens and Tony Fielding, *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: Middle-Class Formation in Contemporary Britain*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 1-19

¹⁶² John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England' 462-468

‘The idea that what a man did in his working life was an authentic expression of his individuality was one of the most characteristic- and enduring- features of middle-class masculinity.’¹⁶³

These ideologies strongly informed the attention which discourses of middle-class masculinity gave to a man’s inner character. To make their way in life, it was expected that middle-class men would be self-reliant, possessing the internal resources to successfully carry out their work and overcome any difficulties which they might encounter. Tosh has argued that the core attributes which nineteenth-century middle-class society associated with these ideals were ‘physical vigour, energy and resolution, courage and straightforwardness’.¹⁶⁴ Possession of these qualities were widely portrayed as being the central means by which men from the middle classes could hope win the respect of others, and independently lift themselves up the professional ladder.¹⁶⁵

It can be recognised that the emphasis given to these different qualities varied over the course of the century. In-particular, I would argue that Tosh’s model is more relevant to the late nineteenth century than earlier decades from this period. Imperial defeats which occurred from the 1880s onwards are recognised to have placed a much heavier scrutiny on the bodily fitness and health of middle-class men than when compared to the beginning of the century.¹⁶⁶ As has just been discussed, this period also saw the increased entry of women into middle-class occupations. By challenging notions that the workplace was a male only sphere, these changes contributed to discourses of middle-class manliness becoming increasingly focussed on men’s physicality, fitness and courage, which were portrayed as being the toughest and most exclusively male attributes.¹⁶⁷

As the time frame which this thesis is operating in is the 1890s, Tosh’s model is very relevant when exploring the masculinities constructed by cycling club officers. As has been established, officer positions had a number of similarities to middle-class occupations, requiring members to handle finances, manage others, and oversee the general running and maintenance of their institution. How then did the ‘manly’ identities of club officers

¹⁶³ John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity?’, 186

¹⁶⁴ John Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrialising Society’, 335

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 335

¹⁶⁶ Martin Francis, ‘The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Masculinity’, *The Historical Journal* 45, (2002), 640-643

¹⁶⁷ John Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrialising Society’, 336-338

compare to those which middle-class men would have typically built through their workplaces and occupations in this period?

Cycling club gazettes, and articles in *Cycling*, both reveal that it was often the case that officers would win the respect and recognition of their fellow clubmen for their possession of a number of the 'masculine' attributes outlined by Tosh. As with middle-class occupations, the roles of club captain, secretary, treasurer and committee member, were renowned for requiring large amounts of hard work and effort. An article which *Cycling* published in 1892, asked,

'As for the treasurer what does he do? Merely writes a paltry one hundred or so letters a week, begging members to pay their subscriptions, and keeps the accounts. And then he has the cheek to say he has a lot to do. Why anybody who knows how, could do the treasurer's work in six hours a day easily.'¹⁶⁸

Whilst the writer of the piece undoubtedly overstated the work required of a club's treasurer, the amount of time and exertion required of those serving as club officers was widely acknowledged both by members of clubs, and other articles in *Cycling*. One of these, published in 1891, described how,

'The work of a secretary of a cycling club, that is if he be a conscientious one who does his duty, is ceaseless and endless. Race meetings, road races, tours, dances, or whatever else may be on the boards at the time- all entail an immense amount of forethought, management, and real hard work.'¹⁶⁹

The amount of 'real hard work' which came with these roles meant that members who successfully filled officer positions were frequently praised for their physical vigour and energy. This was an association further reinforced by the fact that those who served as officers performed these roles in their spare time. Club secretaries received particular commendation for their vitality and energy, as they were required to take on the greatest amount of responsibility for arranging and planning club activities. J.A. Church, secretary for the Eastern Counties Road Club, was praised in *Cycling* for being a 'very energetic honorary worker for the sport'.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, a piece titled 'The Model Wheel Club' stated

¹⁶⁸ *Cycling*, Issue 99, (December 10th 1892), 367

¹⁶⁹ *Cycling*, Issue 33, (September 5th 1891), 110

¹⁷⁰ *Cycling*, Issue 3, (February 7th 1891), 41

that, 'such a club must be in the hands of *energetics*. An energetic secretary is an absolute necessity'.¹⁷¹

The voluntary nature of officer positions also meant those working in these roles would frequently win the approval of their club mates for their straightforwardness. Discourses of 'manly straightforwardness' stated that middle-class men's motivation to work should not rest on hopes of external gain or profit, but rather the unpretentious and dutiful nature of their inner character.¹⁷² Such languages can be found further on in *Cycling's* article describing the work of a club secretary, which asked,

'What is the motive that induces men up and down the country, and all over the world, to put themselves through all this work and anxiety and thankless thought? It is not the hope of pecuniary gain...neither is it a thirst for honour, the few who do take the post simply from personal vanity very soon drop it against- they are not stayers. A real love and belief in his club, a real love for and belief in the sport, are the two motive powers that alone can set an hon. Sec. and keep him at it; and in a sport like ours, where clubs are active from January to December, he is kept at it with a vengeance.'¹⁷³

Similarly, after the captain of the Stanley C.C. resigned his post in 1898, an article in the club's gazette stated,

'To Ludovici I venture to say, the Stanley men appreciate your work for the club, emphatically for the club. With you there has been no self-seeking, no personal advertisement; the kudos you have won has been won by steady, straightforward, self-sacrificing work done by a Stanley man with heart and soul for the Stanley Club.'¹⁷⁴

Languages of 'straightforwardness' were particularly prevalent in monthly character pieces in the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C., which praised and described prominent members of their club. One committee member was praised for working in a 'thorough yet unostentatious manner',¹⁷⁵ whilst a piece on the club captain, W.R. Britton stated how,

'There is an undoubted charm about his personality by his straightforward, quiet and unpretentious manner, which has won him admiration from all his fellow clubmen.'¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ *Cycling*, Issue 1, (January 24th 1891), 18

¹⁷² Martin Danahay, *Gender at Work*, 7-8

¹⁷³ *Cycling*, Issue 33, (September 5th 1891), 110

¹⁷⁴ *The Stanley Gazette* 7, Issue 73, (February 1898), 6

¹⁷⁵ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (May 1897), 35

¹⁷⁶ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (February 1897), 10

Taken together, these sources strongly suggest that cycling club officers achieved recognition from their fellow clubmen as a result of their possession of ‘manly’ qualities, which would have also won them acknowledgement and recognition in their occupations. The amount of hard work officer positions required, combined with their voluntary nature, meant that those serving in these roles were frequently praised for their physical vigour and energy, as well as their ‘manly straightforwardness’. As highlighted by the work of Tosh, these were ‘masculine’ qualities which late nineteenth-century middle-class society strongly associated with men succeeding in their occupations and rising up the professional ladder.

However, these discussions also raise a number of questions. It can be recognised that the central purpose of an 1890s cycling club, in enabling members to enjoy and make the most of their leisure time, was markedly different to that of a middle-class business, in returning a profit. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the emphasis which clubs gave promoting gratification and enjoyment amongst their memberships, meant that club officers, and in-particular club captains, utilised different approaches when managing their fellow clubmen, to those which would have been used by middle-class employers.

The next section will look to further explore these differences, and examine how they impacted on the ‘masculinities’ constructed by club officers. Did the unique requirements of these roles mean that club officers achieved the respect and admiration of their fellow clubmen for possessing ‘manly’ qualities which would have been much less valued in their occupations? The next section will begin to explore these questions by examining the processes by which members were elected to officer positions.

Iron Constitutions, Genial Temperaments and Jovial Faces

If a member of a 1890s cycling wished wanted to serve as an officer, then they first needed to be elected by their fellow clubmen. These elections would take place during a club’s Annual General Meeting, or A.G.M. Whilst existing members would stand for re-election, it appears that if they wished to continue in their role that such a process was a mere formality, with the Annual Circular of the Anfield B.C. revealing that no members would stand against those seeking to be re-elected.¹⁷⁷ For vacant positions, it was typically the case that two members would put themselves forward to be chosen by a popular ballot.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, ‘Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1894’, 21-23

¹⁷⁸ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, ‘Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1895’, 17-19

That serving as a club officer required members to be elected by their fellow clubmen raises the question of why were certain clubmen chosen over others? Was it solely because of their possession of qualities outlined in the previous section, in energy, vigour and straightforwardness? Or would their ownership of other 'manly' qualities and traits increase their chances of success? Answers to these questions can be found in an article which appeared in *Cycling* in 1893, titled, 'Brawn versus Brain'. The writer of the piece described how upon joining a club you would be likely to meet one member, who would possess,

'A very extraordinary and awe-inspiring combination, no less than the union of a pair of lungs of abnormal capacity with an exceptional flexibility of the ankle muscles...In a very short period of time you will find this member the oracle of the club and (unless he under Providence, rises superior to it) becoming chief director of its destinies.'¹⁷⁹

The article recognised how within cycling clubs, individuals who were renowned for their energy and stamina would quickly win the respect and admiration of others. However, the reasons why these members attained to officer positions, was not because of a recognition that these qualities would enable them to effectively deal with the heavy demands of these roles. Rather, it was because in organisations whose activities were focussed around exercise and physical activity, these individuals were the ones who were most likely to be highly regarded among their fellow clubmen. The writer described how he was well acquainted with a club in which the committee was 'composed entirely of the leading riders', and used this assertion to argue that,

'Herein lies the difference (for which let us all be grateful) between a cycling club and a timber business. Through some great error of reasoning it is not considered that the man who can carry the most baulks on a swaying plank from a barge to a stack, is the man to take charge of the counting-house of the firm, to control its buying and selling, and to manage its investments.'¹⁸⁰

It can be recognised that the writer of the article may well have over-exaggerated the extent to which being a talented, fast-paced rider resulted in members of clubs being elected to officer positions. However, I would argue that the physically demanding nature of cycling club life, meant that the 'masculinities' of those serving as officers would be much more focussed around their bodily fitness and energy than in their occupations.

¹⁷⁹ *Cycling*, Issue 154, (December 30th, 1893), 449

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 449

Whilst these would have also undoubtedly been recognised ‘manly’ qualities within their workplaces, in cycling clubs they would have been a much more established means by which members could win the respect of others, and attain to high-ranking positions.

This can be seen in one of the monthly character pieces in the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C., which detailed their committee member, C.J. Ford. Ford was described as having won the respect and admiration of his fellow clubmen not only through his ‘honest, straightforward qualities and genial temperament’, but also his ‘great strength and wonderful stamina’.¹⁸¹ Whilst it certainly seems likely that the former set of qualities would have seen him being well-regarded in his workplace, the same cannot be said for the latter. Although his work colleagues may well have valued the ‘energetic’ approach he took to his work, their opinion of him would have been much less informed by a recognition of his bodily strength and fitness, as these are qualities very rarely required of men working in middle-class occupations.¹⁸²

However, it must also be recognised that whilst members’ physical fitness and stamina may well have helped them attain to senior positions within clubs, the only officer role which involved any form of physical exertion was that of club captain. This raises the question of when actively serving in their roles as club officers, how did the ‘masculinities’ constructed by members compare to those which men from the middle classes would have typically built through their occupations? Whilst working as officers, did members of cycling clubs ‘enact’ masculine qualities which they would have showcased much less frequently in their workplaces?

When exploring these questions, it is useful to return to discussions from the previous chapter. It was here established that because cycle clubs were institutions which looked to ensure that members found pleasure and enjoyment during their leisure time, captains were required to use much ‘softer’ approaches when managing their fellow clubmen than would have typically been utilised by senior figures in middle-class workplaces. I would argue that these discussions can be extended to all members who served in officer positions. For instance, further on in *Cycling’s* article on the work of club secretaries, it was described how,

‘There are the personal squabbles and jealousies among members to be smoothed down in a fatherly way; the indifference of some to be warmed into enthusiasm, the excessive

¹⁸¹ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (December 1897), 103

¹⁸² Martin Danahay, *Gender at Work*, 5-15

buoyancy of others to be checked with tact, and perhaps on rare occasions the most difficult and unpleasant duty of all, to tell a member the club have washed their hands of him.’¹⁸³

The next section will further explore the familial languages evidenced in this piece, and how the responsibilities held by club officers would have compared to middle-class fathers. However, for discussions in this section, the source further highlights the ways in which club officers would ‘softly’ wield their authority, as they ‘tactfully’ dealt with overly ‘buoyant’ clubmen, and looked to coax and cajole other members out of their indifference to club activities.

This understanding helps to explain why those serving in these positions would frequently achieve recognition from their club mates because of their personable, friendly qualities. This is evidenced in the article on C.J. Ford, which stated how his ‘genial temperament’ was one of the factors which had won him the ‘respect and admiration’ of his fellow members. These themes can also be seen in an article which appeared in *Cycling* describing Paul Bans, who was captain of the Nechells C.C. from Birmingham. The piece stated how Bans was, ‘One of the best known of Birmingham cyclists. His jovial face and everlasting good humour have won him friends wherever he has gone...He has an iron constitution, and his burley physique impresses one with this fact. He has been Captain of the Nechells C.C. for four years, and his strong right arm has come in useful with his ‘boys’ on several occasions. He is the model of a captain, and the Nechellites would be sorry indeed to lose their jolly Frenchman.’¹⁸⁴

The piece firstly picks up on themes discussed earlier, highlighting how as club captain, Bans’ ‘iron constitution’ and ‘burley physique’ were key aspects of his identity within his club. Because he was responsible for taking charge of club runs, these qualities had clearly helped him win the respect and recognition of others. Not only would they have made him a very capable cyclist, but his ‘strong right arm’ was also a means of managing the behaviours of ‘his boys’.

However, central to Bans being ‘the model of a captain’ was also his ‘jovial face’ and ‘everlasting good humour’. Although he might discipline ‘his boys’, taken as a whole the article highlights how he represented a ‘soft’ authority figure, who was heavily defined by

¹⁸³ *Cycling*, Issue 33, (September 5th, 1891), 110

¹⁸⁴ *Cycling*, Issue 4, (February 14th, 1891) 57

his cheerfulness and joviality. It was these qualities which had ‘won him friends wherever he has gone’, and combined with his physical strength and fitness meant that ‘the Nechellites would be sorry indeed to lose their jolly Frenchman.’

It is important to recognise that by themselves, skills in sociability which made men popular with others, were rarely presented as being normative middle-class ‘masculine’ qualities in the late nineteenth century. For men to win the respect of their peers solely as a result of their geniality and good-humour, was recognised to be in tension with the heavy attention that discourses of middle-class masculinity gave to a man’s inner character. This can be seen in W.J. Dawson’s book, *The Threshold of Manhood*, published in 1889. Dawson criticised the fact that in universities, barracks and clubs there existed,

‘An inordinate worship of merely intellectual force or the qualities of personal fascination. You ask is he witty? Can he sing a good song? Is he clever? Can he tell a good story?’¹⁸⁵

However, during this period discourses of middle-class masculinity would often state the desirability of men combining the types of ‘inward’ qualities and attributes outlined by Tosh, with a wider set of skills which enabled them to form friendly, personable relationships with others.¹⁸⁶ This is evidenced in an article which appeared in *Chums*, a magazine targeted at boys from the middle classes, in 1893. The piece focussed on Lord Charles Beresford, a famous admiral and M.P., and stated,

‘Manly, straightforward, brave and true- such is Lord Charles Beresford at the present day, deservedly popular amongst all of whom he is thrown into contact, beloved by his fellow officers, worshipped by his men, and admired by all.’¹⁸⁷

That Beresford was ‘deservedly popular’, ‘beloved’ and ‘admired by all’ was recognised to be closely tied into the fact that he was ‘straightforward, brave and true’. However, Beresford’s ‘manliness’ also incorporated his possession of more sociable skills and qualities, which had equipped him to become a loved and respected figure. The article introduced Beresford as,

¹⁸⁵ W.J. Dawson, *The Threshold of Manhood: A Young Man’s Words to Young Men*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), 56-57

¹⁸⁶ Mark Girouard, ‘A Return to Camelot’, *The Wilson Quarterly* 5, (Autumn, 1981), 178-189

¹⁸⁷ *Chums*, Issue 51, (August 30th, 1893), 9

'A powerfully-built, genial man, in naval uniform, with a jovial, clean-shaven face, merry, honest blue eyes and greyish hair; a man of commanding presence, but yet a man with whom one feels at ease in a moment.'¹⁸⁸

The attention given to Beresford's 'genial', 'jovial', and 'merry' qualities, highlights how these attributes were recognised to be a central part of his 'manly' identity. It was not just his 'commanding presence', or the fact he was 'straightforward, brave and true' which had won him the admiration of others, but also his joviality and good-naturedness. The writer of the piece stated how by possessing this range of qualities Beresford had been able to independently 'make his way' in the world, as he had,

'Steadily and by his own unaided efforts worked his way up to the proud position of prominence in the navy which he now holds.'¹⁸⁹

It can be recognised that discourses of middle-class masculinity which focussed on men's ability to form friendly, personable relations with others, would have tied much more easily into the activities of cycling club officers, than senior figures in middle-class workplaces. Whilst languages of middle-class masculinity may have idealised men in positions of command being likeable and friendly figures, these were not qualities typically associated with employers, bosses and managers during the late nineteenth century.¹⁹⁰

As highlighted in the work of Hosgood, the roles of shopkeepers in this period meant they could demand large amounts of discipline and subservience from those under their charge, and did not require them to be individuals with whom their employees would 'feel at ease in a moment'.¹⁹¹ Clearly, such dynamics would have been much less present within 1890s cycling clubs. As has been discussed, the fact that the activities of clubs were focussed around members enjoying their leisure time, meant there would have been a much stronger emphasis on officers being well liked figures, defined by their geniality, joviality and merriment.

Taken together, the first two sections in this chapter have looked to highlight how serving as a cycling club officer, would have both connected middle-class men to 'manly' identities which they built through their workplaces, but also provided them with opportunities to

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 9

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 9

¹⁹⁰ Deborah Wynne, 'The 'Despised Trade' in Textiles: H.G. Wells, William Paine, Charles Cavers and the Male Draper's Life, 1870-1914', *Textile History* 46, (May, 2015), 106-108

¹⁹¹ Christopher Hosgood, 'Mercantile Monasteries', 322-352

explore new ways of 'doing' their masculinity. As with middle-class occupations, officer positions enabled members to clubs to showcase they were men who would carry out their work in a straightforward, vigorous and energetic fashion.

However, at the same time these roles placed a much heavier emphasis on middle-class men possessing jovial, cheerful and good-natured qualities than would have been the case in their employments. As well as this, unlike middle-class businesses possessing bodily fitness and strength was an established means by which members could win the respect of others and attain to these positions of seniority, whilst serving as a captain also enabled clubmen to actively showcase and affirm their physical capabilities.

Moreover, I would argue that this is an argument which can be further explored and developed. As was discussed in the previous chapter, clubs were not simply spaces in which members negotiated identities which they constructed in the workplace, but also the home. The ways in which older members serving as club captains would manage and monitor the behaviours of their younger clubmen, were recognised to have noticeable overlaps to the types of interactions which would have existed between middle-class fathers and their sons.

Sources used in this section have also touched upon the fact that the relations between club officers and their younger clubmen resembled those which existed in domestic environments. How then did the masculinities constructed by captains, secretaries, treasurers and committee members, compare to those typically built by middle-class fathers in the late nineteenth century? Exploring this question will be the focus of the next section.

Club Officers and Middle-Class Fathers

When examining the question above, it is useful to again return to discussions concerning the 'soft' ways in which club officers were required to manage their fellow clubmen. It was argued in the previous section that this meant that officers would frequently be praised for their joviality and good-naturedness. However, the article on club secretaries which appeared in *Cycling*, highlights that officers would also 'softly' manage others by using more tactful and diplomatic approaches, such as 'smoothing down' disputes between members.

By describing these more discrete and perceptive behaviours as 'fatherly', the writer of the article recognised how they were qualities which fathers would often showcase when

interacting with their children. These themes are further evidenced in another article in *Cycling*, quoted at the very beginning of this thesis, which described Earnest Leach, the captain of the Polytechnic C.C. It was stated how,

‘The Polytechnic racing boys of to-day look up to Leach as a benevolent father figure, whose advice must be followed at any cost, and the good show made by the Polyites in their recent match with the Catford, was to a great extent, due to the fatherly solicitude of Leach.’¹⁹²

As with the previous source, the ways in which Leach ‘solicitously’ guided his club’s younger members, were seen to parallel the types of relations which a father might enjoy with their children. Similar dynamics were also present in the interactions between Andrew MacMillan, the captain of the Hull S.A.C.C., and his younger clubmen which were explored in the previous chapter. By ‘explaining something about the stars’ in such a way that, ‘even the youngsters were spellbound and had not the desirability to scorch’, MacMillan was mentoring his club’s ‘youngsters’ in a manner that would have been commonly recognised as ‘fatherly’.¹⁹³

As such, whilst it can be argued that cycling club officers represented much ‘softer’ authority figures than would have typically been found in middle-class employers, it needs to be recognised that the ‘solicitous’ ways in which these individuals related to their younger clubmen, bore noticeable parallels to the ways in which middle-class fathers would have often interacted with their sons. Broughton and Rogers’ research into gender and fatherhood in the nineteenth century reinforces this argument. Because middle-class fathers had a duty to prepare their sons for the world outside of the home, a key part of their roles as fathers was to provide guidance and mentoring to their sons before their entry into the world of work.¹⁹⁴

As such, I would argue that ‘masculine’ qualities associated with middle-class fathers in the late nineteenth century, would also have been recognised as being suitably ‘manly’ when members of clubs viewed the work of their officers. As highlighted in the articles on Leach and MacMillan, more personable qualities and behaviours, which enabled officers to ‘solicitously’ guide their younger clubmen, were a means by which those serving as officers would win the respect and admiration of their fellow clubmen.

¹⁹² *Cycling*, Issue 127, (June 24th, 1893), 386

¹⁹³ Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers, ‘Introduction’, 4-6

¹⁹⁴ Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers, ‘Introduction’, 4-6

However, it is important to recognise that the masculinities constructed by club officers would have also contained differences to those built by middle-class fathers. As has been previously outlined, central to the 'manly' identity of a middle-class father, was their ability to exercise strict authority over their children, as well as 'solicitously' mentoring them.¹⁹⁵ By contrast, in positions which did not give individuals the types of authority and power held by heads of households, and were focussed around ensuring that others found pleasure in their leisure time, skills in sociability and 'genial temperaments' formed much bigger parts of the 'masculine' identities of cycling club officers.

I would therefore argue that the 'manly' identities of officers, and in-particular club captains, both resembled, but also contrasted from those which were typically constructed by middle-class fathers in this period. This raises the question: what were the typical ages of cycling club officers? By detailing the ways in which officers managed their clubs' younger members, sources used in this, and the previous chapter, have suggested that officers were typically men in later stages of the life cycle. Was it then the case that club captains, secretaries, treasurers and committee members were usually older members of clubs, who would subsequently use these positions to re-work identities that they constructed in their home lives?

The gazettes analysed by this thesis certainly suggest that a very high proportion of cycling club officers were men over thirty. Paul Ludovici, who served as captain of the Stanley C.C. from 1892 to 1898 was thirty-seven when he retired the captaincy to Thomas Scarfe, aged thirty.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, W.R. Britton, the captain of the Bristol B.T.C. was in his early thirties when the club's gazette was published in 1897.¹⁹⁷ Whilst the gazette of the Hull S.A.C.C. did not list the age of their captain, Andrew Macmillan, a piece describing him stated that 'in his younger years', during 1866 to 1871 he engaged in competitive cycling, suggesting that at the time of writing in 1896 he was in his mid-forties to early fifties.¹⁹⁸

It was not just the case that club captains would typically be men who had moved beyond their twenties. W.G. Teed, the secretary of the Stanley C.C. was thirty-one when he was appointed to the role in 1892, whilst the club's treasurer for much of the 1890s, W.R. Rex,

¹⁹⁵ Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood*, 2-19

¹⁹⁶ *The Stanley Gazette* 7, Issue 73, (February 1898), 6, 1901 UK Census (database online). Ukcensonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 10th 2015]

¹⁹⁷ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (February 1897), 10

¹⁹⁸ *Cyclorn* 3, (Issue 2, May 1896) 4

was a man in his forties.¹⁹⁹ Lawrence Fletcher, who served as secretary of the Anfield B.C. in the early years of the decade, was described as being one of the 'boys of the old brigade' in their Annual Circular, a group which also included D.R. Fell and H.B. Saunders, who served on the club's committee.²⁰⁰

With the average age of marriage of middle-class men in this period thought to be around thirty, it certainly seems likely that a good proportion of those men serving as club officers were married men, who may well have been fathers to children.²⁰¹ A piece in the gazette of the Stanley C.C. detailed how many of the club's 'hard working officers' were married,²⁰² whilst census records reveal that club officers W.G. Teed and Paul Ludovici were men who had entered matrimony and fathered children.²⁰³

However, even if older members serving as club officers had not yet entered fatherhood, it can be recognised that the interactions which they enjoyed with their younger clubmen, would have created distinctive opportunities for these more junior members to re-work and develop 'manly' identities which they constructed in other areas of their lives. As was established in the previous section, when combined with a broader set of more inward facing attributes, skills in sociability were highly regarded middle-class 'masculine' attributes in the late nineteenth century. It was recognised that possession of these qualities would support middle-class men in their struggle to independently 'make their way' in the world, as they would help them win the respect and confidence of their peers and superiors.²⁰⁴

Middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties would have, over the course of their lives, experienced plenty of opportunities to develop these skills with men of their own age, whether in homes, schools, universities or workplaces. However, learning how to form sociable, friendly relations with men older than themselves in these environments would have been much more difficult. It can be recognised that the authority and power held by senior figures in each of these settings, and the limited amounts of time they spent

¹⁹⁹ 1901 UK Census (database online). Ukcensonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 10th 2015]

²⁰⁰ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, 'Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1890', 11

²⁰¹ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 108-109

²⁰² *The Stanley Gazette* 1, Issue 3, (April, 1892) 32

²⁰³ 1901 UK Census (database online). Ukcensonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 10th 2015]

²⁰⁴ Mark Girouard, 'A Return to Camelot', 184-187

interacting with younger men, would have done much to prevent relaxed and affable relationships forming between them.²⁰⁵

Certainly, these imbalances could have created intergenerational dynamics in which younger middle-class men would be mentored by those older than themselves. As well as homes, schools and universities, and to a certain extent, workplaces were also spaces in which young middle-class men might expect to experience the 'solicitous' guidance which club captains and other officers provided to more junior members of clubs.²⁰⁶ However, I would argue that cycling clubs would have held far more prospect for middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties, developing cordial and convivial relationships with older men in positions of authority than any of these other sites.

In contrast to these other settings, the activities of clubs encouraged far greater amounts of intergenerational mixing and interaction. Club runs, and in-particular those led by a captain, would have seen members of different ages spending far more time in each other's company, than would have been the case in workplaces, homes and universities.²⁰⁷ As was also discussed in the previous chapter, the fact that the goings-on of clubs took place in homosocial environments, and were focussed around members' common enthusiasms for cycling and desires for sociability, meant that intergenerational relationships within cycling clubs were much more relaxed and convivial than those which would have existed in any of these other settings.

These themes can be further seen in an article in *Cycling*, which was quoted in the last chapter, and detailed the changes that had occurred in a club after the introduction of a female member. The piece described how the club was captained by a Colonel, who was older than the writer of the article and many of the club's non-official members. It was stated how during a club run 'Billy Graheme', who was one of these members,

'Asked the Colonel innocently-, 'I say Captain, why shouldn't we have lady members in our club?' This remark acted like a bombshell in our midst. 'Ladies!' echoed the colonel...'I am sure', with a withering glance at the unsuspecting Billy, 'the club has deteriorated enough

²⁰⁵ J.A. Mangan, 'Bullies, Beatings, Battles and Bruises: 'Great Days and Jolly Days' at One Mid-Victorian Public School', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, (January-February 2010) 32-59

²⁰⁶ David Newsome, *Edwardian Excursions, from the Diaries of A.C. Benson 1898-1904*, (London: John Murray, 1981) 42-53

²⁰⁷ John Tosh, *A Man's Place* 93-99

during the last six months (N.B. It is just six months since Billy joined us) without a lot of forward girls joining!

Silence reigned for a short time after this awful speech, and then Billy returned boldly to the charge. 'Well', he said, 'what makes me suggest it, I have a cousin who rides and rides well, too, and she was saying the other day how she would like to join a really nice club, and I thought I would mention it to you fellows, that's all.' 'I don't approve of women riding bicycles', returned the Colonel loftily, 'they ought to stay at home and mind the babies.'²⁰⁸

As previously acknowledged, it is unclear to what extent the article was based on the actual experiences of the writer. However, even if they did fabricate the events described, it seems very probable that the author did in-part base the relationship between 'the Colonel' and his younger clubmen on their own experiences of club life. Their interactions clearly showcase how the club captain represented an individual who younger members felt comfortable approaching and socialising with. Whilst representing a figure of authority, who was worthy of a certain amount of deference and respect, he was at the same time someone with whom they enjoyed cordial relationships, and good-natured banter.

I would therefore argue that membership of cycling clubs, provided distinctive opportunities for middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties to develop skills in sociability with men in later life stages. Spending time with club officers, and in-particular club captains, enabled younger middle-class men to both learn how to respectfully interact with figures more senior than themselves, but also how to relate to them in a genial and sociable manner. For middle-class men in early stages of the life cycle, whose opportunities for advancement in their careers were closely tied into their ability to impress and get on with men older and more authoritative than themselves, it can be recognised that learning and acquiring these 'manly' skills and behaviours would have been highly valuable and useful.

These arguments help develop discussions from the previous sections of this chapter. It can be recognised that for older members who were husbands and fathers in their home lives, serving as a cycling club officer was a means of developing and re-working the 'masculinities' which they constructed in the domestic sphere. Whilst clubs valued officers possessing 'fatherly' qualities which enabled them to guide and mentor those younger than

²⁰⁸ *Cycling*, Issue 159, (February 3rd, 1894) 45

themselves, they also placed a higher premium on them being more jovial and sociable figures than would have been the case in home environments.

The intergenerational dynamics which this created, provided members in their late teens and early to mid-twenties with distinctive opportunities to develop skills in sociability with older and more senior middle-class men. Cycling club officers, and in-particular club captains, represented much more approachable and friendly authority figures than younger middle-class men would have usually encountered in other areas of their lives. Membership of clubs therefore enabled them to both learn how to respectfully handle themselves around men older than themselves, but also how to socialise and form cordial relationships with them.

The final section to this chapter will now look to develop these arguments one step further, by examining whether 1890s cycling clubs gave younger members opportunities to serve as officers. Whilst it has been recognised that those working in officer roles were typically in more advanced life stages, might clubs have also given members in their late teens and early to mid-twenties opportunities to attain to these positions? If this was the case, how would serving as a club captain, secretary, treasurer or committee member have enabled younger clubmen to develop 'masculinities' which they constructed in other areas of their lives? These next section will start to explore these questions by further examining the ages of officers in the clubs who form the basis of this thesis.

Learning to Speak, Act and Govern

Cycling club gazettes and circulars being analysed by this thesis suggest that, whilst younger members may have occasionally been elected as club officers, for the most part these were roles filled by clubmen in later stages of the life cycle. One club who does appear to have provided some opportunities for members in earlier life stages to achieve these positions is the Anfield B.C. Their club secretary for much of the 1890s, Harry Spence was just twenty-four years old when he gained this position in 1893, whilst two members who served on their committee in 1890 were described as 'youngsters' in their Annual Circular.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ *Anfield Bicycle Club*, 'Reports and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 1890', 11-12, *1901 UK Census* (database online). Ukcenssonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 10th 2015]

However, none of the other clubs being examined seem to have held similar prospects for younger members looking to serve in these positions. This can be seen to reflect the fact that captains, secretaries, treasurers and committee members needed to be elected by their fellow clubmen. As such, longer serving members would have had more opportunities to win the respect and admiration of others, and demonstrate to them that they were individuals who could be trusted to officer roles.

Despite this, I would argue that, on a wider level, 1890s cycling clubs provided members in their late teens and early to mid-twenties with frequent opportunities to take on these positions. The Stanley C.C., Bristol B.T.C., Anfield B.C. and Hull S.A.C.C. were all well-established clubs, founded well before the period being studied, which meant they were home to a number of older members who had belonged to their institutions for long periods of time. Several of the influential figures described in the 1897 gazette of the Bristol B.T.C. were individuals who had been at the club since its foundation twenty-one years previously.²¹⁰

By contrast, many cycling clubs active in the 1890s were founded at much later dates. The growth in popularity of cycling following the invention of the safety bicycle and pneumatic tyre in the mid-1880s, led to a corresponding increase in clubs.²¹¹ A number of these were formed by younger men from the middle classes, and the average age of members would have therefore seemingly been much lower than the clubs who form the basis of this study. One of the key founders of the Catford C.C. was Chas Sisley when he was aged just nineteen, and Biddle-Perry's study of this institution highlights that members were predominately middle-class men in their late teens and twenties.²¹²

Clubs such as these can be recognised to have held far more prospects for younger members looking to attain to officer positions. Sisley himself served as secretary of the Catford C.C. for a number of years after its foundation.²¹³ Census data also reveals that Paul Bans, the captain of the Nechells C.C. examined earlier, was twenty-four when he took on this role.²¹⁴ Similarly, an article in *Cycling* on H. Hammond, the captain of the Essex

²¹⁰ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (Issue 3, March 1897) 17, *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, (Issue 5, May 1897), 35

²¹¹ *The Leeds Evening Express*, (April 16th, 1898) 2, Zoe Lawson, 'Wheels Within Wheels', 131-133

²¹² Geraldine Biddle-Perry, 'Fashioning Suburban Aspiration', 193-197

²¹³ *Ibid*, 196-197

²¹⁴ 1901 UK Census (database online). Ukcensonline.com. (Genealogy Supplies, Jersey) [accessed April 15th 2015]

Wheeler, described how at the time of writing, he was just twenty-three years old.²¹⁵

These different examples highlight how, on a nationwide scale, 1890s English cycling clubs often provided members in earlier life stages with opportunities to serve as club officers.

To what extent then would serving in these roles have enabled younger members of clubs to develop and re-imagine masculinities which they constructed in other areas of their lives? As was discussed earlier in this chapter, members serving as officers were valued for possessing a range of 'manly' qualities which would have also been valued in their workplaces, such as a capacity for carrying out hard work in an energetic and 'straightforward' manner. At the same time, the 'masculine' identities of club officers were much more focussed around their 'genial temperaments' and ability to get on with others, than would have been the case in their occupations.

However, I would also argue that for middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties, serving as a club officer would have provided additional opportunities for them to develop 'manly' identities which they constructed through their employments. This was life stage in which they would have only just started out in their careers, meaning they would typically be employed in junior roles. Before attaining to more responsible, authoritative and well-paid positions, they would have needed to demonstrate through low-level forms of employment, that they possessed the skills and temperaments necessary to handle these more senior roles.²¹⁶

It can therefore be recognised that officer positions, which required younger members to exercise authority over others, manage finances, and oversee the day-to-day running of their particular institution, would have given them responsibilities and duties which they rarely experienced in their workplaces. These themes were clearly recognised in an article which appeared in *Cycling* in 1898, titled 'The Cycle as an Educator'. The writer of the piece stated how,

'Entering more particularly into certain phases of cycledom, we might enumerate many benefits resulting from our duties in connection with club life. Most of us aspire to official positions, and some make very capable officers. The benefits we derive from these, comparatively minor duties, cannot be overestimated. They train us to speak, to act, and to

²¹⁵ *Cycling*, Issue 137, (September 2nd, 1893), 111

²¹⁶ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 108-110

govern- invaluable in later life, when we aspire, perhaps, to more potent and responsible positions.’²¹⁷

Within late nineteenth century middle-class society, skills associated with managing others, and handling positions of responsibility, were widely understood as being desirably ‘masculine’ attributes for men to possess. Being able ‘to speak, to act and to govern’ were key qualities if men from the middle classes wanted to independently make their way in the world, and attain to ‘potent and responsible positions’ in their occupations. As recognised in the article quoted above, handling the duties and requirements of officer positions, provided distinctive opportunities for younger middle-class men to develop and affirm their possession of these normative ‘manly’ skills and attributes.

Taken together, the different sections in this chapter have highlighted how the work of cycling club officers, and the relationships which they experienced with their fellow clubmen, enabled members of 1890s cycling clubs to explore a variety of different ways in which they could ‘do’ their masculinity. For both older and younger members, serving in these roles allowed them to further develop and affirm their possession of ‘manly’ qualities which they would have frequently ‘enacted’ in both home and work environments.

However, working as club officers also allowed men from the middle classes to try out and practice new ways in which they could ‘be’ manly. The qualities, behaviours and skills which members of clubs valued in those working as officers, enabled those who filled these roles to re-work and re-imagine masculinities which they constructed in home and work environments. The distinctive set of intergenerational relationships this created, have also been recognised to have provided younger members of clubs with unique opportunities to learn and develop a range of ‘masculine’ skills and qualities. The roles of club officers enabled both those who filled these positions, and their fellow clubmen, to explore the multi-faceted nature of middle-class masculinity, and the various understandings present in late nineteenth century middle-class society of what it meant for men to ‘be’ manly.

Conclusion

This chapter began by asking how studies of middle-class masculinity during the late nineteenth century, could be used to further conceptualise the rich range of relationships and identities identified to have existed within 1890s cycling clubs. As evidenced by discussions above, discourses of late-nineteenth century middle-class masculinity provide a

²¹⁷ *Cycling*, Issue 370, (February 19th, 1898), 125

useful conceptual tool when researching the activities of cycling club officers, the identities they constructed, and the relationships which they experienced with their fellow clubmen.

It has been established that the work of club officers, and the interactions they enjoyed with their fellow clubmen, enabled members in various life stages to re-imagine 'masculinities' which they would have constructed in home and work environments. As such, this chapter has understood cycling clubs as sites which enabled members to explore, try out and practice a variety of ways in which they could 'be' manly. I would argue that such a conceptualisation is a useful way by which the historian can understand these institutions, as it brings into focus the wide range of activities, and rich set of relationships, which existed within cycling clubs.

Previous research into middle-class sports clubs during the nineteenth century have recognised how their sporting activities enabled members to explore a variety of ways in which they could 'perform' their masculinity. Melanie Tebbutt's study of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers from 1880-1920, highlights how by rambling in Derbyshire's peaks, members of this club were able to affirm their possession of normative 'masculine' qualities and attributes, such as physical strength and stamina, and mental toughness and resilience. However, at the same time Tebbutt recognises that the men who belonged to this institution were 'romantics', who through their activities found 'emotional release more usually constrained by the conventions and expectations of contemporary manliness.'²¹⁸

That the physical and sporting activities of middle-class sports clubs allowed members to practice a variety of ways in which they could 'be' manly, is also recognised in Peter Hansen's study of Alpine clubs in the mid-Victorian period, and Biddle-Perry's article on the Catford C.C.²¹⁹ However, discussions in this chapter have looked to showcase the wider and more varied opportunities which cycling clubs provided for members to 'do' their masculinity. Just as 'scorching' up a hill would have enabled younger members to affirm and assert their manliness to their fellow clubmen, so would winning the respect of others by being a hard-working, 'straightforward' club officer, or using weekly runs as opportunities to socialise with their club captain.

²¹⁸ Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and a Manly Identity', 1149-1153

²¹⁹ Peter Hansen, 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club', 312-324, Geraldine Biddle-Perry, 'Fashioning Suburban Aspiration', 200-202

These discussions have built on arguments made at the end of the previous chapter, which stated that cycling and other sports clubs should not simply be understood as sites of escape, which offered ‘cathartic release’ from the home and work lives of members. As has been identified at various points in this chapter, serving as a club officer enabled members of clubs to re-work and re-imagine, but by no means completely move on from, masculinities which they would have constructed in both these other settings. By examining these similarities, this thesis is looking to highlight the historical importance of cycling clubs and other voluntary sporting institutions, and showcase how they can inform other fields of academic study.

This, I would argue, is particularly relevant when analysing younger middle-class men, and the ‘masculinities’ which they constructed through their membership of cycling clubs. It has been established that both the relationships which members in their late teens and early to mid-twenties experienced with club officers, and the opportunities which they may have had to serve in these positions, allowed them to learn and develop a wide range of ‘manly’ qualities, which were strongly associated with middle-class men advancing in their occupations.

This is an area of research which has received little historical attention or research. When discussing the activities of younger middle-class men within sports clubs and other all-male leisure associations during the nineteenth century, historians have given a far greater emphasis to the opportunities these institutions provided for sociability, and the enjoyment of ‘more sinful’ behaviours. For instance, Tosh has argued that,

‘The appeal of all-male conviviality is probably greatest among young unmarried men who are temporarily denied the full privileges of masculinity: the journeymen’s association, the street gang, the sports club.’²²⁰

Similar arguments have been made by Mike Huggins, who has recognised that the free time and lack of responsibility enjoyed by young middle-class men in the Victorian period, meant they were particularly prone to enjoying ‘less respectable’ pleasures during their leisure time.²²¹ The work of Huggins and Tosh certainly highlights that the appeal of cycling clubs to middle-class men who were unmarried and in earlier stages of the life cycle, would have extended well beyond the discussions above. As will be explored in the next chapter, they

²²⁰ John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity?’, 187

²²¹ Mike Huggins, ‘More Sinful Pleasures?’ 589-590

were also institutions which enabled them to relax and engage in more boisterous and unruly behaviours after busy working weeks.

However, it is important to also acknowledge the wider benefits which becoming a member of a cycling club would have had to middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties. These were not simply sites in which they would experience lively all-male conviviality, but also spaces in which they could receive 'fatherly solicitude' from men older than themselves, learn how to socialise and handle themselves when interacting with authority figures, and affirm their ability 'to speak, to act and to govern'. Recognising these wider processes not only provides a more rounded picture of the activities and goings-on of sports clubs. It also helps further establish their historical significance, and how they were closely connected to other areas in the lives of members.

Whilst discussions in this chapter have not explicitly drawn on the studies of Fine, I would argue they further showcase how drawing on his work allows the historian to find new ways of conceptualising and approaching studies of sports clubs. As was explored in the previous chapter, his notion of 'idiocultures' highlights the diverse range of different interactions and relationships which were present within 1890s English cycling clubs. Arguments made in the sections above have showcased how further exploring these interactions and relationships, brings to light how members of these institutions would practice and try out of variety of ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity, which have rarely been recognised or explored in historical studies of voluntary sporting institutions.

The final chapter of this thesis will now look to explore the wider range of masculinities which were constructed by members of cycling clubs. Discussions in this chapter have focussed primarily on the activities of club officers, and the manly identities which they built by serving in these positions. As such, there is a need to explore in much greater detail the masculinities which members built when engaging in the more general activities and goings on of their clubs.

By giving its focus to this area, the next chapter will aim to build on and develop arguments made in the first two chapters of this thesis. It will look to both further outline how membership of cycling clubs enabled men from the middle classes to explore a variety of ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity, and also how the masculinities they constructed would have compared to those they built in home and work settings. By

exploring these processes, it intends to provide a more rounded picture of the appeal and significance of these institutions to middle-class men living through the 1890s.

Chapter Three- Homosociality, Masculinities and Club Excursions

As has just been outlined, the purpose of this final chapter is to further explore the masculinities which men from the middle classes constructed through their membership of 1890s cycling clubs. In-particular, it will focus on how members of these institutions interacted with discourses of middle-class masculinity when cycling together as a group, either on club runs or club tours. By moving its attention away from the work of club officers, and towards the more general activities and goings on of clubs, it is looking to provide a wider analysis of the processes by which members of clubs negotiated and interpreted late nineteenth-century discourses of middle-class masculinity.

It can quickly be recognised that these processes will be noticeably different to those analysed in the preceding chapter, which explored the activities of club captains, secretaries, treasurers and committee members. As was outlined there, members valued straightforward, hard-working officers, who were also able to get on well with others, because by possessing these attributes they could effectively carry out positions which required them to both organise their clubs' activities, and 'softly' manage their fellow clubmen.

By contrast, club runs and tours were activities primarily focussed around facilitating individual enjoyment, allowing clubmen to indulge both their shared enthusiasms for cycling, and desires for sociability with each other. It can therefore be recognised that when participating in these activities, members of clubs would have understood a different set of qualities and traits as being desirably manly. From this assertion come two questions which will form the basis of this chapter. First, what types of behaviours did members view as being masculine when they participated in their clubs' cycling excursions? Second, what were the reasons why these behaviours were collectively understood as being manly?

When exploring these questions, this chapter will again draw on the work of Gary Alan Fine and his notion of 'idiocultures'.²²² Whilst Fine has not applied this concept to gender studies, it can be recognised that the process of creating shared 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', would have involved members of cycling clubs interacting with discourses of middle-class masculinity. The concept of 'idiocultures' highlights how when on club runs and tours, the behaviours of and interactions between members, would

²²² Gary Alan Fine, 'Small Groups and Culture Creation', 733-745

have been strongly informed by shared group understandings of which traits and attributes were acceptably 'masculine'.

This chapter will also draw on studies which have recognised how the homosocial nature of all-male leisure groups, strongly influences the ways in which men 'position' their masculinity when spending time in these environments. The work of Sharon Bird has highlighted how the exclusion of women from group activities, will frequently result in men moving away from behaviours or activities which could be interpreted as 'feminine'.²²³ As was discussed in the Chapter One, in the late nineteenth century this would often involve middle-class men behaving in a way which was much less 'respectable' when compared to home environments.²²⁴ As well as this, the emphasis these institutions give to men 'blowing off steam', means that boisterous and unruly behaviours are much more likely to be viewed as acceptably 'manly' than in homes or workplaces.²²⁵

As will be explored in the sections below, the homosocial nature of club runs and tours, combined with the fact that members were out to make the most of their leisure time, meant that the masculinities which they constructed through these activities, were often far removed from those which middle-class men would have typically built in home and work settings. On the surface, this appears to be an argument which undermines discussions from the first two chapters of this thesis, which have explored how the identities of members, and their relationships they experienced with each other, often bore parallels to the home and work lives of members. However, that clubmen would engage in more 'unruly' or less 'respectable' behaviours whilst on club runs and tours, does nothing to detract from a recognition that, in many other instances, their identities and interactions drew on models which from middle-class homes and workplaces.

Moreover, the previous two chapters have not looked to argue that middle-class men would simply carry over their home and work selves when participating in the activities of their local cycling club. Both have recognised that clubs were sites in which members' re-worked and developed identities and relationships which they would typically construct and experience in both these settings. I would therefore argue that the 'masculinities'

²²³ Sharon Bird, 'Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity', *Gender and Society* 10, (April, 1996) 125-127

²²⁴ Mike Huggins, 'More Sinful Pleasures?' 587

²²⁵ John Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', 186-187

which will be explored in this chapter were a part of these same processes, as members used their clubs' activities to explore new ways of 'positioning' their masculinity.

In placing the more boisterous and less restrained behaviours of members alongside previous discussions, this chapter is therefore looking to provide a more rounded picture of the 'masculinities' constructed by members of 1890s cycling clubs. It is also aiming to outline new ways in which historians can conceptualise these aspects of club life. This thesis has previously argued that the attention which historians have given to the 'cathartic releases' and conviviality offered by sports clubs, does much to explain why they represent a 'neglected field' of academic research, as from this perspective the activities and goings-on of these institutions can seem detached from other areas of historical scholarship. This chapter will look to move these arguments on, by seeing the more boisterous behaviours of cycling club members, as being a part of the wider processes by which they explored and tried out a range of ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity.

As was discussed in the conclusion to the previous chapter, the extent to which membership of sports clubs has enabled men to practice a variety of ways in which they could 'be' manly, has not been fully recognised by historians. There have been very few, if any studies of sports clubs which have looked to explore in detail the varied opportunities these institutions open up for members to 'position' their masculinity in a diverse and varied number of ways.²²⁶ By further analysing this area, this chapter will look to demonstrate how such a perspective can assert the historical significance of 1890s cycling clubs, and help the historian understand their appeal and importance to men who were a part of them.

The sections below will begin to explore these issues by examining the meetings which occurred on club runs and tours between younger members, and women whom they encountered during these excursions. They will firstly analyse the manly identities which members looked to construct through these meetings, and why clubmen in earlier life stages would have understood certain behaviours and qualities as being suitably 'masculine' when they were interacting with women during group rides. These discussions will lead to an examination of how club runs and tours, created distinctive opportunities for younger members to act as they did when spending time with women of a similar age and class to themselves.

²²⁶ Malcom Maclean, 'A Gap but not an Absence', 1687-1689

This chapter will then explore how older members of clubs viewed and made sense of these encounters. This analysis will be used to further explore the reasons why the 'idiocultures' of clubs perceived certain behaviours and activities as being suitably 'manly' when members engaged in club runs and tours, and the opportunities this created for younger members to explore a variety of ways in which they could 'position' their masculinity.

Discussions in the second half of this chapter will then examine the masculinities which members aged thirty and above constructed when out cycling with their younger clubmen. Arguments in these sections will look to build on themes from the first part of this chapter, analysing how club runs and tours also enabled older members to re-imagine 'manly' identities which they would have built in home and work environments. They will also aim to provide further insights into the processes by which members of cycling clubs came to understand certain qualities and attributes as being 'masculine' when they participated in club runs and tours. Taken together, discussions throughout this chapter will look to further outline how the distinctive set of intergenerational relationships which existed within clubs, created unique opportunities members in various stages of the life cycle to try out, practice and explore a range of ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity.

Encounters with Women on Club Excursions

For younger members of 1890s cycling clubs, part of the excitement of club runs and tours was seemingly the prospect of encountering members of the opposite sex over the course of these excursions. Stops at pubs and inns, overnight stays in hotels, and longer amounts of time spent in a particular town or city during a tour, all afforded opportunities for clubmen to introduce themselves to and spend time with women whom they happened to encounter. The gazettes of the Bristol B.T.C., Hull S.A.C.C. and Stanley C.C., strongly suggest that it was mostly younger members of these clubs who used these meetings as opportunities to engage in forward and flirtatious behaviours. A poem which appeared in the Bristol B.T.C.'s journal in September 1897 described how,

'There's a sweet little girl at Fairford,
By the chappies round there she's adored,
But without any doubt,
I can knock 'em all out,

Said out gay mashing member, who scored.²²⁷

Members of the Hull S.A.C.C. also looked to 'score' with women they encountered during club outings. An article in their gazette from April 1896 described how in spring time, 'the young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of cycling', and recalled how when visiting a 'village feast' the previous year,

'Each and all the crew imprinted a kiss on the lips of some rustic damsel and swore to be true to her evermore. But the following week they did the same thing again and the damsels- God bless 'em, well, perhaps it would be best to draw the veil (alas, alas ye saints, what a record of broken vows and blighted affections is yours).'²²⁸

Similar encounters are also suggested in a piece which detailed the club's tour to Yarmouth later in the year. Upon leaving Yarmouth it was described how,

'At three o'clock we were once again aboard the Amelia when, after bidding adieu to our many new found friends- lady and otherwise, we steamed out to sea.'²²⁹

Members of the Stanley C.C. also used club runs and tours as opportunities to make themselves known to women whom they happened to encounter. One member described how during a tour, the club visited a hotel in Newbury in which,

'We went and made the brief acquaintance of a young lady who it had pleased providence to 'call at the bar'. I say brief, because we soon got into her bad books, and had to leave.'²³⁰

A more successful meeting of this nature occurred during another tour in which members were staying overnight at an inn. A piece in their gazette described how one member made the acquaintance of a female cyclist also staying at the same establishment, and after eating supper the writer of the piece stated,

'He disappeared shortly afterwards, and did not return past twelve. I wonder who it was that kept him out all that time.'²³¹

The most vivid account of one of these encounters appeared in the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C., in an article which recounted events that had occurred during a club tour to

²²⁷ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 9, (September, 1897) 76

²²⁸ *Cyclorn* 3, (Issue 1, April, 1896) 3

²²⁹ *Cyclorn* 3, (Issue 6, September, 1896) 4

²³⁰ *The Stanley Gazette* 7, Issue 80, (September, 1898) 61

²³¹ *The Stanley Gazette* 6, Issue 66, (July, 1897) 48

Stratford. The piece was penned by an older member of the club, who described how after spending the morning in Stratford 'all who owned responsibilities left for Bristol', leaving behind himself and five younger members who were booked to stay the night in a hotel.²³²

The writer detailed how the hostess of this establishment was the 'happy mother of several lovely daughters' who were all 'in maiden meditation fancy free'.²³³ That evening, after members had eaten dinner together, the writer of the piece briefly disappeared to pen a letter for home. However, upon returning to the bar he found that his fellow clubmen had all disappeared. He went to search for them outside of the hotel and,

'The mystery was solved. It was Romeo and Juliet all around. It must have been due to the atmosphere of Shakespeare's town. Approaching one doorway I overheard, 'The brightness of thine eyes outshines the stars'. Can't pass that way, let's try another. Here 'twas, 'Oh would I were a glove upon that hand that I might kiss that cheek'. Cheek indeed: what next. Next, 'Good night, good night, parting is such sweet sorrow' &c. It is evidently no place for me. I will betake me to the back entrance and escape. Foiled again! A veranda was there, and it was the balcony scene all over again- 'Oh swear not by the moon, the inconsistent moon.'²³⁴

Taken together, these articles highlight how members of 1890s cycling clubs who were in earlier stages of the life cycle, would often use encounters with women on club runs and tours as opportunities to engage in highly forward and flirtatious behaviours. The next section will now examine how discourses of middle-class masculinity can be used to make sense of their activities. Can their attempts to seduce the women whom they encountered be explained by the fact that they were looking to showcase certain 'manly' qualities and attributes to their fellow clubmen? If so, why did the 'idiocultures' of clubs understand these behaviours and traits as being acceptably and desirably 'masculine'?

Middle-Class Masculinities and Sexualities

When exploring the questions above, it is useful to draw on the work of historians who have explored how, during the mid to late nineteenth century, younger middle-class men used encounters with women when away from their home communities to engage in sexually active behaviours. A. James Hammerton has argued that during the 1880s, young

²³² *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 8, (August, 1897) 69

²³³ *Ibid*, 69

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 69

men from the lower middle classes earned themselves ‘the dubious title of being the most sexually threatening men on the streets’, due to the reputation they enjoyed for visiting brothels, and experiencing other forms of popular urban entertainment.²³⁵

Similarly, Phillip Howells has demonstrated that guidebooks to brothels and prostitutes flourished in mid-nineteenth century London, reaching a target market consisting predominately of young men from the middle and working classes.²³⁶ This is not to say that all of those who purchased guidebooks were men who visited, or even planned to visit brothels. Howells argues that the real value of these books to young, unmarried men was that they enabled them to present themselves as worldly ‘men about town...whose sexual knowledge and experience operated as the franchise of male independence in the urban public realm.’²³⁷

The work of Tosh further highlights how during the period being studied, possessing ‘sexual knowledge and experience’, was a means by which middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties would construct ‘manly’ identities. Tosh argues that before the nineteenth century, a liberal amount endowment of sexual energy was understood as being a central part of a middle-class man’s masculinity. Whilst Evangelicals at the beginning of the century had looked to cast off this marker of masculinity, it is recognised that sexual conquests remained a means by which younger middle-class men could affirm their ‘manliness’ in the later decades of this period.²³⁸

The studies of Hammerton, Howells and Tosh all recognise that whilst ‘sexual knowledge and experience’ were by no means normative middle-class ‘masculine’ traits during the mid to late nineteenth century, within groups of young men they would often be understood as highly desirable skills and experiences for them to possess. In a life stage when very few middle-class men were married, ‘sexual conquests’ were a well-established means by which they could win the respect and admiration of their peers.²³⁹ These themes are clearly evidenced in the poem which appeared in the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C., in which the member who ‘scored’ with the ‘pretty girl from Fairford’ felt able to ‘knock out’ the ‘chappies’ who adored her. The fact that he successfully ‘scored’ with her, and the other

²³⁵ A James Hammerton, ‘Pooterism or Partnership? Marriage and Masculine Identity in the Lower Middle Class, 1870-1920’, *Journal of British Studies* 38, (July, 1999) 295-298

²³⁶ Phillip Howells, ‘Sex and the City of Bachelors: Sporting Guidebooks and Urban Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Britain and America’, *Cultural Geographies* 8, (January, 2001) 20-40

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 40

²³⁸ John Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, 107-112

²³⁹ *Ibid*, 107-112

'chappies' did not, was recognised by his fellow clubmen to affirm and assert his 'manliness' at their expense.²⁴⁰

Taken together, the studies above do much to explain why younger members of clubs would engage in forward and flirtatious behaviours with women whom they met on club runs and tours. It can be recognised that these encounters, whether occurring at 'village feasts', pubs, inns or hotels, typically took place in group environments, meaning the activities of members were highly visible to their fellow clubmen. As such, there was a strong incentive for them to 'score', as this would have been a very public means of affirming their 'manliness', and achieving status with their club mates.

However, it must be acknowledged that none of the articles from club gazettes, made it at all clear whether the encounters they described were in any way sexual. The most explicit suggestion that something of this nature did occur came later on in the piece describing the Bristol B.T.C.'s tour to Stratford, with the writer commenting how the next morning he, 'Did not wish to be *de trop* as a witness of the delightful lingerie of the partings of so many Romeos and Juliets.'²⁴¹

As is the case today, during the 1890s 'lingerie' was a word used to describe a women's underwear and nightclothes.²⁴² Its use therefore strongly suggests that some, if not all the members spent the night in the company of the landlady's daughters. Nonetheless, even after accepting that such an event occurred, it still cannot be said with certainty whether any forms of sexual activity took place between them. The same is true when examining the 'gay mashing member' of the Bristol B.T.C. who 'scored' whilst in Fairford, or the clubman belonging to the Stanley C.C. who disappeared during their trip to Newbury.

However, even if these encounters were rarely sexual, I would argue that the articles above still make it apparent that 'conquests' with women whom members encountered, were an established means by which they could win the kudos of others. Even if, as in the case of the Hull S.A.C.C., members only managed to 'imprint kisses' on the lips of 'rustic damsels', this was still something which the writer of the piece was eager to bring to the attention of his fellow clubmen.

²⁴⁰ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 9, (September, 1897) 76

²⁴¹ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 8, (August, 1897) 70

²⁴² 'lingerie' n. OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/108667?redirectedFrom=lingerie> (accessed June 09, 2015)

The works of Hammerton, Howells and Tosh therefore provide a very effective means of making sense of the sources detailed in the first section of this chapter. As with many groups of younger middle-class men in this period, within the 'idiocultures' of cycling clubs 'scoring' with women was a recognised means by which they could win the respect and admiration of others. As a result, the forward and flirtatious behaviours which members in earlier life stages evidenced during these encounters, would have been understood as being acceptably and desirably 'masculine' by their fellow clubmen.

However, I would argue that the activities of younger members of clubs, do not fully align with arguments made in their studies. As has been acknowledged, it is very hard to say whether some, or indeed any of the encounters described in club gazettes, were sexual. As well as this, Hammerton, Howells and Tosh each give their focus to encounters which occurred between younger middle-class men, and women who were of a different social background to themselves.²⁴³

They recognise that although middle-class men in earlier stages of the life cycle could 'court' and be romantically involved with women of their own class, the risks of pregnancy, and a more general taboo of sex before marriage which existed within middle-class society, meant it was highly unlikely that middle-class couples would engage in forms of sexual activity before they were married.²⁴⁴ As such their studies each focus on the meetings which occurred between middle-class men in their late teens and early to mid-twenties, with women who were either working as prostitutes, or were of a lower social status to themselves.²⁴⁵

By contrast, articles in club gazettes suggest that there would often be little difference between the social background of members, and the women whom they encountered on club runs and tours. For instance, the female 'friends' made by members of the Hull S.A.C.C. visiting Yarmouth were described as 'ladies', a term commonly used to describe women from the middle and upper classes in this period.²⁴⁶ Similarly, the fact that the women whom the Stanley C.C. member made the acquaintance of whilst in Newbury was a fellow cyclist, makes it highly likely that she was also from a middle-class background, as

²⁴³ A James Hammerton, 'Pooterism or Partnership?' 295-298, Phillip Howells, 'Sex and the City of Bachelors', 20-40. John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 107-112

²⁴⁴ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 107-112

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 107-112

²⁴⁶ Kay Boardman, 'The Ideology of Domesticity: The Regulation of Household Economy in Victorian Women's Magazines', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 33, (Summer, 2000) 150-164

very few working-class women would have been able to afford the costs of purchasing a bicycle in this period.²⁴⁷

The hotel which members of the Bristol B.T.C. stayed in whilst visiting Stratford was also a high end establishment, containing a commercial room, a smoke room, a coffee room and a bar, and would therefore have, in all probability, brought in a comfortable income to the landlady who owned it.²⁴⁸ Although her daughters would have seemingly been required to undertake tasks such as cleaning, serving food or working behind the bar, which would have all been recognised as working-class occupations, the fact that they were her daughters and not employees or servants, would have made their social status fairly ambiguous and unclear to the members of the Bristol B.T.C.²⁴⁹

These similarities between the social backgrounds of members, and the women whom they encountered when out on club excursions, raise a number of questions. As was discussed in Chapter One, during the late nineteenth century it was expected that when in the company of middle-class women, men from the middle classes would showcase decorous, polite and 'respectable' behaviours.²⁵⁰ Although they might 'court' women of a similar class background to themselves, to engage in the types of overly forward, flirtatious and seductive behaviours evidenced in the first section of this chapter, would have been commonly recognised as being highly inappropriate.²⁵¹ Why then did they choose to do so when out with their fellow clubmen?

When exploring this question, it is firstly important to recognise that the encounters which occurred on club runs and tours took place in environments which were well detached from the home communities of members. As recognised by Huggins, and the historians discussed above, moving away from home environments was a means by which middle-class men could find the freedoms and anonymity to engage in behaviours which pushed the boundaries of 'respectability'.²⁵² Even though members of clubs may have been spending time with women of a similar social status to themselves, they could be confident

²⁴⁷ Jill Liddinton and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*, (London: Virago Press, 1978) 122-123

²⁴⁸ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 8, (August, 1897) 69-70

²⁴⁹ Elizabeth Langland, 'Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel', *PMLA* 107, (March, 1992) 290-304

²⁵⁰ Mike Huggins, 'More Sinful Pleasures', 587-588

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, 587-588

²⁵² *Ibid*, 588-589

that behaviours which be a cause for disapproval and controversy in home settings, would remain safely 'on tour'.

As well as this, the fact that members were only having fleeting encounters with the women they spent time with, meant their meetings would have had very different dynamics when compared to couples engaged in middle-class courtship. Both members of clubs and the women whom they were spending time with would have been aware that they were not 'courting' each other, but were rather participating in very brief encounters, after which they would have no contact. As evidenced by the Bristol B.T.C.'s trip to Stratford, these dynamics gave younger clubmen the freedoms, and also the confidence, to showcase a range of forward and flirtatious behaviours.

These two factors, combined with the fact that members participated in these activities as part of an all-male group who, as explored in discussions above, placed a high value on individuals 'scoring' with women they encountered, do much to explain why members behaved as they did when interacting with women who were of a similar class status to themselves. Participating in club runs and tours, which placed younger middle-class men in homosocial settings, took them away from their home communities, and ensured they would only have brief encounters with women whom they met, can be recognised to have created unique opportunities for them to explore new ways of 'positioning' their masculinity.

These arguments reinforce and develop discussions from the previous chapter. They further outline how 1890s cycling clubs were sites which provided younger members with opportunities to construct distinctive 'manly' identities, which they would have been unable to build in home and work environments. These opportunities can, in-turn, be seen to reflect the varied and diverse set of relationships that existed within clubs. The fact that club captains and other officers represented 'soft' authority figures, created intergenerational dynamics which enabled members in their late teens and early to mid-twenties to develop skills in sociability with men older and more authoritative than themselves. Similarly, the relations which existed between members in earlier life stages, helped form shared 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', which gave status and recognition to those who successfully 'scored' during club runs and tours.

However, that the 'idiocultures' of clubs gave younger members the freedoms to 'score' with women during these excursions, can also be recognised to have been a consequence of the intergenerational relationships which existed within these institutions. As has been

established, if members in earlier life stages had interacted with women from their home communities in the same manner as when out cycling with their fellow clubmen, this would have caused widespread criticism and controversy. This raises the question of why were older, married members of clubs, who had no reason to look up to or admire those who were successful in their attempts at seduction during club runs and tours, prepared to allow and tolerate their behaviours? The next section will explore this question by further examining the article written by the older member of the Bristol B.T.C. which detailed their tour to Stratford.

Homosocial Environments and the Sexual Objectification of Women

One particularly noticeable feature of this piece, is the fact that it was written almost entirely from the perspective of the author and his fellow clubmen. It was only at the very end that the writer attempted to view the encounter through the eyes of the landlady's daughters, when he stated how,

'The Juliets have doubtless now consoled themselves with the Immortal's words-

'Sigh no more, ladies- ladies, sigh no more;

Men were deceivers ever;

One foot on sea and one on shore,

To one thing constant never.'²⁵³

As with the piece in the gazette of the Hull S.A.C.C which detailed their encounters with 'rustic damsels', the only emotions credited to the 'Juliets' were a capacity to fall for, and then mourn the departure of the 'Romeos'.²⁵⁴ Neither article acknowledged that the women who were on the receiving end of the exuberant attentions of young male cyclists, felt emotions more complex than a strong longing for them, and a sadness when they departed.

These discussions tie into arguments made in the introduction to this chapter, which recognised that certain codes of masculinity will often be prevalent within all-male groups. Sharon Bird has argued that because in homosocial settings men will often be engaging in forms of competition with each other, and be looking to move away from behaviours that might be seen as 'feminine', this encourages men spending time in these environments to

²⁵³ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 8 (August, 1897) 70

²⁵⁴ *Cyclorn* 3, (Issue 1, April, 1896) 3

view women as sexual objects.²⁵⁵ The article describing the Bristol B.T.C.'s tour to Stratford highlights how it was not just the younger members of the club who held these understandings. Even though the writer of the piece did not join in with the activities of his junior clubmen, by writing the article almost entirely from his and their perspective, he can be recognised to have been involved in the processes which objectified the landlady's daughters.

As well as this, the fact that on a wider scale, older members of clubs would raise little, if any objection to the behaviours of their club mates, further reflects how within the all-male environments of their clubs, they would be complicit to understandings that the women whom members encountered could be treated as sexual objects. This, in-turn, does much to explain why they gave their junior clubmen the freedoms to behave as they did during these meetings. By subscribing to these beliefs, those in later life stages could raise little objection when younger members attempted to achieve 'sexual conquests' on club runs and tours.

The article describing the Bristol B.T.C.'s tour to Stratford, also highlights that there were a wider range of reasons why the writer did not look to prohibit the behaviours of his club's 'Romeos'. These are evidenced in a passage describing how, after returning inside from discovering them quoting lines from Shakespeare he,

'Felt half inclined to go and make love (a term for chaste, romantic courtship in this period) to the *Mater* of those maidens, marry her right away, and, out of revenge, to act the part of the irate parent when my moon-struck fellow-sighclists came to ask our consent. Prudence prevailed, however- I had previously witnessed some of them perform in the gym.'²⁵⁶

The fact that the older member of the club chose not to discipline his younger clubmen in the manner of an 'irate parent', both picks up on and develops arguments made in the previous two chapters of this thesis. These have both recognised that senior members of clubs had to find 'softer' ways of managing clubmen in earlier life stages than would have typically been used by middle-class fathers or employers. The quote above helps reinforce these arguments, highlighting how the writer of the piece recognised that the relationships

²⁵⁵ Sharon Bird, 'Welcome to the Men's Club', 128-130

²⁵⁶ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 8 (August, 1897) 69, Fraser Sutherland, 'Why Making Love isn't What it Used to be' in *Challenging Change: Literary and Linguistic Responses*, eds. Vesna Lopicic and Biljana Mistic Ilic. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012) 15-22

he had with those younger than himself, did not permit him to discipline them in the manner of a father or father-in-law.

However, unlike discussions in these two chapters, it also showcases that older members of clubs could abandon these authoritative behaviours altogether. In contrast to the captain of the Hull S.A.C.C., who checked members who wanted to engage in 'scorching' on club runs, the writer of the article made no effort to reign in the activities of the 'Romeos'.

I would argue these differences stemmed from how these two different activities impacted on the other members of a club. As discussed in Chapter One, those who belonged to 1890s cycling clubs commonly felt that 'scorching' on weekly runs would detract from the enjoyment of others, as it could create rivalries between members, and would limit the amount of time they spent socialising together. Clubs appointed captains to control and limit the behaviours of younger members during these runs, in the name of promoting satisfaction and enjoyment more generally amongst their memberships.

By contrast, these dynamics were not present when the Bristol B.T.C. visited Stratford. The fact that the older member was outnumbered five-to-one by his younger companions, significantly reduced the scope he had for exercising authority over them. In this particular situation, the emphasis which the club gave to promoting gratification and pleasure amongst members, prohibited, rather than enabled the writer, from managing or controlling the behaviours of his junior clubmen.

Moreover, whilst he may have wished to take 'revenge' on those who deserted him to spend time with the 'Juliets', the overall tone of the article strongly suggests that he was able to find a considerable amount of humour and enjoyment in their activities. The author's own inclination to 'make love' to the landlady suggests that he too, to a certain degree, was swept up in the excitement which they clearly evidenced when interacting her daughters. If nothing else, the whole event at least provided him with the material to produce a very witty and amusing article for the club gazette.

As a whole, these discussions provide a range of new insights into the intergenerational relationships which existed within 1890s cycling clubs. Both the previous two chapters have recognised that younger and older members of clubs enjoyed more sociable interactions than would have typically occurred between men of different ages in middle-class homes and workplaces. However, they have also highlighted how as with these other

environments, members in later life stages would be individuals who possessed seniority and authority over those younger than themselves.

By contrast, the article in the gazette of the Bristol B.T.C. highlights how these dynamics might, in certain instances, disappear altogether. The homosocial nature of club activities, the fact that members were out to enjoy their leisure time, and the humour that older members found in the more 'boisterous' behaviours of those younger than themselves, were factors which when combined, could remove these notions of seniority and authority. Whilst the writer of the piece clearly recognised that his age prohibited him from joining in with the activities of his club's 'Romeos', he steered clear of looking to limit the excitement they found when attempting to seduce the 'Juliets'.

This further highlights how the varied and complex set of relationships which existed within cycling clubs, created distinctive opportunities for members to explore a variety of ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity. For younger members, the interactions they enjoyed with those in later life stages, underpinned the processes by which they practiced and tried out new ways in which they could 'be' manly. As explored in the previous chapter, the geniality and good-humour evidenced by club captains and other club officers, created distinctive opportunities for younger members of clubs to develop skills in sociability with men older and more authoritative than themselves.

However, as showcased in this section, cycling clubs were also sites in which the authority which middle-class men in later life stages would typically hold in home and work environments, could on certain occasions, be removed altogether. Although they would not jointly engage in the forward and flirtatious behaviours of their younger clubmen, these relations helped create 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', which gave members in earlier life stages the freedoms to explore and try out new ways in which they would 'do' their masculinity.

The final part of this chapter will now look to develop these arguments one stage further, by turning its attention to the activities of older members during club runs and tours. Did the more relaxed set of intergenerational relationships explored in this section, also create 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs', which enabled them to practice new ways in which they could 'do' their masculinity? If so, how did these masculinities compare to those which middle-class men in later life stages typically constructed in home and work environments?

'It makes you young again'

Previous discussions in this thesis have asserted that within 1890s cycling clubs, members in later life stages remained connected to identities they constructed, and relationships they experienced in their home and work lives. For instance, it would typically be clubmen who had passed thirty who were trusted to handle the responsibilities of being a club officer. Moreover, even though the writer describing the Bristol B.T.C.'s tour to Stratford, or the member of the Stanley C.C. who took photographs whilst 'the boys' rushed up Bury Hill, gave their younger members the freedoms to engage in more boisterous and energetic activities, they did not look to participate in them.²⁵⁷ Although they lacked the authority of middle-class fathers or employers, they recognised that their position in the life cycle did much to separate them from their 'boys' or 'Romeos'.

However, a feature of club runs and tours, were the opportunities these excursions created for older members to behave in ways not usually associated with middle-class men of their age. As was recognised in Chapter One, the senior member of the Stanley C.C. engaged in much more sociable behaviours with his club's younger members than would have typically been the case with middle-class fathers and employers, as he enjoyed 'mysterious liquors' with them during a stop at a pub. That the older member of the Bristol B.T.C. who described their tour to Stratford also used his club's cycling excursions to move beyond identities that he constructed in home and work environments, is clearly evidenced in another article which he penned for the club gazette. In it he described how a cycling tour around Devon, which involved visits to sites associated with the Spanish Armada, would allow you to,

'Forget your cosmopolitanism and every other ism- again a British boy and proud of it, remember Nelson and Wellington and the brave tars and soldiers, who prevented the Corsican usurper from ever placing his foot on old England's shores. Presently you'll find yourself humming, strumming , or shouting as of yore- Two skinny Frenchmen, one Portuguese, One jolly Englishman, can lick 'em all three'.²⁵⁸

This passage has a number of parallels with an article in *Cycling* quoted at the very beginning of this thesis. The piece, titled 'It makes you young again', stated how,

²⁵⁷ *The Stanley Gazette* 8, Issue 88, (June, 1899) 42

²⁵⁸ *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 5, (May, 1897) 39-40

‘Cycling seems to possess a potent and peculiar charm to the middle-aged, aye, even the elderly man. It is not unusual to see the swarthy, bearded man, the sober head of a business house, perhaps, and perchance the father of grown-up children, cutting capers that would put to shame the rollicking fledgling of some sixteen summers. It is no uncommon thing to see the man of forty, in company with a party of younger men, acting in a manner that seems positively childish, when considered, though at the time the circumstances would hardly warrant your thinking so.’

‘We have often noticed this levelling influence of the sport, and when you see bearded men- rulers among men we may say- beyond the prime of life, vaulting five barred gates, turning somersaults, and otherwise sacrificing the dignity and discretion that is generally supposed to pertain to age for the frolicsomeness of youth, you cannot help believing that cycling does in reality give man a new lease of life’.²⁵⁹

Both articles highlight how club runs and tours created opportunities for older members to, on certain occasions, throw off their day-to-day identities, and instead behave in ways which connected them to their younger selves. In doing so, they drew on wider understandings present in late nineteenth century middle-class society, which recognised how moving through the life cycle would change and alter men’s ‘masculine’ identities.

In contrast to middle-class women, men’s youth and adolescence, which was roughly seen to last from their mid-teens to mid-twenties, was recognised to be a particularly ‘vigorous’ period of their lives, as they dealt with the bodily changes brought about by puberty.²⁶⁰

During the late nineteenth century, the strong sexual desires and urges which young men experienced as they entered adolescence, were subject to increased medicalised attention and discussion.²⁶¹ This can be seen further on in W.J. Dawson’s book, *The Threshold of Manhood*, referenced in the previous chapter. Dawson drew on medical and scientific languages when he stated that,

‘There is a period in life when the desires of the flesh exercise immense and subtle power over the imagination. They seem to promise illimitable delight and inexhaustible pleasure. They sting the flesh with their violence, and send the blood boiling through the veins like a tide of fire. The imagination runs through the world and sees everywhere alluring forms

²⁵⁹ *Cycling*, Issue 120, (May 6th, 1893) 276

²⁶⁰ Deborah Gorham, ‘The ‘Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon’ Re-Examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England’, *Victorian Studies* 21, (Spring, 1978) 356-373

²⁶¹ John Demos and Virginia Demos, ‘Adolescence in Historical Perspective’, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 31, (November, 1969) 634-635

which point to intoxicating joys. That is not an unusual experience. It is common to all of us in the heyday of youth and strength.'²⁶²

Scientific and medicalised discourses also presented men's youth as being a period when they would be at their most physically active and energetic, as their bodies reached their physical peaks. An article titled 'Golden Youth' which appeared in *Cycling* in 1895, evidenced these understandings when it described how,

'Feats of strength, skill, and endurance we expect from the young; it is in the nature of things that we cannot look for marvellous physical ordeals except when the fire and buoyancy of life's spring time prevail.'²⁶³

The association between middle-class men's youth, and more vigorous and energetic behaviours, was also reinforced by an understanding that they were still developing the 'manly' qualities and attributes necessary to effectively manage their newfound physical capabilities and urges.²⁶⁴ This was recognised further on in the 'Golden Youth' article, which stated how,

'Youth has its defects as well as its qualities, and over balances itself in its exuberant enthusiasm. Flushed with success, or moved by the ardour of fiery endeavour, it sometimes makes mistakes in its impetuosity.'²⁶⁵

As men passed through their adolescence and early twenties, discourses of middle-class masculinity expected that they would increasingly learn how to reign in their 'exuberant enthusiasms'. As was discussed in the previous chapter, men starting careers across a range of middle-class occupations would typically begin in low-level, junior roles, before being expected to showcase they possessed the qualities and temperaments required to attain to more high ranking and authoritative positions.²⁶⁶ As well as this, as middle-class men approached their thirties, it was increasingly anticipated that they would be in a position to marry, and shoulder the responsibilities of providing for and exercising authority over a family unit.²⁶⁷

²⁶² W.J. Dawson, *The Threshold of Manhood*, 89

²⁶³ *Cycling*, Issue 255, (December 7th, 1895) 360

²⁶⁴ John Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Gender Relations 1770-Present*, (London: Academic Press, 1974) 99-117

²⁶⁵ *Cycling*, Issue 255, (December 7th, 1895) 360

²⁶⁶ John Tosh, *A Man's Place* 105-122

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 108-122

Within late nineteenth century middle-class society, moving through the lifecycle was therefore seen to be a process in which middle-class men would increasingly acquire the maturity required to handle positions of added seniority. It was expected that men who had passed thirty would have moved beyond the bodily upheavals brought about by puberty, and would also possess the composure and dignity which befitted their acquired responsibilities and status.

These themes are evidenced strongly in the article in *Cycling* quoted at the beginning of this section. The energetic and carefree behaviours evidenced by 'the man of forty', were recognised to contrast heavily to those which he would showcase when acting as the 'sober head of a business house' or 'the father to grown up children'. Turning somersaults and vaulting five-barred gates, were activities associated with the 'frolicsomeness of youth', and not men who had attained the 'dignity and discretion which is generally supposed to pertain to age.'

The two passages quoted at the beginning of this section, therefore highlight how membership of cycling clubs, created distinctive opportunities for middle-class men in later life stages to move beyond home and work identities, and 'enact' qualities and behaviours associated with men much younger than themselves. The final section to this chapter will now look to further explore these processes. It will firstly examine the reasons why older members of clubs wanted to showcase these more energetic and less restrained behaviours during their club's cycling excursions. It will then ask why it was that their fellow clubmen viewed these as being suitably 'manly' qualities and attributes for them to 'enact' over the course of these rides.

Old 'Uns and Young 'Uns

As has been discussed throughout this thesis, the central appeal of 1890s cycling clubs to men from the middle classes, was that they were institutions which enabled them to enjoy their leisure time. By indulging their enthusiasms for cycling with like-minded others, middle-class men looked to find sociability, pleasure and relaxation through their club's active.

Such an understanding does much to explain why members in later life stages used club runs and tours as opportunities to showcase behaviours widely associated with middle-class men much younger than themselves. Clearly, 'humming, strumming or shouting as of yore', or vaulting five barred gates, were activities which allowed older members of clubs

to find gratification, release and pleasure during their leisure time. These themes are further evidenced in an article which appeared in the gazette of the Stanley C.C., which detailed a tour taken by four members of the club. The writer described how at one point, 'The old 'uns- I refer to William and Charles- began to show rare sprinting powers. It only required a little encouragement. I rode alongside Charles and hinted that William fancied himself at riding. Charles remarked that 'he could beat his head off'. 'Betsy' sidled up to William and said that on the next level bit Charles had announced his intention of taking his number down. We gradually brought the two together, and taking a glance at each other, they were off for a couple of miles- the two 'who ride only for pleasure' were plugging away for all they were worth. I do not know how it finished; 'Betsy' and I laughed so much we could not keep up with them, but both admitted to me afterwards that they did not think the other would 'come that game again'.²⁶⁸

The piece firstly reinforces how within clubs, the identities of older members remained attached to those which they built in home and work environments. The fact that the 'old 'uns' had a reputation for being two 'who ride only for pleasure', showcases how within the Stanley C.C. they represented two more 'dignified and discrete' individuals, who would typically steer clear of overly energetic forms of cycling. It was seemingly the contrast between these usual demeanours, and the sight of them 'plugging away for all they were worth', which made the event so amusing to their younger clubmen.

However, the fact that the two members were prepared to go 'scorching' against each other, further evidences how in certain instances senior clubmen could throw off 'dignified and discrete' identities, in favour of showcasing more energetic and less restrained behaviours associated with middle-class men in earlier life stages. Their willingness to do so can be seen to a large extent, to have stemmed from the excitement and exhilaration they felt at the prospect of racing against and beating their fellow 'old 'un'. An article published in *Cycling* in 1895, which detailed the activities of 'veteran' cyclists, captured the appeal of racing and 'scorching' to men in later life stages when it stated how,

'We know of a certain Veteran, a clergyman too, who arrived home the other day, perspiring, out of breath and exhausted, but elated with an unholy joy at having beaten the postman in a scratch tricycle race through the village.'²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ *The Stanley Gazette* 8, Issue 88, (April, 1899) 29

²⁶⁹ *Cycling*, Issue 249, (November 9th, 1895) 231

The 'unholy joy' which the clergyman felt after beating the postman, highlights the pleasure and enjoyment which older members could find through racing and competing against each other. However, I would argue that their motivations for engaging in more energetic and less restrained behaviours during club runs and tours, would have also be the consequence of a wider range of factors. Chapter One of this thesis outlined how during the late nineteenth century, physical vigour, energy and strength were all normative middle-class 'masculine' qualities.²⁷⁰ As was discussed in the previous section, during this period discourses of middle-class masculinity most strongly associated these qualities with men experiencing 'the fire and buoyancy of life's spring time'.

However, the passage above highlight how possession of these attributes remained a part of the 'manly' identities of more senior members of clubs, who still defined themselves by their ability to 'beat the head off' a fellow 'old 'un'. F.T. Bidlake's book on cycling, published in 1896, recognised how strength, stamina and physical endurance remained a part of the 'masculine' identities of older male cyclists when it commented how,

'The competitive side of cycling undoubtedly offers a great attraction to every rider...Tourists and old riders who never race, and affect to despise speed, make careful diaries and gloat on their mileage as 'good for them'...every rider has his record, his best day's total, his best speed.'²⁷¹

It can therefore be recognised that for members of clubs in later life stages, there were a number of reasons why they might 'do' their masculinity in the style of middle-class men younger than themselves. Leaving behind 'dignified and discrete' identities in favour of less restrained behaviours, was a means by which they could experience the pleasure, excitement and release which they were looking to find in their leisure time. As well as this, for men who still defined themselves by their strength, stamina and endurance, 'scorching' against others was a means of re-affirming and asserting this particular part of their 'manly' identity.

The articles above also highlight how these processes were underwritten by the 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' which existed within clubs. As demonstrated by the article in the gazette of the Stanley C.C., younger members could actively encourage those in later life stages to throw off the 'dignity and discretion that is generally supposed to pertain to age', in favour of more energetic and less restrained behaviours. Why then

²⁷⁰ Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity', 1136-1141

²⁷¹ F.T. Bidlake, *Cycling*, 102

was it that, compared to home and work environments, the 'idiocultures' of clubs gave older members much greater freedoms and opportunities to showcase qualities associated with middle-class men in earlier stages of the life cycle?

I would firstly argue that because the activities of cycling clubs were focussed around men engaging in forms of physical activity, evidencing energetic and vigorous behaviours was a means by which members in later life stages would achieve recognition from their club mates. As was discussed in Chapter One, the 'great strength and wonderful stamina' of the Bristol B.T.C. member C.J. Ford was something which had one him the 'respect and admiration of his fellow clubmen'.²⁷² *Cycling's* article on veteran cyclists recognised how older members who were still participating in more lively and animated activities would be looked up to by others, describing how,

'There is something uncommon and impressive in a man who can keep alive the fire of enthusiasm for the sport and pastime of his youth and prime, well into the latter days, and who, in spite of grey hairs, stiff muscles, and a shorter wind, has still all the heart of a boy as far as his pleasures are concerned.'²⁷³

The article describing the tour taken by four members of the Stanley C.C., also highlights that there were a wider range of reasons why the 'idiocultures' of clubs gave older members the opportunities to showcase that they were men who had kept alive their 'fire of enthusiasm for the sport and pastime'. The sight of the 'old 'uns' leaving behind more dignified and discrete behaviours, in favour of 'plugging away for all they were worth', was clearly very amusing and humorous to their club mates, as they 'laughed so much that we could not keep up with them'. The piece showcases how older members who were prepared to showcase less restrained and dignified behaviours, were valued and well-regarded by their fellow clubmen, as by showcasing these behaviours they helped ensure that others were also able to find enjoyment and pleasure in their leisure time.

As well as this, the all-male nature of their tour can also be recognised to have given the more senior members of the club the freedoms to engage in less restrained and dignified behaviours. It is certainly difficult to imagine the two 'old 'uns' being enticed to 'plug away for all they were worth' during a 'ladies day', when members would be in the company of their wives, sisters and fiancées. Within the homosocial environments of clubs, members

²⁷² *Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club Gazette* 1, Issue 12, (December, 1897), 103

²⁷³ *Cycling*, Issue 249, (October 26th, 1895) 231

were likely to view the more boisterous and less restrained activities of their older clubmen, as being suitably and acceptably 'masculine'.

The ways in which these two factors influenced the 'masculinities' constructed by members in later life stages, can be further seen in another article in the gazette of the Stanley C.C., which described their club's visit to a 'cycle camp' held in Harrogate. 'Cycle camps' were yearly events, in which members of cycling clubs from across Britain met up for a long weekend of camping, in lavishly adorned tents which contained both the space and facilities for smoking concerts.²⁷⁴ These camps gave a much heavier emphasis to late night drinking and sociability than any actual cycling, with the Stanley C.C. member describing how,

'Social distinction, rank of fortune, vanishes as you take your place at the shrine of Bohemianism, equal in one accord- the desire to knock as much enjoyment as you can into four days of grace. Can it be wondered then that men grown grey, be be-bearded solemn pards, faced with the inevitable scourge of time, take to Harrogate as a duck to water, and for a brief spell throw aside the decorum and dignity incumbent with their station in life, to revel as they did in the heyday of their youth, when the blood ran freer and the pulse beat quicker? Such enthusiasts can fully endorse the poet's couplet,

'Tho age is on his temple hung,
His heart, his heart is very young.'²⁷⁵

It can be recognised that the all-male environment of the camp, combined with the fact that all who attended were united by a 'desire to knock as much enjoyment as you can into four days of grace', encouraged and enabled older attendees to reconnect with their younger selves. As well as eradicating markers of 'social distinction', these factors also did much to remove markers of age, as 'men grown grey' would 'for a brief spell throw aside the decorum and dignity incumbent with their station in life, to revel as they did in the heyday of their youth'. As with club runs and tours, the emphasis which camps gave to men enjoying themselves whilst in exclusively male company, created 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs' which facilitated those in later life stages 'doing' their masculinity in the style of middle-class men much younger than themselves.

²⁷⁴ *Cycling*, Issue 134, (August 12th, 1893) 55, *Cycling*, Issue 186, (August 11th, 1894) 58

²⁷⁵ *The Stanley Gazette* 9, Issue 104, (September, 1900) 59

Taken alongside discussions from Chapter Two, the past two sections have further highlighted the range of masculinities which were constructed by members of 1890s cycling clubs aged thirty and above. By exploring the wider activities of clubs in this period, they have showcased how older members would not only re-imagine manly identities that they constructed in home and work environments by effectively handling positions of responsibility, and managing those younger than themselves in 'soft' and 'solicitous' manners. Club runs and tours also enabled those in later life stages to move well beyond home and work identities, and showcase boisterous and energetic behaviours which were strongly associated with much younger middle-class men during this period.

The previous two sections have therefore developed and reinforced a central argument to this thesis: that cycling clubs were institutions which gave middle-class men in various stages of the life cycle opportunities to practice and try out a variety of ways in which they could 'position' their masculinity. The relationships which existed within clubs, enabled both older and younger members to explore the multi-faceted nature of late nineteenth century middle-class masculinity, and associate themselves with a range of different understandings of what it meant for middle-class men to 'be' manly. The conclusion to this chapter will now look to develop discussions from the end of Chapter Two, and further explain why such a perception is a useful way by which the historian can conceptualise 1890s cycling clubs.

Conclusion

This thesis has previously argued that existing studies of middle-class sports clubs in the mid to late nineteenth century, do not fully recognise the range of masculinities which were constructed by members of these institutions. I would argue that the different sections in this chapter, which have explored the 'manly' identities that members of cycling clubs built by engaging in more boisterous and unruly activities, reinforce this argument.

Certainly, that men from the middle classes used their membership of voluntary sporting institutions to enjoy rowdy and less restrained behaviours, has been well documented by historians. Both Mike Huggins' research into the leisure activities of middle-class men in the Victorian period, and Hamish Telfer's study of late-Victorian Scottish harriers clubs, have recognised how members of sports clubs frequently enjoyed a range of more 'disreputable

pleasures', particularly during social activities such as smoking concerts.²⁷⁶ However, neither Huggins nor Telfer have looked to explore the 'masculinities' which members constructed through these activities. Instead, they give their focus to how the homosocial environments of clubs, and their detachment from the home lives of members, enabled them to escape the 'potential prison of respectable behaviour'.²⁷⁷

Moreover, historians who have explored the masculinities built by members of middle-class sports clubs during this period, have made little attempt to analyse the 'less respectable' activities of these institutions. Whilst Biddle-Perry has argued that the busy social calendar of the Catford C.C., which included smoking concerts and weekly club nights, helped to reinforce a concept of 'modern progressive masculinity' within the club, she only briefly touches on these aspects of club life.²⁷⁸ Neither Tebbutt's research into the activities of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, nor Hansen's study of mid-Victorian Alpine clubs, examine the masculinities which members of these institutions constructed through the social activities of their clubs.²⁷⁹

By examining how members of cycling clubs built masculinities through their encounters with women on club runs and tours, and by engaging in more energetic and less restrained behaviours during these excursions, this chapter has therefore looked to develop this area of historical analysis. It has aimed to provide new insights into both the range of 'less respectable' activities which were enjoyed by middle-class male members of sports clubs in the mid to late nineteenth century, and how these activities enabled members to construct 'masculinities' which have not previously been explored by historians studying these sites.

Moreover, I would argue that by developing the argument that cycling clubs were sites in which members constructed a variety of 'manly' identities, the sections above have also highlighted why these institutions represent such interesting and significant sites of historical study. Clubs were not only spaces which gave younger members distinctive opportunities to affirm their possession of a range of normative 'masculine' qualities and attributes. They also provided members in various stages of the life cycle, with unique opportunities to 'do' their masculinity in ways which brought them large amounts of enjoyment, pleasure and release. Recognising the range of masculinities which were

²⁷⁶ Mike Huggins, 'More Sinful Pleasures', 590-594, Hamish Telfer, 'Ludism, laughter and liquor', 185-203

²⁷⁷ Hamish Telfer, 'Ludism, laughter and liquor', 191

²⁷⁸ Geraldine Biddle-Perry, 'Fashioning Suburban Aspiration', 198-199

²⁷⁹ Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity', 1125-1153, Peter Hansen, 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club', 300-324

constructed by members of 1890s cycling clubs, therefore does much to highlight the importance and appeal of these institutions to those who were a part of them, whilst also shedding light on their organisational structures and hierarchies, and the diverse set of relationships which existed within them.

I would argue that this is a perspective which is much harder to reach when the historian does not draw on wider research into men and masculinities, as is the case in the work of Huggins and Telfer. As evidenced in discussions through this thesis, their studies provide a range of useful insights when analysing many aspects of 1890s cycling club life. However, to focus solely on how members of sports clubs found enjoyment and fulfilment by escaping the 'potential prison of respectable behaviour' undersells the potential these sites have to inform other areas of historical research, does not account for the more complex set of relationships which existed between members, and understates their significance to those who were a part of them.

As was discussed in Chapter One, the processes by which cycling clubs managed their memberships and appointed officers, helped promote friendly and relaxed relations between members, but at the same time connected them to interactions which they would have experienced in home and work environments. The ways in which clubs created, maintained and protected 'idiocultures' which facilitated sociability and mutual enjoyment amongst their memberships, in-turn meant that they were not sites in which men from the middle classes simply escaped relationships and identities from these other two settings.

These discussions were further developed in Chapter Two, which explored how the work of club officers, and the relationships which existed between clubmen and their captains, secretaries, treasurers and committee members, enabled younger members to develop 'manly' qualities which would have been highly relevant for their careers and occupations. The appeal of cycling clubs, particularly to members in earlier life stages, stemmed not just from the opportunities they offered for boisterous all-male conviviality, but also from the wider range of ways in which they enabled them to 'do' their masculinity.

Finally, discussions in this chapter have highlighted that whilst members valued opportunities to break free from the constraints of 'respectability', this perspective cannot fully account for the pleasures and releases which members found when participating in their clubs' activities. Certainly, both the older member of the Bristol B.T.C. who described the joys of touring in Devon, and the Stanley C.C. member who visited the Harrogate cycle

camp, valued the ways in which these activities enabled them to throw off their 'cosmopolitanism' and day to day identities.

However, the enjoyment they found by 'humming, strumming and shouting as of yore', or 'revelling' with like-minded others, was not just a result of the fact that they were escaping the 'potential prison of respectable behaviour'. It was also tied up in the processes by which they negotiated discourses of middle-class masculinity. Enacting 'manly' qualities strongly associated with those in earlier life stages, enabled them to re-connect with their younger selves and subsequently gave these activities added meaning, value and significance to them.

I would therefore argue that understanding cycling clubs as institutions which afforded their members distinctive opportunities to construct a range of masculinities, provides an excellent starting point for any historical study of these institutions. It brings into focus the complexities of their organisational structures and hierarchies, the variety of different activities which their members indulged in, and the diverse and distinctive set of relationships which existed between them. As the first two chapters of this thesis argued, exploring these areas of cycling club life highlights the connections which existed between these sites and other aspects of the lives of members, and the potential they have to inform wider fields of historical research.

Moreover, this is a perspective which also captures why these institutions were so valued and treasured by those who were a part of them. It helps the historian understand why pedalling bicycles in large circles with fellow enthusiasts, was such a source of pleasure, purpose and satisfaction for middle-class men living through the 1890s.

Conclusion

Discussions over the course of this thesis have primarily drawn on two fields of academic research. As has just been discussed, studies of mid to late nineteenth-century middle-class masculinities, provide an excellent means of analysing 1890s cycling clubs. However, this thesis has also looked to showcase how the work of Gary Alan Fine can aid historical analysis of cycling clubs and similar voluntary sporting institutions.

As was outlined in the first chapter, Fine's research into leisure organisations provides an excellent framework by which the historian can examine and understand the organisational structures and hierarchies of cycling clubs. Discussions in Chapters One and Chapter Two, demonstrated how exploring these structures and hierarchies, brings into focus the broad range of relationships and interactions that existed within these institutions which have not been fully recognised in historical studies of sports clubs.

I also find Fine's notion of 'idiocultures' to be a useful way of conceptualising the more general activities and goings on of sports clubs. His sociological studies of small groups provide a theoretical framework which highlights how these institutions were sites of 'cultural creation', as members actively formed, maintained and protected shared 'systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs'.²⁸⁰ Such an understanding showcases how sports clubs were institutions not simply defined by the escape they offered from other areas of the lives of members, but rather how they were spaces in which they actively created their own distinct group cultures by negotiating and interacting with wider societal discourses.

This perception not only highlights how voluntary sporting institutions represent sites which can provide wonderfully revealing insights into the lives and lived experiences of men and women. It also demonstrates how historical research into sports clubs, can provide illuminating windows into the beliefs, values and understandings which were held by the societies and cultures from which their members were drawn.

For instance, Chapter Three highlighted how cycling clubs were sites in which older members re-positioned themselves in relation to late nineteenth-century discourses of middle-class masculinity pertaining to the life cycle. I would argue that the value of utilising Fine in historical studies, is showcased by the fact that there has been very little research into how moving through the life cycle influenced the 'masculine' qualities and behaviours

²⁸⁰ Gary Alan Fine, 'Small Groups and Culture Creation', 739-745

which men were expected to possess, both within late nineteenth century middle-class society, and also in other contexts and time periods.²⁸¹ This can, in-part, be seen to be a result of the fact that gender historians typically take a more cultural approach to that used by this thesis, exploring how discourses of masculinity were present in political tracts, religious discourse, works of art and poetry, and propaganda.²⁸²

As has been outlined by Michael Roper, the focus in these studies is often to analyse how 'assertions of sexual difference', supported 'symbolic systems of power' by underpinning discourses of government, the nation-state, empire and war.²⁸³ A classic example of such a study, Mrinalini Sinha's 1995 work *Colonial Masculinity: The Manly Englishman and the Effeminate Bengali*, explores how late nineteenth-century discourses of middle-class masculinity were used to justify the Bengalis' loss of independence to the British in this period.²⁸⁴ Sinha outlines how languages which stated the 'feebleness' of Bengalis, and their lack of 'manly self-control', underwrote the processes by which Britain exercised colonial rule in India.²⁸⁵

However, it can be recognised that the sources which Sinha draws upon, would have rarely evidenced wider understandings of how younger men were still developing certain 'masculine' behaviours, or how men in more advanced life stages may no longer be in possession of other 'manly' qualities. Because these languages did not view all English men as being fully 'masculine', they would have been in tension with the processes by which they looked to assert their innate superiority over the Bengalis through discourses of masculinity.

By contrast, because the activities of sports clubs are not focussed around maintaining 'symbolic systems of power', but rather facilitating individual enjoyment and pleasure, it can be recognised that members of these sites will interact with societal discourses which may well not be referenced in histories such as Sinha's. Such an understanding, combined with Fine's notion of 'idiocultures', highlights how these institutions offer a window into the past which can complement and develop cultural studies. Because these are sites in

²⁸¹ Gabriela Spector-Mersel, 'Never-aging Stories: Western Hegemonic Masculinity Scripts', *Journal of Gender Studies* 15, (2006), 67-82

²⁸² Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal* 59, (Spring, 2005), 57-62

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 57-58

²⁸⁴ Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) 1-19

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 1-19

which members will constantly be negotiating and re-interpreting wider societal discourses with the primary purpose of enabling men and women to enjoy their leisure time, studies of sports clubs have the potential to bring the historian's attention to languages of gender, class and race which might rarely be evidenced in more cultural histories.

Certainly, I would argue there is much scope for further research into how mid to late nineteenth-century-discourses of middle-class masculinity and femininity, associated different qualities and behaviours with men and women in various stages of the life cycle. As was showcased in Chapter Three, exploring the processes by which individuals interacted with and negotiated these understandings, also has the potential to provide very revealing and personable accounts of individuals living through this period.

As well as this, Fine's concept of 'idiocultures', and an understanding that cycling clubs were sites in which members 'did' their masculinity in a variety of ways, are both conceptual models which could be applied and tested on other middle-class sports clubs active in the mid to late nineteenth century, and other historical contexts. Additionally, studies exploring cricket, tennis and angling clubs in this period, could examine in greater detail the intergenerational relationships which existed between middle-class men in these sites, and how they compared to home and work environments. As was also discussed at the end of Chapter One, by examining the relationships which existed between fathers and their sons in sports clubs, historians can also hope to gain new insights into nineteenth-century middle-class fatherhood.

Histories in these areas would not only help fill 'one of the gaps in our knowledge in the history of sport'.²⁸⁶ They would also highlight why sports clubs represent such rich and interesting sites of historical research, and the potential they have to inform wider fields of academic study.

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I would like to finish this thesis with a brief aside. In late July this year my Grandad, who had been a member of Walton-le-Dale crown green bowling club since 1959, and was also their long-serving treasurer and President, passed away. Growing up with him gave me a very first-hand experience of the extent to which being a member of a voluntary sports club can fill someone's life. I cannot imagine the total number of hours he spent on bowling

²⁸⁶ Jeffrey Hill, *Sport in History*, 49

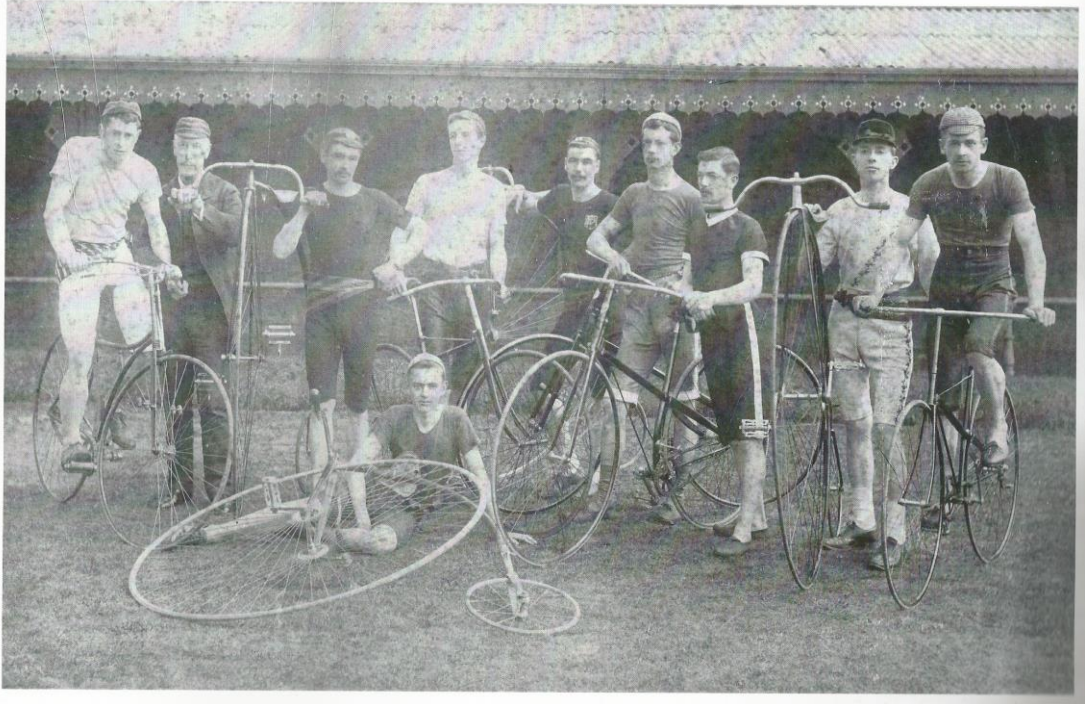
greens, the amount of holidays which were cut short so he could attend a 'vital' league fixture, or how many cups of tea my Grandma made in their club's pavilion during matches.

Bowls, and the community he found among fellow enthusiasts, was a huge part of who he was. This was something that really hit home to me in the days after his death. Members of his club, and others he had played against, came to pay their respects to my Grandma. At the front of the booklet for his funeral was a picture of him smiling whilst holding 'The President's Cup', a trophy awarded at the end of each season following a competition to determine the best bowler within his club. The reception after his funeral took place at the community centre overlooking the bowling green which he had played on for over fifty years.

Near the end of this reception I found myself speaking to one of my Grandad's former club mates. We discussed for a little while his relationship to my Grandad, and during the course of our conversation he said something which, for a couple of reasons, briefly brought a smile to my face.

'He was like a father to me.'

Appendix 1: Members of Peterborough Cycling Club, circa 1890



Source: Peterborough Cycling Club: An Appreciation

Appendix Two: Peterborough Cycling Club Racing Team, early 1900s



Source: Peterborough Cycling Club: An Appreciation

Definitions

Anfield Bicycle Club (Anfield B.C.)

Bristol Bicycle and Tricycle Club (Bristol B.T.C.)

Cycling Club (C.C.)

Hull St. Andrews Cycling Club (Hull S.A.C.C.)

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