A Study Of Gamblers And Gaming Culture In London, c. 1780-1844: emerging strategic reasoning in a culture of conspicuous consumption

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Abstract

Gambling has long been knitted into the culture of the English, occupying the leisure time of rich and poor alike. Therefore it is surprising that the subject has escaped much scrutiny or interest from historians. This thesis takes a closer look at English gambling in the late 18th and early 19th century. It examines the role of gambling in Aristocratic London clubs through a case study of White's Club betting book. It moves further afield to examine the changing styles of contemporary gaming publications, and the prominence of luck, skill and probability therein. A study of Scrope Berdmore Davies offers a snapshot of a character heavily embroiled in the clubs and racecourses of England. Finally, the thesis examines the evidence given at the 1844 Select Committee on Gaming, and attempts to understand the driving factors behind legal changes enacted in the 1845 Gambling Act. This study not only fills large gaps in the historiography, but also offers an interpretation of gambling history coloured by a fundamental understanding of the games and wagers described.

Contents

Introduction

Gambling is a worthy vice: timeless and ubiquitous, it transcends cultures and eras. From ancient bone astragalia to computerised video-poker machines, the premise is built on the same concept of risk and reward. The thrill associated with gambling has many times been both ruinous and grossly rewarding for those willing to play. Gambling exists in forms of business, of expedition, of social interaction, and of course, most purely in the games people play.

Considering its universal appeal, it is puzzling that gaming and gambling has not received greater attention in scholarly work. Perhaps it is because students of gambling would rather focus their attentions on the perfect betting system than research broader themes surrounding the culture of gambling. Certainly the idea of a historical study of betting contradicts the accepted truth among gamblers that any profitable betting edge eventually disappears, and is not worth learning. Indeed, this dissertation will not uncover a method for profitable gambling, previously lost in time. There are however many gaming follies discussed which would best be avoided by the astute gambler.

The historiography of gambling is mostly out-dated and sparse. Often gambling is not the primary focus. That is not to say that there are not any scholarly and informative works in existence, although a good majority tend towards a psychological and social science slant rather a historical one. The research I have undertaken for this dissertation is unique in its approach to gambling history, casting a bettor's-eye-view on the evidence combined with a more traditional historical method.

At any rate, the quantity of scholarly work on gambling has not reflected its universal place in society. The first piece of what might be regarded as academic work was published in the nineteenth century by Andrew Steinmetz, and takes the form of a two volume series of anecdotes, hearsay and musings from the author on all manner of subjects within the spectrum of gambling.[1] Steinmetz, a barrister by trade according to the book's title page, lists multiple incidents of wins, losses, duels and suicides associated with the gambling world, although never details any of his sources. For example, Steinmetz argues that modern gaming, or what was deemed modern at his time of writing, began in 1777, although he does not elaborate on this.[2] As a source, it is an interesting basis for opinion, but perhaps not the most robust of scholarly work.

Lord John Ashton apparently felt similarly about the lack of gambling study and at the turn of the twentieth century whe completed his opus: *A History Of Gambling In England.*[3] Although Ashton takes a similarly liberal approach to referencing within work, it contains a wealth of narrative information about popular gambling in England, from the history of playing cards to the gambling at clubs and alehouses. Ashton does not

[1] Andrew Steinmetz, *The Gaming Table: Its votaries and victims in all times and countries, especially England and France,* Vols. I and II (London, 1870).

[2] Steinmetz, *The Gaming Table,* Vol. 1, p. 138. It is implied that perhaps Steinmetz's definition of 'modern gaming' relies on how much outcry it produces. He states that before 1777, "gaming appears never to have assumed an alarming aspect." Most gambling historiography following Steinmetz shows this to be incorrect: there have always been opponents to gambling.

[3] John Ashton, *A History Of Gambling In England* (London, originally published 1898, republished 1969).

follow any particular trend or changing force within gambling culture in England, choosing rather to move from point to point by quoting various sources, often unreferenced. The work may be dated, but it is still a fantastic introductory text for the student of gambling history, and a book for the curious.

More modern historical works have been published, often with a differing focus. Roger Munting's *Economic And Social History Of Gambling* is a great study of domestic and foreign gambling habits, but alas skips over much of the history before 1914.[4] Similarly, Carl Chinn's work on bookmaking and Philip Jones's more general work are equally vague within our period of interest, and choose to focus on a more modern history.[5] Mark Clapson's work is also of interest, but focuses more on the gambling activities of the working class, who are not the subject of the research undertaken for this dissertation.[6] However, these works are still recommended to any student of gambling history. They broadly imply that gambling institutions and organisation developed rapidly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, based upon a relatively static working class gaming culture that existed before. The constant theme within these works is the propensity of the English to gamble furiously when presented with the opportunity. There are other, more

[4] Roger Munting, *An Economic And Social History Of Gambling In Britain And The USA* (Manchester, 1996).

[5] J. Philip Jones, *Gambling: Today and yesterday* (Newton Abbot, 1973); Carl Chinn, *Better Betting With A Decent Feller: Bookmaking, betting and the British working class, 1750-1990* (New York, 1991).

[6] Mark Clapson, *A Bit Of A Flutter: Popular gambling and English society, c. 1823-1961* (Manchester, 1992).

commercially minded, publications available which deal with the history of gambling, such as Joseph Mazur's *What's Luck Got To Do With It?*[7] This work in particular provides a good narrative overview of gambling history before the twentieth century, but unfortunately fails to corroborate much of its claims and grossly overestimates the importance of some 'facts'.[8]

Scholars of gambling therefore have to look further afield to find work of interest for consumption and critique. David Mier's excellent *Regulating Commercial Gambling* has a reasonably comprehensive overview of gambling framed by the concept of law and order.[9] Similarly, Gerda Reith's excellent *Age Of Chance* serves as a work on chance and fortune which straddles both modern gambling and its history.[10] The historiography of chance and probability is rich in content, but is predominantly written for mathematicians. However, it retains a good level of use for historical interest. Ethier's *Doctrine Of Chances* is perhaps the most heavy with calculations, but other pieces such as Maistrov's *Probability Theory: A historical sketch* and Ian Hacking's *Emergence Of*

[7] Joseph Mazur, *What's Luck Got To Do With It?* (Oxford, 2010).

[8] Notably, the way in which the work of Cardano is used as explanation for an 'explosion of gambling practices' appears to be grounded in appealing conjecture rather than fact or evidence. Cardano will be discussed in chapter two of this dissertation.

[9] David Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling: Past, present and future* (Oxford, 2004).

[10] Gerda Reith, *The Age Of Chance: Gambling and western culture* (London, 2002).

Probability have deep, insightful historical analysis.[11] Franklin Bellhouse has made steps to bridge the gap between the mathematical and historical in his work on gaming calculations and cheats.[12] Many of these works imply a Whiggish narrative for historical understanding of chance, although there is very little attempt to apply this to any other aspect of popular gaming.

In addition to published works, there are a number of unpublished dissertations which I have been able to source and gather plenty of information from. As a student of the University of York, access to Nicholas Tosney's thesis on Gaming and Gambling history has been invaluable for establishing context for this research.[13] Similarly, Phyllis Deutsch's 'Fortune And Chance' has provided many interpretations worthy of praise and critique during this research, coupled also with interesting work by Jessica Richards and Justine Crump.[14] Extensive

[11] Stewart Ethier, *The Doctrine Of Chances: Probabilistic ideas of gambling* (Springer, 2010); L. E. Maistrov, *Probability Theory: A historical sketch* (1974); Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: a philosophical study of early ideas about probability, induction, and statistical inference* (London, 1975).

[12] Franklin Bellhouse, 'The Language Of Chance', *International Statistical Review,* Vol. 65, No. 1 (1997) and 'The Role Of Roguery In The History Of Probability', *Stastical Science,* Vol. 8, No. 4 (1993).

[13] Nicholas Tosney, 'Gaming In England, c. 1540-1760' (Unpublished thesis, University of York, 2008)

[14] Phyllis Dianne Deutsch, 'Fortune And Chance: Aristocratic gaming and English society, 1760-1837' (Unpublished Thesis, New York University, 1991); Jessica Richard, 'Arts Of Play: The gambling culture of eighteenth century Britain' (Unpublished Thesis, Princeton University, 2002); Justine Crump, 'The Perils Of Play: Eighteenth century ideas about gambling' (Unpublished Thesis, Cambridge University, 2004). These dissertations focus on aristocrats, but I propose to look beyond the upper classes to the other conspicuous gamers of the early nineteenth century. I propose to

searching suggests that these are the most relevant unpublished theses for the current work.

There are of course historiographies which run parallel to gambling history. The history of leisure time has been an interesting avenue for research, although not entirely fruitful.[15] Broadly, we see an increase in leisure time related to an increase in wealth and availability of luxuries in Britain. Furthermore, there are scholars such as John Brewer and Neil Mckendrick who have dealt with the rise of a consumer society, which has ties with speculation, finance and gambling.[16] As will be examined later, a maturing financial system and the development of investment speculation is roughly analogous to the maturing nature and methodology of betting and gaming. As well as this, there is a limited historiography on the history of lotteries, although I have steered relatively clear of these as they present an altogether different interpretation of gambling.[17]

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approach the subject of gaming differently by also actually studying how games were played and how knowledge of strategy and odds affected the way people gamed.

[15] Peter Burke, 'The Invention Of Leisure In Early Modern Europe' *Past and Present,* No. 146 (1995); John Hatcher, 'Labour, Leisure And Economic Thought Before The Nineteenth Century' *Past and Present,* No. 160 (1998); Alessandro Acangeli, *Recreation In The Renaissance: Attitudes towards leisure and pastimes in European culture, c. 1425-1675* (Basingstoke, 2003).

[16] John Brewer, J. H. Plumb, Neil McKendrick, *The Birth Of Consumer Society: The commercialization of eighteenth century England* (London, 1982).

[17] John Ashton wrote his own piece on lotteries, separately from his *History of Gambling.* See John Ashton, *A History Of English Lotteries, Now For The First Time Written* (London, 1893).

However, what the historiography fails to do is provide any real study on the nature of aristocratic and popular gaming in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The historiography also fails to comment on the interplay between these two types of gaming and the way in which games were played. Furthermore, none of the historiography appears to be written with any proper understanding or grasp of the games in question. For example, Phyllis Deutsch would rather point out the chaos of one's own fate and fortune over the thrill of losing or winning great amounts of money. The historiography also fails to knit popular understandings of probability into the narrative of popular games and the culture of gaming manuals. As far as I am aware, no scholarly work attempts to combine different parts of gambling culture in the way I am proposing.

This research took a primary interest in elite gambling culture between the latter quarter of the eighteenth century and the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This paper will argue this is a period of great change for gaming culture. Notorious gaming clubs occupied by the great and the good of the political world housed hedonistic gambling alongside food and drink, offering an opportunity for members to waste huge amounts of money by wagering against the house and with one another. By the end of our period of interest, the gambling within clubs had dwindled and been dwarfed by the gambling houses sprouting up around London to cater for the elite and lowly alike. The reasons for this appear multiple. Firstly, the aristocratic gaming in clubs such as White's or Brooks's began to lessen due apparently to the rumbles in France and in the New World which were threatening the aristocratic establishment. Secondly, this

quintessentially English reaction to critique of one's excess was also exacerbated quite simply by a haemorrhaging of money from gambling noblemen, ruining many landed families permanently or setting a precedent for an aversion to excessive gambling for later generations.

This popular impression is only magnified by the lack of a public figure who personified gambling excess. Charles James Fox lost his fortunes and was ousted from power, though still respected in gambling circles. Beau Brummel experienced ruin and fled the country. By 1820, there was no equivalent public figure for gambling excess, save for the famous proprietors of the new breed of gambling houses. This would prove significant in the changing wagering culture within aristocratic clubs. The widening of gambling culture to other areas of the social spectrum was reflected in gaming literature, which shifted its focus from etiquette and the right way to play, and onto more tactical considerations for a wide variety of bets and gambles. This phenomenon would also bring the potential for the professional gambler, a master of the odds, who would in effect inhabit the early position of a bookmaker at racetracks or proprietor in gambling houses. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the prominent position of London's gambling houses had caused a backlash by the government, who changed gambling law to supress and control the spread of new 'Hells.' Clubs and gambling houses held very different motives and intentions by this time, and the establishment of institutionalised gambling, the casino, had been created.

This dissertation will take separate paths into popular gaming culture, but will also work (broadly) in a chronological manner. The gambling and gaming under consideration includes any table game, played with paraphernalia such as dice or cards, or any wager on events, sports, races, news, current affairs or any opinion of note. If money is not changing hands, it is not gambling: A game of Whist is dull until the pennies come out.

Chapter one will investigate elite gaming culture at its core: the London clubs. The culture of debt and aristocratic values will be considered alongside records of the betting books at White's club and Brooks's club. The popularity of different games of chance, Whist, Hazard, and wagers of all varieties will be assessed, as well as the way in which they changed during the period. Briefly, the figure of Charles James Fox will be considered as an epitome of elite gaming culture, along with a brief discussion of gender within gaming culture and what it may imply for future research. This chapter will attempt also to assess how important it was to win at games of chance or skill, and whether success was any sort of a necessity within popular gambling culture.

Chapter two will investigate gaming manuals and the way in which they evolved during the eighteenth century. This will begin with a look at the first popular gaming manual, Cotton's *Compleat Gamester.* It will continue by documenting and analysing the revisions to the popular *Hoyle's Games* series, in order to infer how popular gambling culture was changing in instruction, etiquette, and by the games of choice. This investigation of gaming manuals will be juxtaposed with a history of popular

understandings of probability and chance, with a view to assessing early nineteenth century gamblers' understanding of probability, but also in order to place the importance of calculations into the spectrum of gambling strategy. By this integration and consideration of popular gambling strategy, the importance of winning might be better assessed within the culture as a whole.

Chapter three will take the form of a biographical assessment of one Scrope Berdmore Davies. Scrope, a relatively unstudied dandy and gentleman about town, appears at multiple points in the historiography as an excellent gambler. I want to investigate his alleged calculation of odds and success at the Macao and Hazard table, and question why he eventually went into ruin and exile like his contemporary Beau Brummel. Indeed, as a way of assessing the importance of winning, we must look at the experience of a character whom at least purports to be a 'professional' gambler. The analysis will unfortunately expose Scrope as an inevitable loser, in terms of gambling, at least.

Chapter four concludes the research by explaining the changes after the drop in popularity of gaming at politically affiliated clubs. The chapter will use the Report of the 1844 Select Committee on gaming as an anchor of anecdotal evidence to analyse the rise of common gambling houses, increase in the popularity of horse racing, and the reasons for the change of Gaming Act in 1845. This will serve as an apt ending point for the research, as Britain adjusted to the first change in gambling law in exactly one hundred years.

It is hoped that by this point the research will have filled a great number of the gaps in the historiography regarding the change and growth of popular gambling culture in England between 1780 and 1840. There will however, be limits to the research and questions which I have not endeavoured to answer due to practical constraints.

Firstly, as already implied, the experience of working class gambling is noticeably absent from this research. The reasons for this are largely source based; there are very few sources which the scholar of gambling history can draw upon. A project on working class gambling which intends to predate Carl Chinn's work on the subject would probably have to cover a wider time period than I have attempted, and would also require a new glut of relevant sources to surface in order to the form the central pillar to the research.

Secondly, although this research touches on the subject of gender within aristocratic gaming culture, it does not fully attempt to realise a thesis on the role of women in popular gaming culture. Although such a project would not encounter the same source problems as a thesis on working class gambling, source material is still lacking in this area and would possibly require a much wider and comprehensive study of the role of gender within all leisure time, as opposed to a narrow focus on gaming. Women certainly gambled and played card and dice, but apparently with less ferocity or tenacity as some men which we encounter during the research.

It should be noted that when using the term ‘popular’ gambling or ‘popular’ gaming houses, it is in reference to any games and gamblers which are not aristocratic. When working class gaming is being considered, it will be explicit. This ‘popular’ terminology is being used to avoid any awkward ‘middle class’ or ‘upper middle’ segmentation confusion. For example, I refer to *Hoyle’s Games Improved* as a popular gaming manual, but I am not suggesting it was consumed by the working classes.

Each time a type of game is mentioned in the thesis I will endeavour to write a brief description of its rules in a footnote. Any time that an understanding of the rules is more important, such as when discussing the nature of betting at Hazard, there will be more lengthy explanations. The same applies to technical jargon or slang for each game, mentioned in the prose or in a quotation. In references and citations, a shortened author name and title will be incorporated after it is mentioned for the first time in order to avoid cluttered footnotes. The bibliography will include full length references as well as being sorted into categories for ease of consultation.

I: Wagers, White's And Winning

The first chapter deals chiefly with the men (and women) of titles, land and above all, money. There are multiple reasons for a focus on this small percentage of the population: firstly, the better classes tend to have a lot more spare time and wealth to waste gaming and gambling with one another. Secondly, sources are more prevalent (although not as plentiful as one would desire in all cases.) And finally, for the most part, the undeniably romantic allure of the richly decorated gaming clubs or the reckless gambling of dynastic fortunes rather trump the dingy and dull penny games played against street walls or in alehouses.

Central to the gambling lives of many established lineages were the London clubs. These clubs often developed from coffeehouses or other existing meeting places, and had political affiliations and a membership to boast about.[18] The clubs were central to the gambling habits of creatures of state and other plenty-flushed landed men. They provided a platform for business, parliamentary discussion and the strengthening of political networking. Such clubs will be shown in this chapter to be central to the conspicuous consumption of aristocratic gamblers.

The chapter will begin with an examination of the culture which fostered gambling's popularity, followed by a look at the gaming culture itself. The games they played and personified, such as Whist and Hazard will also be considered. I will argued that club culture reached its zenith around the

[18] For example, White's developed from a regular meeting of wealthy men at a chocolate house, as will be discussed later.

end of the eighteenth century, and then began to alter for a number of reasons. The most striking trend is the falling number of high-stakes bets through the early decades of the nineteenth century, being usurped by low-stake political wagers. Proof of deep-play's falling popularity is located within the very wagers passed around aristocratic clubs. This information can be found in the existing betting books from the clubs, containing wagers which are often explicitly recorded. I will discuss how the evidence shows a decline in high stakes club gambling, then examine possible reasons for this decline, and suggest alternative interpretations which will be explored in later chapters. The notion of fashion, and passing trends of betting, are key themes which are considered throughout the chapter.

The changing nature of society during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries pushed gambling into a more prominent position as the perfect pastime for members of all classes. The population of London increased from 200,000 to almost one million between 1600 and 1800.[19] This was coupled with a rise in the availability of luxuries and a boom in economy and free spending spurred by a diversifying trade system.[20] The Whig government established a system based on deficit spending which

[19] Brewer, Plumb, McKendrick, *The Birth Of Consumer Society,* p. 21.

[20] Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British political and social history 1688-1832* (London, 1997), pp. 320-325; Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Britain, 1688-1783* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 59-79; Reith, *The Age Of Chance,* p.59.

fitted in with a society of speculators.[21] A maturing financial system had been set in place by the Bank of England's establishment in 1694 and the stock exchange eight decades later. This financial revolution allowed business to be run on borrowed capital, and popularised the idea of speculation as a way of making profit.[22] Speculation and daring economic ventures also increased the popularity of insurance, beginning with 'bottomly contracts' (marine insurance) and developing into simply laying wagers on the lives of famous or infamous characters: publications would keep bettors updated on the lives and deaths of those contracted: "the longest liver takes all!"[23] Julian Hoppit argues explicitly how "credit, its form and function, givers and takers, risks and rewards loomed large in literate consciousness."[24] This comfort with credit was born of increasing borrowing, on a public, corporate and private level. Publicly, the government had embraced a permanent national debt since 1688, sometimes coined the 'financial revolution.' [25] Excessive corporate borrowing had to be controlled by the Bubble Act of 1720.[26] On a personal

[21] Brewer, Plumb, McKendrick, *The Birth of Consumer Society,* p. 199.

[22] Black, *Eighteenth Century Britain,* pp. 77-9.

[23] Reith, *The Age Of Chance,* p. 61. Quote taken from Taylor's *Friendly Society* (1708).

[24] Julian Hoppit, 'Attitudes To Credit In Britain, 1680-1790', *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1990), p. 306.

[25] Hoppit, 'Attitudes to Credit', p. 307; see also P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution In England* (1967).

[26] The South Sea Bubble is one of the first, infamous financial crises of the eighteenth century, where mass unfounded speculation and hysteria surrounding the South Sea Company resulted in ruin for many investors. For more on contemporary financial crises, see Julian Hoppit, 'Financial

level, credit notes, annuities and pawning were part and parcel of increasingly intricate systems of consumer borrowing.

Gaming and gambling was glamorised in a society that was allegedly addicted to luxury and serenaded by speculation. As Gerda Reith has argued, the fluctuations of the markets, and the economy of speculation was reflected by the gaming table.[27] George Alexander Stevens wrote of the similarities between a gambler and a "stockjobber" in 1788, making use of information about the tumble of dice or profitability of businesses in equal measure.[28] Indeed, Doctor Johnson held them in similar contempt: a gambler was "a knave whose practice it is to invite the unwary to game and cheat them" whilst a stockjobber was "a low wretch who gets money by buying and selling shares in the funds."[29]

Thus, gambling became entwined with the conspicuous consumption of the upper echelons of society. As Lawrence Stone pointed out decades ago, 'conspicuous consumption' satisfied three basic human urges: competition, compulsion to work, and more importantly, compulsion to play: "wealth is not a sufficient source of honour in itself… it needs to be

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Crises In Eighteenth Century England' *The Economic History Review,* Vol. 39, No. 1 (1986). For a more technical and explicit breakdown of eighteenth century investments, see David Hancock, ''Domestic Bubbling': Eighteenth century London merchants and individual investment in the fund", *The Economic History Review,* Vol. 47, No. 4 (1994).

[27] Reith, *The Age Of Chance,* p. 62.

[28] George Alexander Stevens, *The Adventures Of A Speculist,* Vol 1 (London, 1788), pp. 69-70.

[29] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary Of The English Language* (London, 1755).

advertised."[30] For gamblers, this meant high stakes or 'deep play.' The aristocracy showed their detachment from the value of money by risking vast quantities of wealth on the whim of a die or turn of a pasteboard. A wager was not just a financial contract of risk between two parties, but an outward display of one's fantastic wealth and fashion. Even in Stone's period of interest, he describes gambling as the "opium of the idle" and vast swathes of wealth were lost and dynasties ruined by the frivolous flutters of noble men.[31] Conspicuous consumption is dictated by fashion, and what was most coveted. High stakes gambling at the time of the London clubs's zenith satisfied this need in a frankly human culture of jealousy and narcissism.

At the centre of the supposed 'Aristocratic code' was honour.[32] A gentleman would gamble great amounts of money, and perhaps lose, but must never lose his temper or integrity. As a part of this system, debts were largely maintained on a man to man basis, and to charge interest was to be a Jew.[33] In order to handle these debts, there was a great deal of lending between members of clubs, and of course clubs allowed their

[30] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis Of The Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (London, 1965), p. 184 and quotation taken from p. 185.

[31] Stone, *Crisis Of The Aristocracy,* p. 367 and pp. 370-375. See also Maura A. Henry, 'The Making Of Elite Culture' in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion To Eighteenth Century Britain* (2002), p. 324.

[32] Deutsch, 'Fortune And Chance', p. 13.

[33] Deutsch, 'Fortune and Chance', p. 38.

patrons to gamble on credit if they so wished. As explored above, debt was very much a part of every day business and buying power, but the honouring of ones debts was something more special.

Phyllis Deutsch makes an interesting argument about the nature of honour within the realms of gambling and debt. She claims that all debts and bets were expected to be completed in a cooperative manner without any hint of dispute from either side, regardless of outcome. This was at the centre of the code. She uses the example of Lord Douglas, who had placed a bet on the death of a man whom he knew to have already expired. This wager was accepted by a layer, who then refused to pay after learning of Douglas's prior knowledge.[34] Douglas took the case to the King's bench, pleading that the bet was still valid and demanded to be paid. Douglas won the case, but it cost him his membership at Almack's and Boodle's.[35] More than likely, it probably also made him enemies within the membership. What matters, however, was that Douglas had disgraced himself by disputing another gentleman's judgement of the bet.

This example is perhaps a little extreme. It is hardly a wonder that Douglas lost his welcome to the club in which he took fellow members to court. Perhaps if he had disputed the bet another way, such as using adjudication from other club members, he would have maintained

[34] A 'layer' is a term which will used throughout this paper. Any bet must have a 'backer' and a 'layer.' A 'backer' bets that a certain event is going to happen, whilst a 'layer' bets that it will not happen. In effect, all bookmakers are layers since they accept punters's bets at odds they set – they are essentially betting that the event (e.g. a horse winning a race) is not going to happen, and they are accepting the backer's custom.

[35] Deutsch, p. 38.

aristocratic values. This was not uncommon, and the betting book of White's has many entries which required adjudication. This is not to deny that honour was an integral part of club gaming culture. Indeed, it will be explored fully in chapter two how etiquette was integral to the gaming manuals of the time. For now, it is apparent that club culture was strong in two areas: conspicuous consumption and elegant defeat.

The most fashionable gambling locations changed as much as the games in vogue did. During the early to mid-eighteenth century, Beau Nash's Bath was the epicentre of glamorous gaming and ruin. Indeed, R. S. Neale speaks of Bath as an "international centre for gambling."[36] Richard Nash became "Master of Ceremonies" in 1704, and promoted Bath's gambling opportunities by drawing up a code of behaviour designed to limit the rough side of gaming, including prostitution and duelling.[37] A gaming act of 1739 outlawed games such as Faro, Bassett, Hazard and Ace of Hearts – so gaming houses in Bath devised new games such as Roly-Poly and 'Evens and Odds', a variation on the new French game of *Roulet.* Bath's hegemony was not to last however, as the 1745 Gaming Act banned all games of chance regardless of name, and keeping a gaming house became too risky and expensive there.[38]

[36] R. S. Neale, *Bath: A social history 1680-1850: a social history, or, a valley of pleasure yet a sink of iniquity* (London, 1981), p. 25.

[37] Neale, *Bath,* p. 26.

[38] Neale, *Bath,* p. 28.

Incidentally, the Gambling Acts of 1739 and 1745 were actually unique in that they made real impact on the gaming habits of the elite.[39] By the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the gaming epicentre of England had firmly moved to London where many exclusive (and not so exclusive) clubs attracted the finest of men of politics, state, military and great fortune. It triumphed where Bath had failed through its proximity to men of state and lawmakers. A membership to a club was vital to the integrity of a man of wealth, with many paying multiple expensive subscriptions so that they might eat, drink and gamble with likeminded gentlemen. Beau Nash may have lost his fortune at the hands of gamblers in Bath, but many more men lost far more during elite gambling's zenith between the 1770s and 1800s.

Some of the largest and most ruinous clubs of London included The Cocoa Tree, White's, Almack's and Brooks's. The clubs were often referred to as "golden hells" in reference to the "copper hells" which the lowly classes frequented. Golden Hells apparently managed to escape being shut down by the authorities through their connections to the lawmakers and state through their very memberbase.

[39] Nick Tosney writes a great deal on the various acts by government to restrict the gaming of the English, which were almost entirely ineffective. The Act of 1664 attempted to curb cheating in games, but proved too difficult a task to police. Stamp duty in 1711 attempted to capitalise on gaming's popularity, but failed to deal with the sheer numbers of cards and dice being manufactured and purchased. For more, see Tosney, 'Gaming in England', especially p. 253 and 271. For more on gambling and the law see Munting, *An Economic And Social History Of Gambling* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 18-30.

Almack's was originally assembly rooms for dancing, card games and other entertainments.[40] It developed a reputation of gambling and gluttony – conspicuous consumption indeed. Established by a group of nobles and gentlemen in 1764, its original rules included the following:

"21. No gaming in the eating room, except tossing up for reckonings, on penalty of paying the whole bill of the members present."[41]

The demands of payment for the breaking of rules was part of the outward display of its member's wealth. Minimum wagers and bullying were commonplace. Rule 40 stipulated a minimum of fifty guineas at hand at all times at the "New Guinea table" or an evidently more thrifty minimum of twenty guineas at the pathetic "twenty guinea table."

Almack's was actually unique in that it admitted women. It lacked the political club status of White's or Brooks's, but retained an aura of respectability which was later lampooned in *Life In London.*[42] Almack's is gushingly described as "the rally point of rank, wealth, talents and beauty… the meridian of fashion, style, elegance and manners."[43] This description is delicately sarcastic, but is perfectly illustrative of the image which aristocratic gaming culture was attempting to convey, even as late

[40] Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit Of Pleasure: Gender space, and architecture in Regency London* (London, 2002), pp. 87-89.

[41] John Ashton, *The History Of Gambling In England*, p. 91.

[42] *Life In London* was a periodical written by Pierce Egan and illustrated by George Cruikshank. It followed the experiences of Jerry Hawthorn and Corinthian Tom around various parts of London life. It's popularity would later lead to a series of stage productions named *Tom And Jerry.*

[43] Pierce Egan, *Life In London* (1821) reprinted in John Marriott (ed.), *Unknown London: Early modern visions of the metropolis, 1815-1845* (London, 2000), p. 293.

as the 1820s. In the account of Almack's, Jerry is greeted by the sight of royalty, commanders of the military, and Lords and Ladies of the land. He goes to scratch his head in awe, but stops dead as "it would be instantly noticed as vulgar."[44] However, it is worth noting that Tom and Jerry do not encounter the gaming side of Almack's. This is perhaps because of the late time period, which is after the real gambling craze had began to fade. Interestingly, however, the two men do visit a mirror image of Almacks named "All-Max" which is base equivalent which required no patronage or card of admission. "Every cove that put in his appearance was quite welcome: colour or country considered no obstacle; and dress and address were completely out the question."[45] Perhaps this imagined club is supposed to lampoon Almacks by showing its equivalent when all the pomp and wealth are stripped away.

Almack's was to prove insufficient at quenching the gambling thirsts of London's elite. Brooks's is often considered the most infamous of the top clubs, due in part to its rich and varied betting book which will be explored below. The club began as a splinter of Almack's, designed to allow greater betting amongst a chosen few. Membership was limited at first to the original twenty-seven 'Macaronis', with an average age of just 25.[46] Gaming was deep and constant for these young men. Allegedly Lord Carlisle funded a third of the construction of Castle Howard from

[44] *Life In London,* p. 300.

[45] *Life In London*, p. 286.

[46] John Jolliffe, 'Birth Of Brooks's' in Philip Ziegler and Desmond Seward (eds.), *Brooks's: A social history* (London, 1991), p. 26.

winnings at the card table in Brooks's.[47] Membership was highly restricted, and any member which joined another club (except the illustrious White's) was struck off. An infamous example of the type of betting that went on in Brooks's was placed in 1785: "Lord Cholmondeley has given two guineas to Ld. Derby, to receive 500 guineas whenever his lordship fucks a woman in a balloon one thousand yards from the earth."[48] Aristocratic gentility and manners were perhaps not the priority for the young members of this fashionable club. A 1772 etching of the 'Macaronis' in their club depicts them gaming around a table, dressed as witches uttering a spell around their 'cauldron': "Double, bubble, toil and trouble. Passions burn and bets are double!"[49] The ritualistic gambling of Brooks's members is mocked and implied to be inhuman. The caption includes the lesson "ruin enters as fate runs out," thus their eventual bankruptcy is prophesised.

The alternative to Brooks's was White's. White's actually predates Brooks's and has a history before its club status as a coffee house. In fact, it is one year older than the Bank of England, and developed along with the credit-heavy culture which speculation and markets helped stimulate. As a coffee house, it was unspectacular. There were two thousand in London in 1710, and White's Coffee House was just another establishment

[47] John Plumb, 'The World Of Brooks's' in *Brooks's: A social history,* p. 21.

[48] L. G. Mitchell, *Charles James Fox* (Oxford, 1992), p. 96.

[49] Matthew Darly, *The Macaroni Cauldron,* no publication listed (1772). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1643324&partid=1.

offering the fashionable drink and a public sphere for men to converse, debate and game.[50] The proprietor soon realised the informal 'club at White's' was altogether more lucrative for his business, and reopened just as "White's." By the mid eighteenth century, the club had changed hands and moved to its permanent position on St. James Street. Membership was, like Brooks's, very exclusive. Only five or six new members were admitted every year, and this would not be adjusted to the deaths of current members.[51] A Young Club was established as a stepping stone into the full club, although both clubs merged in 1781 into White's final state. Notable members include William Pitt and the Duke of Wellington. The gaming at White's was deep and often absurd. Horace Walpole recollected of an infamous bet between White's members that man could survive under water for twelve hours. The stake was allegedly £1500, and the winner was decided when the two men hired a 'desperate fellow', sunk him a ship and never heard or saw him again.[52] Although there seems to be no evidence of this bet in White's betting book, it is possible that a bet of this magnitude was big enough to be adjudicated by the whole membership. More likely the bet never happened. But it still is illustrative of the popular impression of White's rampant gambling culture. Indeed, the sheer scale of gambling was mind-boggling. Gentlemen even layed wagers

[50] Algernon Bourke, *The History Of White's With The Betting Book From 1743 To 1878 And A List Of Members From 1736 to 1892,* Vol. 1 (1892), p. 2.

[51] Bourke, *History Of White's,* p. 60.

[52] Bourke, *History Of White's,* p. 80.

against themselves gambling, apparently in an effort to curb their expenses. This example comes from early in White's life cycle:

"December 12th 1758. Mr. Fanshawe and Capt. Rodney agree whenever they cut in at whist and are not together, whichever offers to bett fifty guineas (the other refusing) is to forfeit one hundred guineas."[53]

They were goading one another into betting large amounts, and punishing conservative betting. Gambling had become a way of life for some of the members of White's.

So why were clubs so popular? And indeed, why so populous? Firstly, from a gambling point of view, clubs offered a safe environment for patrons to gamble, game and wager without fear of hustlers, corrupt jockeys or doped horses.[54] Gambling and cheating had long been synonymous subjects and many pamphlets had been published over the centuries detailing the sleight-of-hand, confidence tricks and collusion of a mysterious network for gambling hustlers.[55] Secondly, clubs were the

[53] White's Betting Book, reprinted in Algernon Bourke, *The History Of White's With The Betting Book From 1743 To 1878 And A List Of Members From 1736 to 1892,* Vol. 2 (1892), p. 36.

[54] Issues of corrupt horse races will be discussed in chapter four when reviewing the evidence given to the Select Committee on gaming in 1844.

[55] Anon., *The Whole Art And Mystery Of Modern Gaming, Fully Expos'd And Detected: Containing an historical account of all the secret abuses practis'd in the games of chance* (London, 1726). See also S. H. Misodolus, *Do No Right, Take No Wrong; Keep What You Have, Get What You Can: or, the ways of the world displayed in several profitable essays, serious and comical* (London, 1711); J. S., *City And Country Recreation: or, wit and merriment rightly calculated, for the pleasure and advantage of either sex* (London,

perfect stages for the conspicuous consumption of the rich and famous. All wagers could be shared and verified using the betting book, whilst all money was publically bet at the gaming tables in front of the eyes of all members. The architecture of White's shows a select few rooms devoted to gambling, which would have had to house over a hundred members at full capacity.[56] It was essentially a public sphere of betting within a private and privileged setting. The men were protected from those who could not keep up with their deep play, and surrounded by like-minded gamers who they wanted, and perhaps needed, to impress.

However, it might be argued that gambling was not the primary purpose of some clubs, as victualing and gossip had long since existed within coffeehouses and other public arenas. In reality however, it is difficult to justify anything but gambling as the principle reason for them. Brooks's broke away from Almack's for the express purpose of gambling: they banned women, stopped the unnecessary jamborees and wrote gambling into the very rules of the club. If you did not game, you would be blackballed and shamed. Club records explicitly state this intention in the case of Mr Thynne, one of the founding members:

1705); Jeremy Collier, *An Essay Upon Gaming, In A Dialogue Between Callimachus And Dolomedes* (London, 1713).

[56] Bourke, *History Of White's,* p. 243.

"Having won only £12,000 during the last two months, he retired in disgust March 21st 1772; and that he may never return is the ardent wish of members."[57]

Although there is no doubt a level of boisterous sarcasm, the intention is clear: gamble, or get out.

The question must therefore be considered: what made gambling itself so popular? Aside from the psychologically pleasing nature of the risk and reward, club gaming must have been driven by alternative factors. I have already alluded to the culture being firmly conditioned to speculate and to buy with credit. Phyllis Deutsch offers a grand interpretation of the gaming vogue, suggesting that people turned to gambling and wagering as a way of dealing with their fear of chance and fortune.[58] In this way, the gamblers could feel in control of their superstitions and worries by harnessing control of fate by monetising it. It is certainly an interesting interpretation, but perhaps omits one of the most important factors: games are fun. Pastimes were maturing and developing faster than ever with new gaming manuals being published and updated year on year, cards were cheaper and in greater supply, a variety of games could be offered by one gaming establishment and had been expertly combined with the food, drink and gossip which had been prevalent in coffeehouses the previous century. Horse racing was also maturing and becoming more regular and will be explored in chapter four. At any rate, the members of

[57] Quoted in John Jolliffe, 'Birth Of Brooks's' in *Brookes: A social history*, p. 26.

[58] Deutsch, 'Fortune And Chance', p. 26.

White's and Brooks's needed no excuse to gamble, and probably weren't trying to make sense of fate or fortune in any way: rather they were playing with it.

Betting was so much a part of club culture that it became entwined with other aspects of the clubs, particularly the politics. Although clubs were not originally politically affiliated, they fell into such groupings as a result of their most prominent members. Whites became firmly Tory and Brooks's staunchly Whiggish following the political conflicts of the 1780s. Charles James Fox was probably the most (in)famous member of Brooks's illustrious establishment. He split his time equally between his politics and his gambling habit, which saw him even running his very own faro bank at Brooks's.[59] This unsurprisingly made a large impact on his political successes and failures, due in no small part to his every win and loss being well known within the public sphere.[60] He made his gaming such a spectacle as to wear a special costume when gaming. He wore his coat inside out to preserve the embroidery from candles, sported a mask

[59] Deutsch, 'Fortune And Chance', p. 1. Faro is a simple card game where players bet against a dealer on the value of cards to be turned up throughout a shuffled deck. The game was very popular in France, England in the 18th century and in America throughout the 19th century. Unfortunately, interest died out thanks to the low edge the game gave the house or dealer. Its place was superseded by blackjack and variations of blackjack, since they offered greater profit margins.

[60] Gillian Russell, 'Faro's Daughters: Female gamesters, politics and the discourse of finance in 1790s Britain' *Eighteenth Century Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 4 (2000), p. 483.

to shade his eyes and expression, and topped it all off with an extravagant hat decorated with flowers and ribbons.[61] This pomp and eccentricity perfectly illustrates the acute extent of conspicuous displays of gambling within the clubs. For Fox, however, it was to be to his detriment. The election against Mr Pitt in 1784 pushed the political parties into the two different clubs, since Mr Pitt favoured Whites. The rivalry became bitter. Pitt was at one time attacked by members of Brooks's when out strolling in Pall Mall.[62] The home of Foxites was not Westminster, it was Brooks's.[63] The affiliation of the general election candidates became a curse for Fox, who was frequently lambasted for his love of gambling and Brooks's. Gillray's *Crumbs Of Comfort* depicts Fox accepting dice from the devil, portrayed as an angelic saviour.[64] An image in *Rambler's Magazine* in 1783 shows Fox moving house, with very little belongings, mocking his financial ruin.[65] First in the procession is, of course, a pair of dice. Fox and his dice were never apart in the contemporary mind, and a satirical

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[61] Russell, 'Faro's Daughters', p.483.

[62] Richard Ollard, 'The Brooks's Of C.J. Fox' in *Brooks's: A social history*, p. 37.

[63] L. G. Mitchell, *Charles James Fox And The Disintegration Of The Whig Party, 1782-1794* (Oxford, 1971), p. 249.

[64] James Gillray, *Crumbs Of Comfort,* no publication listed (1782). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1630956&partid=1.

[65] Anonymous, *Mr F-x Moving All His Plate & Furniture From St James's Place To Wimbledon* in 'Rambler's Magazine' (1783). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1457695&partid=1.

etching of him as a beggar in 1793 shows dice scattered at his feet.[66] His gambling problem was a public issue, and in turn this highlighted the gambling excesses of Fox's friends, and compatriots at Brooks's and White's.

The biggest game in vogue in the eighteenth century rose quickly into popularity partly because of one man's publications on the correct strategy for play. It was also popular because it combined various card games which had come before. That game was Whist. Whist is traditionally seen as a gentleman's pursuit and was played between two teams of two. Every card in a traditional deck is evenly dealt among the quartet then played in succession to win 'tricks'. Before the game, there is bidding on the amount of tricks each pair will triumph. The pastime was a precursor to the modern game of Bridge which is vastly popular worldwide. Although the main purpose of the game is to win using the correct skill and judgement, the secondary (and far more important aspect to many eighteenth century players) was to win money through betting.

Whist saw a rise in popularity after Edmond Hoyle published his *Short Treatise On The Game Of Whist* in 1742 which helped to formulate the

[66] William Dent, *A Great Man In Distress* in 'A looking glass for a right honourable mendicant' (1793). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1634885&partid=1.

rules across whist circles throughout the metropolis.[67] The relationship between the rise of whist's popularity and Hoyle's publications was symbiotic – Hoyle's skills were very much in demand due to the rising popularity of the game, and a publisher paid a handsome £100 to publish the tips he usually confined to private lessons.[68] Whist fitted very well into aristocratic culture because of its structured decency, gentlemanly contracts and strict etiquette.

Proper and improper conduct at the card table is considered frequently in Hoyle's original, as well as subsequent editions.[69] The treatise on whist bangs the etiquette drum early and often:

"Even the attempt to take up the trick, though won before the last partner has played, is deemed very improper."[70]

Indeed, etiquette such as this is explicitly listed under the authoritative title "Laws of Whist." It deals with important subjects such as what to do in the event a card turning upwards during the deal, what to do if the deal is discovered to be uneven after the first trick has been settled, and how to revoke, call honours and how to call rounds early.[71] These somewhat confusing terms are part and parcel of the aristocratic gaming culture: jargon and technical gaming terms kept the pastime relatively specialist,

[67] Edmund Hoyle, *A Short Treatise On The Game Of Whist Containing The Laws Of The Game,* (London, 1742)

[68] Tosney, 'Gaming In England', p. 239.

[69] The evolution of these gaming manuals will be considered in chapter two.

[70] Edmond Hoyle and Charles Jones, *Hoyle's Games Improved* (1796), p. 1.

[71] Hoyle and Jones (1796), pp. 48-50.

insular, and above all, exclusive. A card player who knew his tenaces from his trumps should be revered and his competence respected.

Of course, a game of whist was no distraction without betting. Even for the best players, a loss of concentration could be very costly. Steinmetz relays the story of Lord Rivers, a skilled player, who lost £3400 playing at White's because he forgot the seven of hearts had already been played.[72] The story also goes that he went on to win over £100,000 at Whist over a short membership to the club. The Duke of Wellington, patron of White's, would allegedly bet £100,000 on whist per evening.[73]

Knowledge and skill at whist was certainly hotly contested at the club, and money was even wagered on the correct strategy of hypothetical whist situations:

"26th July, 1823. We have a trick each, B is left with King, Queen of Clubs, and Queen of Trumps, and is to play. King not marked on either side. Which card should B play? Mr. de Roos bets Baring £200 to £100 that B ought to play the Queen of trumps. To be decided by Mr. Church at Paris."[74]

Although this bet comes late in the period, it is an apt example of the lengths of debate which card strategy could provoke. Incidentally, Hoyle does not address this specific situation, which is possibly why it could only be solved by an independent adjudicator. Like many gambling games, whist was addictive:

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[72] Steinmetz, p. 76.

[73] Joseph Mazur, *What's Luck Got To Do With It?* (Oxford, 2010)

[74] White's Betting Book, p. 179.

"January 18th 1812. Mr W. Howard betts Mr. Talbot five guineas that he, Mr. T, will not play at whist for more than guinea points, during the next six weeks."[75]

As will be mentioned in connection with many common games, men would bet against further play in order to ensure no more losses. This was a precaution taken by gamers:

"Nov. 13th, 1809. Mr Talbot bets Mr. Tweedale ten guineas that he does not play more than five rubbers at whist on any one night at White's before 25th December next."[76]

Life In London suggests a darker side to the whist craze. In a section titled "What is termed a friendly game of whist" the duo of Tom and Jerry unwittingly begin a game of whist with a group of "swell broad coves" which they meet at a cockfight.[77] The men turn out to be less than reputable, and proceed to cheat Tom and Jerry with the use of a mirror. It is worth noting that the cheats are not proper gentlemen, and do not fit into aristocratic gaming culture. Rather they are imposters, praying on the gentlemanly sensibilities of real Whist players – perhaps this is indicative of the naivety which such a culture breeds.

[75] White's Betting Book, p. 79.

[76] White's Betting Book, p. 56.

[77] *Life In London*, p. 219. Swell Broad Coves is term which denotes elegantly dressed cardmen, who mix with gentlemen.

The pot luck game of choice was Hazard, a precursor to the modern game of Craps. The dice are thrown by the caster, and either rolls 'crabs' or a number known as the 'main.' He now attempts to throw a 'chance' number, depending on the 'main', before he rolls the 'main' for the second time. The rules appear bewildering at first, but become easy to pick up when playing. What is more, my research has turned out multiple variations on the rules being played in different eras and places – it is essentially customisable.

The real 'hazard' comes with the betting. Money is wagered on each throw of the dice, and large fortunes can be wiped away with a single throw as each cast bet is cumulative if the game does not end. When it does end, it begins again with a new caster. The game is very old and was popular on all levels of the social spectrum, and appears in literature and drawings throughout the centuries.[78]

Betting on hazard could cost or create a fortune in short spaces of time. Such was the love of the game that Ashton fondly remarks on the story of Middle Temple Hall in 1764, where over one hundred pairs of dice were found after falling through the cracks in floorboards during renovation work.[79] The game was addictive, and the betting books of White's is testimony to this:

[78] Ethier traces it back to the twelfth century to the Arab castle of Hazart. More information on Hazard's conception in Ethier, *The Doctrine Of Chances*, p. 517.

[79] Ashton, p. 27.

"May 22nd, 1818. Mr Raikes bets Sir Joseph Copley ten guineas that he does not play at cards or dice at any club in London in a year from this date."[80]

This sort of contract seems to have been a type of self-control rather than a real wager.

"Feb 1st, 1757. Mr Shafto betts Mr. Turner ten guineas that he does not play hazzard before the next April meeting of Newmarket."[81]

This bet is followed by an identical wager, but with switched names. Evidently these two gentlemen were unhappy with their gambling habits, and thought that ten guineas was enough to warn them off. Of course, since Newmarket was a gambling haven, maybe they were just trying to save up some capital in order to blow it there. Perhaps it was just a shared joke about the proportions of each other's gaming.

By and large, luck games such as hazard were considered base and bestial, but games of skill such as whist were portrayed in a more positive way. Contemporary images of games of hazard depict raucous chaos and bestial behaviour. An image of club hazard, published in 1790, depicts a disagreement and ensuing scuffle between players.[82] Two men point pistols at each other whilst another man is in the process of striking someone with a chair. One bawdily swings his wine glass and a

[80] White's Betting Book, p. 145.

[81] White's Betting Book, p. 35.

[82] Thomas Rowlandson, *A Kick Up At A Hazard Table,* no publication listed (1790). Picture visible at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1487279&partid=1.

candlestick whilst other men fall away from the table with expressions of anger and worry.

Even images of games of Faro run along a similar theme, despite the game being relatively slow and requiring less input from the players. James Gillray's *The Faro Table* published in 1792 shows such a scene.[83] Up to twenty visible combatants are crammed around the table, which is littered with bets. The dealer turns up cards as one player visibly braces himself against the table to counter the push of crane-necked gamblers. The faces are ones of anger and disappointment. The luck factor in these games, requiring no study or poise, would appear to be the inspiration for the negative imagery.

Images of whist or other skill games are more civilised. *The Card Party*, published in 1783 depicts two ladies at play, with no money on the table. Two men advise their next moves. Their dress is formal and grand, which matches the room's decoration. The caption is taken from Alexander Pope's *Rape Of The Lock,* and implies Whist is being played, or some other skill based game: "Let spades lie trumps (she said), and trumps they were."[84] The mood of the picture is relaxed and their expressions are calm. A late image of Whist maintains this serene and elegant atmosphere. The

[83] Probably a print for *Modern Hospitality, Or, A Friendly Party In High Life* (1792). James Gillray, Unnamed sketch. Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=747539&partid=1.

[84] Sayer and Bennett, *The Card Party,* no publication listed (1783). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=3342608&partid=1.

satirical print *Whist*, published in 1825 by George Hunt, depicts a richly decorated games room where there are multiple games of Whist being played by men and women in fashionable dress.[85] Several men watch the game, whilst another adjusts his outfit in the mirror. No one appears to be speaking, and there is an aura of calmness and stillness which sharply contrasts with images of hazard and faro previously discussed.

It is evident that dicing and other luck based games were held in far more contempt by society's rules and satires. This is likely because of the commendable skill and memory required in Whist, or similar games, which fitted civilised ideas of intelligent gentlemen. Luck-based games, however, offered no better man any advantage, and were ruled by confusing ideas of luck and chance. In this way, they were unpredictable and unmanageable – and thus, base. They were only playable with betting, unlike skill games, which could be played entirely for amusement. The fact that Whist games seemed always to have stakes, often high ones, seems to be beside the point. The difference between the games begins to blur when you consider the skill factor in a game of pure luck, or the luck which can help you in a game of skill. This will be addressed more thoroughly in chapter two when we consider the study of probability and its interplay with gaming culture.

[85] George Hunt, *Whist,* no publication listed (1825). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=3015223&partid=1.

The problem with table games such as whist and hazard is that they leave relatively little in the way of source material. Countless games were played within the walls of Brooks's and White's without documentation of any kind. Therefore our source base for study is limited, as are the interpretations we can make. However, the third tine of Satan's gambling fork is the humble wager: a far greater documented form of speculation and one which was extremely popular in elite circles. Every point of argument was game for a wager, and many men lost or won great sums on the frivolous events of the day. Politics, marriages, deaths, wars and all manner of sports were the subject of great debate and cash flow.

In order to keep track of the wagers made in each club, a betting book was present in which to be scribbled the absurd claims and prices which men agreed upon. This is a fantastic source to make use of. The book at Brooks's contains unsurprisingly frequent mentions of Charles James Fox: "April 16th 1771, Lord Ossory bets Mr. C. Fox 100 guineas to 10 that Doctor North is not bishop of Durham this day two months provided the present bishop dies within that time."[86]

This somewhat speculative bet occurs before Fox's money problems, and gives a great clue into the topic of conversation common behind the doors of Brooks's. Soon after it is Fox's money problems which are the subject of gossip:

[86] Quoted in G. S. Street, 'The Betting Book At Brooks's' in *The North American Review* (Vol. 173, No. 536, 1901), p. 47.

"March 21st, 1774, Lord Clermont has given Mr Crawford ten guineas upon the condition of receiving £500 from him, whenever Mr. Charles James Fox shall be worth 100,000£ and clear of debts."[87]

One rich source which seems to have avoided any sort of close historical analysis is the betting book from White's. Algernon Bourke's *History of White's* came with a volume dedicated to a reprinting of the entire betting book as it existed at the time of publication. However, Bourke resigns himself to simply reproduce the source, and chooses not to add any annotations or make any deep analysis of the book. It is an incredibly rich source, and one which I will analyse in depth. Firstly, I will look at the different types of wager present within its pages, broadly within our timeframe of interest. Secondly, I will use quantitative evidence to assess the changing trends of betting within the walls of White's during our timeframe of interest. Finally, I will connect the findings of this quantitative statement with previous evidence in order to make conclusions about the changing trends in gambling and the reasons for the changes. It will become clear that gambling fashions moved quickly during the period of interest.

White's betting book contains many bets on the current affairs of the time, be it war, economy or politics. The war in Europe is the subject of a great deal of wagers. For example:

[87] Street, p. 47.

"January 17th 1809. Lord Sefton bets Sir Joseph Copley 50 guineas that Lisbon and Cadiz will be in Buonaparte's possession on or before the 1st of April next year."[88]

Analysing the bets on such events can give clues as to the current gossip in the club, who had what opinion, and who was the 'favourite' to win a war or political races. Times of political intrigue, such as elections, caused a spike in the volume of bets, as did periods of great war. However, bets on current affairs are not just limited to politics and wars, of course:

"April 13th, 1819. Lord Henry Moore bets Sir Joseph Conley that the man who shot at Lord Palmerston will be hanged."[89]

Any current affair worth discussing was indeed worth a wager. The human love of gossip extended to relationships and marriages:

"April 2nd, 1809. Mr Howard bets Mr. Osbon Ten guineas that Lord Folkestone does not marry Miss Taylor before this day twelve month."[90]

These sorts of bets can create somewhat of a gambling hysteria, and a sense of a loss of control. For example, Mr Colman gives odds of 49-1 of his marriage occurring within five years, whereupon the bet is snapped up both by Mr. Paget and Sir Copley for a two pound stake.[91] However, to make it more interesting, Paget and Copley bet a guinea between each

[88] White's Betting Book, p. 55. Conley was victorious, as Cadiz withheld the French armies.

[89] White's Betting Book, p. 137.

[90] White's Betting Book, p. 58.

[91] White's Betting Book, p. 59.

other on who Colman will pay first if he achieves such holy matrimony in the given time frame. Indeed, bets could become layered upon other bets.

More morbidly, but also not surprisingly, mortality is the subject of many a wager too. At White's:

'November 17th 1810. Mr C. H. Bouverie bets Mr. Blackford 150gs to 100gs that the Duke of Queensbury outlives the Duke of Grafton."[92]

Brooks's offers a similar cross section of mortality:

"June 22nd, 1771, Mr. Boothby gave Mr. Fawkner five guineas to receive one hundred if the Duke of Queensbury dies before half an hour after five of the afternoon of the 27th of June 1773."[93]

These bets offer somewhat of a snapshot of club life too. For example, at White's on the February 17th, 1812, Lord Alverny bet Mr Goddard five guineas that Mr. Talbot "does not die a natural death." An ominous wager, certainly. Mr. Talbot is one of White's premier wagering forces, with 191 bets recorded in the betting book alone between 1808 and 1836. Evidently, Lord Alverny had been annoyed or wronged by Talbot, and chose to express himself in the only way he knew: with a bet. The aristocracy had begun to move away from duelling as a way to settle disputes, and so a sizeable bet on the demise of ones opponent was an apt expression of distaste in such a betting-crazy culture.

[92] White's Betting Book, p. 66. Mr. Blackford was successful in this wager, as the Duke of Queensbury rudely decided to die in December of that year.

[93] Street, p. 47. Mr. Fawkner kept the 5 guineas as profit, since the Duke of Queensbury lived five years longer than Mr. Boothby predicted.

Indeed, a tale told of a bet at White's offers disturbing evidence for this: according to Bourke, and other sources such as Ashton and Steinmetz, an incident occurred at White's when one member collapsed, apparently dead. Instead of helping the man, the surrounding patrons placed bets with one another on whether he would die or not. The bets were apparently very important, since they disallowed any medical aid for the collapsed man less it void the legitimacy of the bets.[94] This is not only a damning indictment of club culture, but also strong evidence for the honour of betting and fairness in wagers.

All sorts of frivolous and strange bets are amusingly common in the betting books. Wagers must have been a great way to kill boredom, in the same way that Whist was considered a great pastime. For example:

"April, 1819. Sir Joseph Copley bets Mr Horace Seymour five guineas, that Lord Temple has a legitimate child before Mr. Neville."[95]

Playful tomfoolery, no doubt. In a similar vein to the bet at Brooks's in March 1776 that on "Mr. W. Hanger betts Mr. Fox fifty guineas Mr. Fox has the gout before Mr. Hanger."[96] Betting to kill time suggests wagering occupied the same space as Whist or Hazard in the minds of club bettors. A game of cards would pass the time just as adequately as a discussion and wager on the marriage eligibility of a fellow club patron. Wagers were a form of entertainment and commerce:

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[94] Bourke, *History of White's* p. 85.

[95] White's Betting Book, p. 148.

[96] Street, 'Betting Book At Brooks's' p. 48.

"May 9th 1767. Lord Weymouth bets Mr. Cadogan five guineas that India stock is at one time three hundred by the ensuing Christmas."[97]

The most intriguing of all bets in the books are unfortunately the hardest to make any conclusions with. They are the bets which withhold information in the betting book. For example:

"January 5th, 1811. Lord Alverny bets Mr. Talbot 100 guineas to 10 guineas that a certain person understood between them does not marry a lady understood between them in 18 months from this day."[98]

The intrigue continues on the same day in the book:

"Lord Alverny bets Mr Talbot one guinea that £30,000 was not paid by a person understood between them for a particular purpose on one day."[99]

With such secretive bets between the two men, it is ever more the intriguing mystery as to why Lord Alverny figured Talbot would come to a sticky end but a year later.

The final distinct category of wagers present in the White's betting book is the lottery. Sweepstake draws were conducted roughly once a year, and were recorded in the betting book. To supplement this gamble, many members also opted to bet with each other about the outcome of said lotteries:

"November 14th 1768. Mr Fortescue betts Col. Burgoyne ten guineas that [ticket] No. 6834 has a better chance in the present lottery than No. 21739; if neither is drawn a prize, the last ticket drawn to win."[100]

[97] White's Betting Book, p. 38

[98] White's Betting Book, p. 68.

[99] White's Betting Book, p. 68.

Compulsive gambling about the outcome of a lottery suggests impatience in settling bets. This is no doubt the reason that hazard thrived within clubs since payouts and losses were quick, in much the same way that slot machines are nowadays. This is testament to the theory that the principle reason for club gaming's popularity was the enjoyable and addictive nature of gambling, which had reached fever pitch with the maturation of Whist and hazard as universally played games, and clubs as the perfect gambling infrastructure in which to game. This process would give rise to the gambling house, such as Crockford's decades later, which would cut out the elite nature of gaming and open to almost anyone. In modern times, this business model is of course manifested in casinos which fill gambling meccas around the world.

At its height, betting must have been a serious addiction for many. Just as mentioned with hazard and whist, men bet one another to stop betting as in the case of our favourite Mr. Talbot who bet Sir. J. Copley five guineas in August of 1812 that they would not make a bet together for the next three years.[101] Mr Talbot would have lost those five guineas as they came together to wager in April of 1815: a valiant effort. However, this loss was worth the twenty five guinea victory Mr. Talbot would have over Copley this time round. This kind of betting-to-limit-betting had actually been around since the very start of White's:

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[100] White's Betting Book, p.39.

[101] White's Betting Book, p. 93.

"April 4th. 1751. Lord Chesterfield wagers Lord William Stanhope ten guineas that his lordship never makes a bet above one guinea after 20th August 1751."

According to the betting records, Lord Chesterfield succeeds in his wager, but remains a part of club culture, as he adjudicates a lottery draw a few years later.[102]

The undeniably reckless wagering of club members was satirised in an etching named *The Gamester Beshit, Or A New Way To Win Money.*[103] Charles James Fox stands, with empty pockets, and liquid dripping down his legs, which a dog is licking. One man bets Fox: "I lay 5000 l. You have beshit your britches." The other bettors stand and discuss the value of the bet and offer counter bets to others. The image lampoons Fox, depicting him as penniless and pathetic. However, the actions of his fellow Brooks's members are no less morally dubious. Contemporary opinion evidently thought Fox and his gang would gamble on anything, no matter how base. There's probably a lot of truth to this statement too, especially in the early years of White's and Brooks's when wagering was at its highest stakes.

A study of the betting book at White's can be more revealing than just evidence for popular betting topics. It provides a quantitative measure with which to evaluate gambling culture as a whole. In this case, all bets have been converted into data. The recorded fields are date, money

[102] White's Betting Book, p. 24.

[103] William Dent, *The Gamester Beshit,* no publication listed (1784). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1634273&partid=1.

wagered (to the nearest pound), and subject of the wager (split into distinct categories.) The categories are politics, wars, deaths, other current affairs, challenges, and betting on other gambles.

At Brooks's, the betting book suggests the majority of high rolling wagers came in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, and then began to tail off. It is noted by G. S. Street on close inspection of the records that by 1814, almost every bet is a question of politics, but is also for much lower stakes than before. Something had killed the urge to gamble so recklessly. At Brooks's, this may have been a result of the loss of reckless influence from figures such as Charles James Fox, whose rampant staking was also the very subject of wagering.

At White's, a statistical study reveals very interesting betting trends. In the thirty years before White's merged with the Young Club in 1781 and assumed its mature state, there were 124 bets recorded for a grand total stake of roughly £5723. That is an average bet size of £46. However, in the thirty years after the club matured, there were 198 bets totalling £2,482: an average of just £12. What this suggests is that although gambling may have become more common, the stakes became smaller and the risk being taken was far less. This may have been because members were growing older, less cavalier, and perhaps less wealthy so their gambling was scaled back. The increase in the number of bets might also be a result of the growing membership base which was increasing the number of bettors within the walls of White's. This would suggest that the young guns of White's had withered away or lost all their disposable money. Of course, whilst this interpretation may be true for a few of the more unlucky

bettors, the money wagered between men in the club would stay within the membership, rather than going to the house. Indeed, there is no evidence that Whist and (more potently) hazard dropped off in activity, and games played against the house were a constant siphon of wealth between patrons and the establishment. At any rate, the zenith of reckless aristocratic wagering would appear to have faded by the formation of White's in 1781.

However, before further analysing the figures, we must consider the reality of the accuracy of White's betting book. Firstly, it is not definite, or even remotely likely, that all wagers were recorded in the book. Short term wagers, such as the weather the following morning or the number of rubbers of whist played that evening, were probably not written down since the bets were only open contests for a few hours. The book was useful for the longer term wagers which may result in disputes due to convenient memory loss or flat denial that a wager ever took place. Some years do not have any bets recorded in them whatsoever. It is probably unlikely gambling stopped for a whole year, but perhaps the betting book became neglected by the members before being taken up again. Perhaps the book acted more as a ceremonial piece, rather than a bureaucratic aid. Enshrining one's wager in the book for all to read was part of the culture of conspicuous consumption, and at times of reduced betting activity there was less to boast about, so the book was neglected. Indeed, if the book was entirely for the purpose of records, you might figure it would also include information of any debts incurred at the card table, or with one another at dice.

Nonetheless, a look at the areas of zero recorded betting might give us a clue as to what shaped aristocratic wagering. Firstly, the period between 1788 and 1801 has no bets recorded. It might be possible to trace this apprehension to the civil unrest in France and the ramifications it had in the minds of the British elite. Suggestions have been made, even in the limited historiography, that the French Revolution forced the upper classes to reflect on the nature of their privilege.[104] Naturally, this might prevent them from indulging in excess for a while. Although this may not just refer to wagers specifically, the argument highlights the change of social order and attacks on aristocratic waste. Certainly losing a hundred guineas in a frivolous wager could be construed as waste. But once again, racecourses and gaming houses were enjoying healthy patronage at this time which might be considered far more wasteful.

The analysis of the subject of each wager also suggests there is a profound change in betting trends through the process of White's maturation and the unrest in France. In the thirty years prior to White's maturation, around 20% of wagers were on the subject of gambling itself, whether that be a bet about a lottery's outcome, an outcome of another wager, or a self-limiting bet meant to stop gambling. In the subsequent three decades, this falls to just 2%. Gambling was becoming less of a novelty and games of hazard and whist were going on without additional wagers.

Therefore, we see an increasing percentage of wagers being placed about current affairs and politics – particular in times of great events. Politics

[104] O'Gormon, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, p. 327.

attracted 42% of all wagers in 1811, the year of closely fought elections in Britain. However, each bet averaged just £12. Similarly, a streak of nine bets over the 1808-9 period deal with Bonaparte's war in Europe, but he is not mentioned again for a few years.

Overall however, we see a similar trend to that noted by G. S. Street at Brooks's: by the mid 1810s the majority of bets were for low sums and about politics. However, the sheer number of bets is very impressive: the decade sees 511 bets being recorded in the betting book, the majority of which are about British politics. This may have been because the betting book were better maintained during this time, or simply that wagers on politics had become the fashionable pastime alongside hazard, whist and piquet.

Before we reflect on all that has been examined in the chapter, we must first consider gender in gaming. It is explored in very little of the historiography, but women have a definite role in aristocratic gaming. They are the scapegoat for the dubious morals of men. Although women had legal inferiority to men, it did not always hamper their ability to gamble and to profit from one another and from their husbands. The classic view of female gaming is one of whist, or other card games of skill, such as the mixed game of Quadrille in *The Quadrille Party.*[105] The party

[105] Anon., *The Quadrille Party.* no publication listed, (c. 1730-1780). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=3288973&partid=1. Quadrille is a game much like Whist, which is based on winning tricks and trumping

sit back in their chairs, dressed expensively in their expensive setting. Their faces are calm or expressionless, and very little money is shown on the table.

However, although female pastimes included whist and other card games, the concept of a lady gambling on those games was altogether different. The perception was that women should not game because they had no legitimate way of paying their debts, and a ruined woman would have to prostitute herself in order to fund her gambling.[106] A real example of this sort of femme fatale is Georgina, Duchess of York. Phyllis Deutsch studies her closely, and finds a troubled and tortured character who fell into ruin because of her gambling habit. She accrued debts of up to £100,000 before dying "of worry" in 1806.[107] Her case is infamous because of the literature it spawned, such as Georgina's own semi-autobiographical *The Sylph* and other popular novels which had characters allegedly based around her story.[108] These stories suggest that a female gamestress turns to her vice because she has no other pastime which fulfils her, and gambling fits a woman so well because of its innately irrational and unpredictable nature.

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cards. It was a popular alternative to Whist, and appears in Hoyle's Complete Games manuals from early editions.

[106] Deutsch, 'Fortune and Chance', p. 45.

[107] Deutsch, 'Fortune and Chance', p. 55.

[108] See Anna Maria McKenzie's *The Gamesters…* (1786) and *The Female Gamester, or the Pupil of Fashion* (1796). These are also touched upon in Deutsch, p. 66.

On the other hand, Georgina is only one end of the spectrum. Women were known to keep Faro banks in their homes, and make great profits by allowing visitors to gamble freely against them. These pseudo-casino businesses were held behind closed doors, but attracted unwanted attention due to their sheer scale. Although the men of the gambling world had profiteered illegally with little reaction, the women transgressed the status quo and had to be stopped. Chief Justice, Lord Kenyon, issued a public statement in 1796 threatening the women with pillory.[109] Many were fined the following year, some faro banks were raided, and Faro's Daughters were all but extinguished by the turn of the nineteenth century. *The Morning Post* celebrated in January 1800: "Society has reason to rejoice in the complete downfall of the Faro Ladies, who were so long the disgrace of human nature."[110] This crackdown perhaps reflected the general downturn in gambling and wagering in the clubs, and therefore Faro's increasing popularity was exceptional under the circumstances. Perhaps this is why they were stopped – but a cynic would simply point to the continued health of White's, Brooks's, Watier's and the Cocoa Tree Club as argument against this. The general downturn and backlash against gaming was slow, but it began most firmly with women. Moreover, Faro was an easy target and easily given up by other clubs and gaming houses: the profit margin was poor for the proprietor

[109] Russell, 'Faro's Daughters', p. 482.

[110] This is quoted in Ashton, *History Of Gambling,* p. 82.

compared to other games such as Hazard and the myriad roulette variations.

Games such as Whist are depicted with different spin when women were the protagonists. Isaac Cruikshanks *A Group At Bath* depicts a game of whist which has descended into arguments between the four lady players.[111] Men stand around and offer their obvious expertise to the players. This seems to be a common theme in contemporary etchings, where men offer their advice to ladies as they play their games.[112] Later in the period, the image of mixed parties of women and men gaming appear calm and lucid.[113] This area of gaming culture seems immune from the disgrace of female gamesters, or the drop in deep play at the clubs.

However, etchings of *Faro's Daughters* or lady gaming house proprietors at the time of Lord Kenyon's crackdown show the dark popular reception to the profiteering ladies. Faro's female proprietors are lampooned and associated with Charles James Fox's ruin in Cruikshanks *Faro's Daughers, Or The Kenyonian Blow Up To Gamblers* published in 1796.[114] The ladies are in stocks, surrounding a broken faro table which is ablaze. The lady on the right straddles the figure of Fox, who sits in tattered clothes and with

[111] Isaac Cruickshank, *A Group At Bath,* no publication listed (1796). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1649074&partid=1.

[112] See *The Card Party*, note 54.

[113] See *Whist,* note 55.

[114] Isaac Cruickshank, *Faro's Daughers,* no publication given (1796). Picture at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1649866&partid=1.

only one shoe. Lord Kenyon crouches and feeds the bonfire of gambling paraphernalia. The ladies shame is emphasised by a forth set of far-facing stocks in the background, holding a lady with her naked posterior exposed. Kenyon's crackdown on female gambling seems to have been entirely sexist, as gaming houses and clubs continued to thrive for decades to come before the 1844 Select Committee attempted to address the perceived problem of gambling.

So what did gender mean to a gamer? It could possibly have meant nothing for some. You could play if you wished, without reprisal. But to wager money on the games was different. Ladies interacted with the gambling world for decades very profitably, but in the end it took the intervention of conservative statesmen to put a stop to the profiteering of the dames of games.

The contents of the betting books show the sheer extent of betting within the walls of aristocratic clubs. More intriguingly, however, they offer an interesting interpretation of the hierarchy within the membership. If members such as Mr. Thynne were indeed embarrassed to be a lower stakes gambler, then kudos amongst his peers would have been attributed to greater risk taking. If a gentleman offered his opinion on a current event, such as war on the continent, then he seems essentially obliged to stake some of his wealth (and indeed, some of his reputation) on that very opinion. However, victory in a wager was not as important. Charles James Fox remained a revered and respected member of Brooks's (by the

membership, at least) despite his less than exceptional record when it came to betting.

We therefore arrive at a central theme of aristocratic gaming: winning would appear to be irrelevant. Very few of the bets detailed in the betting book of White's have been marked according to their outcome. Furthermore, if they have, often it is simply a mark of "paid" along with a date. The betting book does not inform its reader of the victorious bettor. This could be for multiple reasons. Firstly, it is possible that it was dishonourable to call attention to anyone's losses which means this information was omitted when settling bets. However, this doesn't stand up to scrutiny if you consider that members of Brooks's were happy to wager on the very financial situation of Charles James Fox, which would surely be a dishonourable since his losses were so apparent. Alternatively, it is possible that wins and losses were omitted because the book was not well maintained. However, this does not fully answer the question either as even in times of great activity such as 1810 and 1811, the hundreds of bets placed were not kept updated (or marked as paid) despite new ones being added.

It is increasingly obvious that winning was simply not that important in aristocratic gaming culture. It was far more important to be seen to be risking capital than necessarily winning it. If not, then Charles Fox would have been kicked out of Brooks's far before his final bankruptcy. The voters may have cared about Fox's gambling problem, but the members certainly didn't. It becomes even clearer when you consider every source together as one. Throughout the research process, the occurrence of

accounts and anecdotes relating to winners was far outweighed by those about losers. Lord Carlisle allegedly successful card career is one of the few exceptions. This might be a result of the greater allure of a tragic story, but more likely, it was because money was steadily being lost to the house. The proprietors of White's and Brooks's were extremely successful, and would lead the way for Crockford's as the mecca of gambling in London. Money might have changed hands between patrons of the clubs, but was eventually siphoned into the faro banks, hazard banks and membership fees of the institutions they frequented.

A population of losing gamers would pave the way for an alternative culture of non-elite gamers who used any advantage they could in order to win. One of the best examples of this, Scrope Berdmore Davies, will be explored in chapter three. Before that, however, the second chapter of the thesis will further attempt to analyse the theory of the unimportant win. By looking at gaming literature of the time, we can observe a counter culture of increasingly crafty and tactical gambling, utilising the emerging science of probability and the diversifying portfolio of gaming manuals. With this knowledge, we can further assess the importance of winning within the sphere of the conspicuously gaming elite.

II: Manuals, Strategy And Probability

Chapter one presents interesting conclusions about a change in aristocratic gaming. Chapter two will alter its approach to gaming culture and deal principally with contemporary and pre-existing gaming literature. Rather than looking at who was gaming, it will look at how those games were being played. It is a study of the most popular gaming manual series, *Hoyle's Complete Games*, and an analysis of the way in which they changed. The chapter will conclude on the manuals' effects on popular gaming and gambling, but also how the culture of gambling affected the manuals themselves. Was the relationship symbiotic? Was Hoyle the architect of the late eighteenth century gamer?

Moreover, the chapter will specifically deal with contemporary and pre-existing popular understanding of probability, luck and chance – and how this is dealt with in gambling literature. The historiography has traditionally vouched for the eighteenth century ignorance of odds and chances, and this interpretation will be challenged through looking at the science of probability, how it developed, and how it affected gaming literature. The arguments put forward by scholars are too flimsy- Jessica Richards argues that probability knowledge was not adopted because a knowledge of odds was trumped by the rampant and common cheating.[115] However, she offers no evidence for this – the scaremongering of pamphlets on cheaters and gamers are not plentiful enough or

[115] Jessica Richards, 'Arts Of play', p. 4.

corroborated to a point that cheating can be considered anything more than a scourge (in a similar vein to a family game of snap.) Therefore, the place of probability must be properly evaluated.

Broadly, I will argue that knowledge of strategy, chance and fortune was far more advanced than has previously been stated, and therefore the emergence of professional gamblers or the Dandies living by their dice was inevitable. Indeed, although I have argued in chapter one that etiquette was a big part of gambling literature and instruction, we can track an increase in technical education and a move to a more tactical, savvy gamer. This change of culture offers another interpretation to the changing gambling habits of the aristocracy as discussed in chapter one, but also reasoning for the perceived increase of popular gaming which will be discussed in chapter four.

Firstly, before we view the manuals of the late eighteenth century, we must gain context by briefly examining the mould of early instructional gaming literature. Charles Cotton's *Compleat Gamester,* first published in 1674, dominated as the most popular manual of games and pastimes until the mid-eighteenth century.[116] It went through multiple reprints and was updated by Seymour and Johnson.[117] No book on games I have found

[116] Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester: or, instructions on how to play billiards, trucks, bowls and chess. Together with all manner of usual and gentile games either on cards or dice* (London, 1674).

[117] Richard Seymour, *The Court Gamester: or, full and easy instructions for playing the games now in vogue* (London, 1724); Richard Seymour and Charles Johnson, *The Compleat Gamester, In Three Parts* (London, 1754)

before Cotton's adhered to a similar template and structure, but all manuals afterwards copied it – including the revisions and plagiarisms.[118] Pastimes were categorised in Court, City and the Gentlemen's diversions. Court included Whist, Quadrille, Piquet, Chess and other skill games considered reputable and gentile.[119] City games encompassed the grubbier world of gambles, such as All Fours, Cribbage, Putt, Brag and of course Hazard.[120] The Gentlemen's diversions were outdoor pursuits: riding, racing, archery, cock-fighting and bowling. The introduction to the 1754 edition begins "Gaming is become so much the fashion amongst the beau-monde that he who, in company, should appear ignorant of games in Vogue, would be reckoned low bred, and hardly fit for conversation."[121]

The Court gamester section laboriously explains the rules of every game before launching into a set of "rules" for play, which read as contrived proverbs: "VII: If the younger hand holds the aces, he will find it his best way to discard the fourth suit."[122] The rules lack much context and often become extremely complex and multi-conditional. At this point, Whist has not risen to dizzying popularity it would later achieve, and is dealt with relatively swiftly. Cotton also addresses methods of cheating at card

[118] Cotton was also a principle author of *The Compleat Angler* which applied a similar style of manual to the pursuit of fishing.

[119] Whist, Quadrille and Piquet all use a similar structures of trick-based trump card game.

[120] These games can simply be considered as dressed-up variations on cutting a high card. Pure luck.

[121] *The Compleat Gamester* (1754) p. iii.

[122] *The Compleat Gamester* (1754), p. 109.

games, suggesting that sharps might be out to fleece you in any "tavern game." Cotton's explanations for the cheats are almost instructional descriptions of correct sleight of hand technique, detailing card stacking, false shuffles, briefs, bridges, corner bends and the amusingly gentlemanly process of "piping" whereby assailants illegally swap game information by the use of the alignment of their smoking apparatus.[123] Despite this detailed deluge of the darker side of gaming, Cotton remains formal and strict throughout. For example, in the game of Ombre, Quadrille, or Whim, "it is not permitted to speak at all" and "attention and quietness is absolutely necessary."[124]

Cotton and his updaters confront games of luck in an entirely different way. Rather than explaining the best method of approaching the games, often their rules are just explained with perhaps a few pieces of advice.[125] The only exception is in the dice games section, where it is noted that seven is the most frequently thrown number with two dice.[126] This can hardly be considered instruction, although it would help common players of the game hazard.

At any rate, Cotton had set a benchmark for gaming manuals. It was wide in scope, with rules of play, tips on strategy for games of skill and of course the correct procedure a gentleman would pursue when playing these games in gentle company. The inclusion of the information on

[123] *The Compleat Gamester* (1754), pp. 188-94.

[124] *The Compleat Gamester* (1754), p. 62 and p. 2 respectively.

[125] *The Compleat Gamester* (1754), p. 253 for Hazard and Passage.

[126] *The Compleat Gamester* (1754), p. 255.

cheating was perhaps because of the romantic allure of the underworld of gaming, or perhaps as a way of attacking the perceived threat that gaming presented: if one knew of the cheats in play, one could protect themselves. Of course, a few extra copies might have sold to the more mischievous consumers with crueller intentions, although they might be better drawn to the anonymous *The Whole Art And Mystery Of Gaming Expos'd,* which went into explicit detail about the many methods of dishonesty at the gaming table.[127]

At any rate, the mould of gaming manuals was set. It was to evolve and adapt with the works of Edmond Hoyle, through the popularity of the game of Whist. He published his original *Short Treatise On The Game of Whist* in 1742, after having been convinced by his students and a whopping £1000 paid by the publisher.[128] The books were so sought after that Hoyle decided to personally sign every printed copy to avoid counterfeits and fraudsters.[129] Fake prints and counterfeits were almost inevitable though, since Hoyle decided to sell each copy for one guinea, along with his system of *Artificial Memory* at Whist for another guinea.[130]

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[127] Anon., *The Whole Art And Mystery of Gaming Exposed* (1726). This will be discussed further in chapter 4, as its significance is more in terms of gambling dishonesty than correct gaming technique or strategy.

[128] Tosney, 'Gaming in England', p. 239.

[129] Tosney, 'Gaming in England', p. 240.

[130] Hoyle, *A Short Treatise On The Game Of Whist*; Edmund Hoyle, *An Artificial Memory, Or, An Easy Method Of Assisting The Memory Of Those That Play The Game Of Whist* (London, 1744). The system allowed players

Hoyle's arrogance and confidence in his abilities was not ill-founded. His rules and laws became the norm for Whist games for the following century, and the phrase 'according to Hoyle' became synonymous with universal law in card games.[131]

The contents of Hoyle's original 1742 treatise are less accessible than Cotton's writing. After the somewhat arrogant preamble, Hoyle offers an ill-explained table of ratios and odds to be memorised by the student before the rest of the publication is digested. Hoyle decrees fourteen strict etiquette laws to be abided by. Some of these laws are obviously grounded in experience of play and efficiency, rather than manners: "14. If any card be faced in the pack, they must deal again, except it be the last card."[132] The last card has no reason to be any less advantageous if shown, but the rule is obviously down to the experience of annoyance at having to wait for a deal all over again. These "laws" (as Hoyle calls them) are testament to the author's arrogance – they are how he preferred to play. The laws are followed by 108 hypothetical situations, and a strategy for dealing with each of them. These are split up into specific, but sometimes illogically placed chapter headings: "The ten or nine been turn'd up on your right hand etc."[133] The bottom line was: Hoyle's *Treatise On Whist*

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to arrange their hand in such a way as to remember the cards that had been played. The only flaw with this system is that it could be read backwards by other players with knowledge of the system, thereby deciphering information about the cards held in your hand.

[131] http://www.hoylegaming.com/rules/ shows his relevance today.

[132] Hoyle, *A Short Treatise* (1742), p. 8.

[133] Hoyle, (1742), p. 26.

was not accessible, except for already initiated players (or indeed Hoyle's own students.) Nonetheless, the strategies and tips were evidently sought after, and Hoyle's name would be used in subsequent gaming manuals which built upon his original text.

In 1776, Hoyle's work was published as part of *The Polite Gamester* which does not edit or update the original text, save for moving the etiquette section to the back and including Hoyle's work on 'artificial memory'.[134] Moreover, the publishers take advantage of the power of Hoyle's name by including extra material on Quadrille, Backgammon, Piquet and Chess. All these games, like Whist, are skill-based. This focus was evidently not universal enough for such a strongly gambling market, and the 1796 edition of Hoyle added Draughts, Cricket, Tennis, Quinze, Hazard, Lansquenet, Billiards, Faro, Rouge Et Noir, Cribbage, Matrimony, Cassino, Golf and Connexions.[135] This was closer to the mould of Cotton's *Compleat Gamester* in that it included country pastimes, skill games and gambling games. By 1814, the publishers of Hoyle had embraced the quasi-encyclopaedic nature of Hoyle's alleged knowledge by adding Reverses, Putt, All-Fours, Speculation, Loo, Lottery, Commerce, Pope, Brag, Domino, Loto, Boston, Skittles, Dutch Pins, E&O and Raffle.[136] This expanding portfolio of games and pastimes implies several things: firstly, gaming culture was nationally much broader than the gamblers of London

[134] Edmond Hoyle, *The Polite Gamester, Containing Treatises On The Games Of Whist, With An Artificial Memory, Quadrille, Backgammon, Piquet And Chess* (1776).

[135] Edmond Hoyle, *Hoyle's Games Improved* (1796).

[136] Edmond Hoyle, *Hoyle's Games Improved* (1814).

clubs. Secondly, the name of Hoyle had become synonymous with good gaming knowledge, strategy and even rulemaking, regardless of the pastime of choice. And finally, the demand for Hoyle was high, with his Whist strategy perhaps remaining a main selling point.

Indeed, what is so interesting about Hoyle's subsequent and constant updates is that his original text is barely altered. Aside from a number of reshuffles, the same confusing, elitist structure of hypothetical examples were reprinted (almost) every time. In the 1796 edition of Hoyle, the original text is not altered – instead one Mr. Payne adds his own section which appends Hoyle's wistful winning whist tips.[137] Payne's section is useful because it addresses beginners more directly, but its sixty-eight new tips are for the most part still structured in a similar way to Hoyle: hypothetical, often contrived situations, and how to play them. In fact, some of these strategies directly contradict what Hoyle had said in his treatise. In card games, there is more than one way to play any given strategic situation. The most user-friendly section of Payne's addition comes, confusingly, at the end where the forty two general rules for beginners actually address simple questions of aims in play. Although Hoyle had previously updated his work with a "dictionary" of Whist (which took the form of a question and answer section), his work for beginners was often contrived and difficult to unravel. Whist remained elitist, for the most part, and confined to circles where it was already

[137] Hoyle (1796).

played and understood so that people could learn the basics. In effect, the manuals may have expanded in size, but not in types of content.

It is only by 1814 that Hoyle's updaters chose to address these inconsistencies and problems. After a verbatim copy of the previous edition, an "additions" section tackles the problems of Payne and Hoyle's contradictions and the difficulty of remembering every rule individually. Logical tips such as "accustom yourself never to lead a card without having some view, even if an erroneous for doing so" and "when an adept plays in a way you do not understand, get him, if possible, to favour you with his reasons, and try them yourself upon the cards" offer strategic advice on how a player can improve their game without memorising Hoyle's work.[138] These tips might appear quite basic, and perhaps obvious, but the lack of such instruction in previous manuals shows a less then welcoming attitude toward absolute beginners.

Hoyle did add a limited glossary of Whist terms to his treatise himself in the editions that followed his first publication. It is unclear whether Hoyle himself chose to include the small glossary of terms, or whether the publisher thought it a wise inclusion. However, what matters is that it was indeed included, as jargon and technical terminology are a large part of gambling and gaming culture. The ever evolving plethora of gambling slang was in equal parts demonised and admired, depending on the type of game being played. A game of Hazard, which relied on nothing but ignorant luck, had multiple slang terminology for dice and cheaters, or

[138] Hoyle (1814), pp. 71-84.

indeed, *langrets* and *coggers*.[139] It was language to be scorned. However, *trumps, ruffs,* and *tenaces* were the language of the ingratiated. Cotton and his revisers (and plagiarists) aided the reader by italicising technical terms in the text. They are also explained within the text at the beginning of a section. Cotton was aware of the difficulty of learning games when the reader could not understand all the terminology.

Apparently Hoyle was less concerned with beginners. It is perhaps not surprising, since he intended to sell his publication at the cost of a guinea, and was obviously aiming at novice whist players already. The subsequent glossary which was added to later editions explained twelve pieces of technical terminology: *finessing, forcing, long trumps, loose cards, points, quarts, quints, see-saws, scores, slams, tenaces,* and *terces.* However, this helpful key is tucked at the back of the treatise on whist, on page 53. This was not ideal. For example, it isn't particularly useful to have the definition of a *see-saw* thirty pages away from the section which discusses the advantage of such a technique.[140] The illogical placing of such basic information continued: page 57 in the 1796 edition, and page 49 in the

[139] Anon., *A New Canting Dictionary Comprehending All The Terms, Ancient And Modern, Used In The Several Tribes Of Gypsies, Beggars, Shoplifters, Highwaymen, Foot-Pads And Other Clans Of Cheats And Villains* (London, 1725); Humphrey Tristram Potter, *A New Dictionary Of Cant And Flash Languages* (London, 1795); Nathaniel Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London, 1726); Samuel Johnson and John Walker, *Johnson's Dictionary, Improved By Todd, Abridged For The Use Of Schools* (London, 1836);

[140] Hoyle (1776); p. 24, 53. It is of course arguable that the placement of a glossary is irrelevant as the information is still available to the curious beginner. However, a barrage of incomprehensible terms without any mention or note of the whereabouts of the glossary can hardly be identified as user-friendly

1814 edition. It is only by the 1817 edition that *Hoyle's Games Improved* appears to value the definitions of words for beginners. Indeed, the book actually starts with explanation of the game of whist, followed by a short glossary of the basic terminology.[141] It is of course possible that by this time, Whist was such a ubiquitous pursuit within leisurely culture that the words barely needed explaining, since they were well known even for beginners. However, the words do not appear to be a part of dictionaries at the time, at least not in with their whist-specific definitions.[142] The exception to this is of course *trump*, which had been a part of common vocabulary since the sixteenth century.[143]

Of course, Whist is not the only game with a special language, and *trump* is not a Whist-specific term. The 1776 edition of Hoyle has no extra glossaries for its additional games, meaning users had to learn as they read. The 1796 edition is more helpful, adding a glossary for quadrille (*basto, codill, devoles, forces, impasse, spadille, manille, punto, pool, Roy rendu* among others), a glossary for tennis (*bisque, half-thirty, half-court, touch no wall, round no service, barring the hazard*) and a glossary for Faro (*banker, coup, croupier, doublet, hocly, livret, masque.*)[144] The 1817 edition,

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[141] Edmond Hoyle, *Hoyle's Games Improved, New Edition, With Additions* (1817), p. 2.

[142] tenace, terce, finesse. Second edition, 1989; online version March 2012. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/206927>; accessed 26 May 2012. Earlier version first published in *New English Dictionary*, 1915.

[143] Trump. Second edition, 1989; online version March 2012. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/206927>; accessed 26 May 2012. Earlier version first published in *New English Dictionary*, 1915.

[144] Hoyle (1796), p. 100. Also *cheville, double, friend, matadore, mille, ombre, pass, prise, regle, remise, renounce, tenace*; p. 221; p. 279. Also

certainly the most user friendly, retains these glossaries and adds one for cribbage (*cribs, pairs, pair royals, sequences, flush, end hole)* and piquet (*talon, pique, repique, capot, quatorze, tierce, sixieme, septieme, huitieme*).[145] The explanations of definitions contribute a great deal to eliminating the elitist nature of Hoyle's writing. With more basic explanations, the manuals were accessible to newer players.

It is perhaps possible that this ostensibly more open and welcoming structure to the manuals was more accidental than deliberate. Indeed, as Hoyle (and whoever was revising Hoyle) added sections on other games such as Quadrille, Picquet, Backgammon or Chess, his expertise in Whist was perhaps being diluted. Although many card games have similar structures (Quadrille can be equated to Whist with less cards and specialist trumps), Hoyle was probably not as great an expert in these disciplines as he was at Whist. Therefore, the sections on other games would have been written less sanctimoniously, which means more accessible for a beginner. Hoyle's original text was still, however, regurgitated in every edition in primary position, meaning the beginner would still have to work hard to learn to play whist using the manual.

The 1783 edition of the manual under Hoyle's name calls attention to these very faults in his original writing, and even omits large chunks of the original text. The author, who signs just as "a member of the Jockey

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oppose, paix, plix, pont, tallieur. These are basically just French translations, but were still a part of English games.

[145] Hoyle (1817), p.38 and p. 49. Once again, French translations are considered technical terminology.

club", purports to be closer to fashionable gaming than Hoyle. Whist is not the first section, implying its lesser importance. A section on Hazard is in its place, despite it being snubbed by Hoyle and his previous revisers. Its pole position is apparently due to its popularity as the author explains it is "one of the most fashionable [games], one that has long been in vogue."[146] Furthermore, the author also adds a section on E&O, the game popularised in Beau Nash's Bath.[147] He explains the game is "very fashionable… played at the most polite chocolate houses at the West end of town, as well as Bath."[148] He admits that Whist is the most "universal of games played in polite companies," but not necessarily the most popular.

The author remarks (smugly in the third person) of previous editions of *Hoyle's Games Improved* that "he does not think Hoyle's Games were, in either of those productions, improved."[149] He states "the chief complaint that has ever been made against Hoyle, is, that he is too prolix and perplexed."[150] He is making his case for his more drastic revisions of Hoyle. The fact that he himself is somewhat tediously jargonistic, with no glossary of terms, is an unfortunate truth. Regardless, however, the author's intentions enshrine the problems of Hoyle and attempt to change them. Later editions of Hoyle's manuals unfortunately revert back to their

[146] A Member of the Jockey club, *An Epitome Of Hoyle, With Beaufort And Jones's Hoyle Improved* (1783), p. 1.

[147] Hoyle (1783), p. 86.

[148] Hoyle (1783), p. 86.

[149] Hoyle (1783), p. i. The 'either' publications he refers to are two editions published in "these few years."

[150] Hoyle (1783), p. i.

old style. The author's coup had failed, at least till E.M. Arnaud's *Epitome of the Game of Whist* in 1829 which complained about *Hoyle's Complete Games* being "in such a confused and undigested state as to prevent its being generally useful."[151] Regardless, it does imply quite strongly that by the late eighteenth century, Hoyle's writing was beginning to get a bit 'out of touch'. The *Epitome of Hoyle* offshoot saw another edition in 1791, but evidently the rebranding and retouching of Edmond's original did not catch on.

The dissenting author of the 1783 Hoyle could not even break away from the strict etiquette which was commanded at many games, particularly Whist which was supposedly the most common game among "polite company."[152] The author explains that the name 'whist' means quite literally 'silence' and that any breach of rules can be severely punished: "an uninterested spectator has been known many times to pay all the bets depending upon the game playing, to a considerable amount, for having reminded one of the partners of some card played or occurrence, that he had forgot, and which proved to the players advantage."[153] It was certainly not, like Hazard or Faro, a game that involved a group of invested spectators. Concerns of etiquette are placed at the start of Hoyle's original treatise, as 'laws' suggesting their significance. However,

[151] E. M. Arnaud, *An Epitome Of The Game Of Whist, Long And Short, Consisting Of An Introduction To The Mode Of Playing And Scoring; The Laws Of The Game Essentially Reformed And Maxims For Playing* (London, 1829), p. 11. Of course, by the time Arnaud was writing, Hoyle's original text was almost a century old. Its not surprising it was somewhat stuffy.

[152] Hoyle (1783), p. 40.

[153] Hoyle (1783), p. 40.

later editions do not show the same mania for manners. Although Hoyle's laws are reprinted, they are not expanded upon. This might suggest that gaming table etiquette was not an evolving phenomenon. However, what is stranger is that the explanations of other games in expanded editions of Hoyle do not address etiquette with such strictness. For Quadrille, if one names the wrong trump, Hoyle commands that you must abide by your mistake.[154] Such etiquette is essentially borrowed from Whist, since they are similar games in structure. At cribbage, one must move their pins at precise times in precise ways, or be open to points penalties.[155] Nonetheless, there is no mention of comparable etiquette in terms of games of luck. This may be because games of skill were calm and civilised whereas hazard, faro or other dice games came with an automatically bawdy atmosphere – certainly the images in chapter one would support such an interpretation. Either way, the place of etiquette would appear to be less prominent in other games, and are not expanded upon in whist. This may imply a gaming culture of decreasing formality.

Overall, the changing nature of Hoyle's publications are intriguing clues to the nature of gaming culture. It is clear that at the time of his first edition, Whist was still in its infancy and relatively elitist. It would take almost a century before this was addressed in any meaningful way, despite countless new editions and supposed improvements which merely expanded the book into further popular pastimes. Hoyle was not changing

[154] Hoyle (1796), p. 85.

[155] Hoyle (1817), p. 40.

with the times, and gaming culture may have left him behind – at least if the author of the 1783 rebuttal is to be believed. Certainly his work seems to fit with analysis of gaming culture in chapter one, suggesting a strong taste for games of chance even at an elite level. The slump in gambling post-French Revolution in the clubs does not filter through to Hoyle's updaters, who continue to publish Hoyle's rules of etiquette and uphold a sense of elitism for Whist players. There is therefore the implication that perhaps Whist (and maybe other games of skill) occupied a world different to the bombastic wagering and gambling of White's or Brooks's. We know that games of Whist were played there, but the stakes are shown in the betting book to be of a less significant concern to the player. Technical terminology and slang remained ever a part of gaming culture, with extra glossaries being included to keep up with the growing lexicon of gamblers. This was not reflected by questions of etiquette, which were apparently becoming more relaxed, and less of a concern.

It is of course possible that this analysis is the wrong way round. Examining Hoyle for clues as to the culture at the time might be the opposite of effective analysis. Since Hoyle was so widely published and emulated, it may be that gambling culture was in fact moulding to the laws set out within the manuals themselves. If there was a decline in manners and etiquette, it was because of its lesser importance within the manuals. If the lexicon of terminology was growing, it was trying to keep up with published glossaries. However, most likely the relationship was symbiotic. Gambling culture was moulded by the players who read the

manuals, but the manuals were in turn updated and revised by members of that culture.

An area of growing strategic consideration where this cyclical understanding might not be so applicable is the realm of probability, odds, chance, luck and fortune. These are all arguably distinct categories with different connotations. Odds and probability are mathematical paradigms, but chance, luck and fortune are more spiritual. A gamer can have an interpretation of luck which prevents them from having a modern understanding of odds. As rational, modern, sophisticated humans nowadays we might expect all gamers to gamble according to mathematical certainties or percentages. If this was true then the gambling industry would not be worth billions worldwide. The notion of luck, or *fortuna*, is inherently irrational – but is part of modern gamblers' mind-sets. Although we know we would have to play the national lottery over ten million times in order to remotely realistically expect any sort of return, we play anyway, just in case we are 'lucky.' With this epistemological framework we can better deconstruct eighteenth century popular notions of probability, without (hopefully) falling too much on the side of "historical psychoanalysis." Firstly we must understand the foundations of eighteenth century probabilistic science, before examining its trickle-down effect into popular culture.

Gerda Reith argues that even as late as the seventeenth century, contemporary thinking put 'chance' at the mercy of the divine.[156] She also argues that there was no proper concept of probability before the Enlightenment because of an insufficiently advanced number system, coupled with the aforementioned culture of divinely chosen and created fortune.[157] I would argue that Reith is a victim of hindsight and to envisage probability in a modern fashion when looking at the past is anachronistic. There were glimmers of understanding – most notably Lucian Cardano's *Liber De Ludo Aleae*.[158] Cardano was a noted gambler, and wrote on the combinations of throwing two dice. The implication was a basic understanding of expectancy, over a century before Galileo published very similar findings.[159] Although neither writer expanded on the betting strategy to be employed with this information, a savvy gambler might have used such information to show a profit over time in hazard or any other dice game.[160] Therefore, we must understand that the

[156] Reith, *The Age of Chance,* p. 20.

[157] Reith, p. 22.

[158] Girolamo Cardano, *Liber De Ludo Aleae* (1550). Ian Hacking has incorrigibly tracked back through history to seek sophisticated notions of probability. He even finds evidence of arbitration (making bets of different odds in order to play them off against one another to guarantee a profit) in a ninth century Indian text by one *Mahaviracarya*. See Ian Hacking, *The Emergence Of Probability: a philosophical study about early ideas of probability, induction and statistical inference* (London, 1975), p. 8. For more, see O. B. Sheynin, 'On The Prehistory Of The Theory Of Probability' in *Archive For The History Of Exact Science* (No. 12, 1974).

[159] Galileo Galilei, *Considerazione Sopra Il Giuco De dadi (On Outcomes In The Game Of Dice)* (1718).

[160] Hazard is an interesting frame for this discussion because of its changeable and customisable rules. In multiple accounts of hazard, the

concept of probability which Reith refers to is inherently modern, and that the concept of probability did exist in a more primitive form.

The development of probability theory was spurred on by the presence of two mathematical and philosophical problems: the Problem of Points and Pascal's wager. In July 1654, Blaise Pascal and Pierre Fermat began their discourse on the Problem of Points which asked the question of how stakes should be fairly divided in a hypothetical wager between two players, when the game is terminated early when one has an advantage over the other.[161] The solution would become the first enshrined formula which understood the concept of implied probability. Pascal's wager brought probabilistic reasoning into the realm of philosophy, suggesting it was the smarter gamble to believe in a higher being. Pascal's work was built upon by Bernoulli's *Ars Conjectandi* and Montmort's *Essai D'Analyse Les Jeux De Hasard* in 1713 which used games of Hazard as the literal base for their theoretical calculations.[162] Therefore, without discussing specific

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caster may choose their own main (or the setter, in some cases). By choosing seven (the most common number thrown with two dice), the player can expect to throw successfully over time and if playing an opponent with no knowledge of dice combinations, profit egregiously. Henceforth, this will be referred to as the Hazard loophole. Hazard also fits the discussion well because of dice's relatively simple probabilities and combinations, compared with card games (even simple ones, such as Faro.)

[161] Gerd Gigerenzer, *The Empire Of Chance: How probability changed science and everyday life* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 1.

[162] Gigerenzer, pp. 10-8. It was Bernoulli who published The First Limit Theorem which was a precursor to the Law of Large numbers, often referred to as the Gambler's Fallacy, and is an integral concept which successful gamblers must grasp. It basically says that over a number of trials, outcomes will tend to move towards the expected mean. In other words, just because red has come up five consecutive times on a roulette

mathematical theory, it is fair to conclude that by the late eighteenth century, the understanding of probability was not as antiquated as one might expect. The science had proved that the expectation of cards or dice were predictable to an extent, which was of course invaluable information to the habitual gamer.

However, the publications of European mathematicians were unlikely to permeate down to gaming culture without a little help. Authors took advantage of the popularity of gaming by publishing pamphlets aimed at improving the gambling habits of its readers and their expected profits over time. Arbuthnot had translated Bernoulli's and Montmort's work into English but only for the purpose of scholarly discourse.[163] De Moivre's *Doctrine Of Chances,* published in 1718 was the first attempted pamphlet intended to serve almost as a gaming manual. The preface to the third edition in 1756 ensures readers that the book is meant as a guard against play, "by setting in clear light, the advantages and disadvantages

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wheel, it does not make black a more likely outcome on the subsequent spin. As you approach infinite trials of a game, anomalies will be come statistically irrelevant. For more on the subject of the development of probabilistic science, see Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability In The Enlightenment* (1988); Anders Hald, *A History Of Mathematical Statistics From 1750 To 1930* (New York, 1998); Stephen Stigler, *The History Of Statistics: the measurement of uncertainty before 1900* (Cambridge, 1986); A. W. F. Edwards, *Pascal's Arithmetical Triangle: the story of a mathematical idea* (London, 2002); Richard Epstein, *The Theory Of Gambling And Statistical Logic* (1977) or even I. Todhunter, *A History Of The Mathematical Theory Of Probability* (1865).

[163] John Arbuthnot, *Of The Laws Of Chance* (1692). Originals are Bernoulli *Arts Conjectandi* (1713); Huygens, *De Ratiocinis In Ludo Aleae* (1757); Montmort, *Essai D'analyse Sur Les Jeuz De Hasard* (1708). See also Hacking, p. 143.

of those games wherein chance is concerned."[164] Although De Moivre was a contemporary of Montmort and Bernoulli, and corresponded with them often, he dumbed down his algebra to simple arithmetic for the popular market in England.[165] He explains in his introduction that his doctrine is for "general use," with "practical rules" for the "gentlemen who have been pleased to subscribe to my book."[166] In *The Doctrine Of Chances,* Abraham De Moivre claims to have solved the games of Faro and Bassette through calculation and wishes to inform the reader of his progress on the game of Hazard. He begins with a basic explanation of how probability works, how this understanding can be turned into numerical fractions and how this applies to the expectation of a win.[167] Moivre also breaks down the concept of the Law of Large Numbers, or Gambler's Fallacy, into layman's terms.[168] These are vital concepts to grasp in order to become a successful

[164] De Moivre, *Doctrine Of Chances Or A Method Of Calculating The Probability Of Events In Play* (3rd. Edition, London, 1756), preface, n. p. The same content is plagiarised in Thomas Simpson's *The Nature And The Laws Of Chance* (1740). De Moivre also appends his *Treatise Of Annuities On Lives: Dedication To The Right Honourable George, Earl Of Macclesfield, President Of The Royal Society* which is testament to the close link between gambling and insurance speculation.

[165] F. N. David, *Games, Gods And Gambling: the origins and history of probability and statistical ideas from the earliest time in the Newtonian era* (London, 1962), pp. 163-9. For more on Moivre, see Anders Hald, 'De Moivre and the Doctrine of Chances, 1718, 1738, 1756' in Ivor Grattan-Guinness (ed.), *Landmark Writings In Western Mathematics 1640-1940* (2005).

[166] De Moivre, *Doctrine,* pp. v-vi. De Moivre also mentions Huygens and Francis Robarte as further reading for his readers, although their publications are entirely in French and of a heavily theoretical nature.

[167] De Moivre, *Doctrine,* pp. 1-4.

[168] De Moivre, *Doctrine,* pp. 6-7.

gambler long term, and not have to rely on the smile of fortune. This information opens the book's main text, and is testament to its usefulness to a savvy gamer.

The bulk of the text is split into different 'cases' and 'problems' which pose a hypothetical situation, much like in Hoyle, and then explain the mathematics that exploit that situation. Situations range from the simple "Problem XLVI: to find at Hazard the advantage of the setter upon all suppositions of Main and Chance" to the more contrived "Problem XII: to estimate at Bassette the loss of the Ponte under any circumstance of cards remaining in the stock, when he lays his stake, and of any number of times that his card is repeated in the stock."[169] De Moivre covers all popular games of time, including Hazard, Bassette, Faro, Piquet and even Whist (or Whisk, as he calls it). There is no doubt that the information gifted to gamers in Moivre's *Doctrine* would give them the edge over any less informed player.

Most intriguingly perhaps, is Moivre's relationship with the concept of luck. Moivre believes in 'luck,' but remarks that it can be nudged along with understanding and calculation. He does not believe in such thing as a *lucky person*. This is a modern premise, that we make our own luck and that with careful calculation a gambler can appear to be lucky over time but is in reality playing the probabilities.

Moivre's *Doctrine* was of course not the only English publication aimed at helping gamers. After all, Moivre's final edition was published in 1756,

[169] De Moivre, p. 160 and p. 70 respectively.

and is hardly evidence alone for a strong probabilistic push in gaming literature. William Rouse borrowed Moivre's well-known title in 1814 when he published the explicitly (and helpfully) titled *The Doctrine Of Chances, Or, The Theory Of Gaming Made Easy To Every Person Acquainted With Modern Arithmetic So As To Enable Them To Calculate The Probabilities Of Events In Lotteries, Cards, Horse Racing, Dice Etc.*[170] Rouse renewed and expanded on some of Moivre's work, but also made card games the main focus of the book, probably because of the popularity of Whist by this time. Rouse also offers some very modern gaming philosophy, urging gamers to ignore the success of the "dull, stupid, careless, ignorant fellow" who gets lucky, and use understanding and judgement to familiarise yourself with chance, giving you greater opportunity to be lucky.[171] He argues that chance is governed through immutable laws, and points to the dead equality of the gender ratio of births through time as an apt example of the power of odds.[172] Rouse also gives us clues as to the accessibility of the mathematics he uses because he argues that his vulgar fractions, combinations and permutations are in

[170] The title goes on: William Rouse, *The Doctrine Of Chances, Or, The Theory Of Gaming Made Easy To Every Person Acquainted With Modern Arithmetic So As To Enable Them To Calculate The Probabilities Of Events In Lotteries, Cards, Horse Racing, Dice Etc. With Tables On Chance Never Before Published Which From Mere Inspection Will Solve A Great Variety Of Questions* (1814). The book was not intended to everyone, of course, as the variety of people 'acquainted with modern arithmetic' would of course only include those wealthy enough to be educated.

[171] Rouse, *Doctrine,* pp. v-vi.

[172] Rouse, *Doctrine,* p. vii.

"common school books of arithmetic."[173] This suggests that an educated member of gaming culture would be able to understand and utilise this *Doctrine Of Chances* in their games of Whist, or Hazard, at their clubs or private parties. It might also suggest they are aware of implied probabilities when it comes to establishing wagers between friends and setting odds. Rouse even discusses how one might play a lottery with the highest chance of winning. Amusingly however, he shows some gambling ignorance by exploring horse racing betting through the assumption that in a five horse race, each horse has an equal chance of winning (20%). Perhaps this faux pas is down to the mathematical nature of dice and decks, which Rouse was presumably most accustomed to. Another publication worth mentioning within our period of interest was the more focused *The Game of Hazard Investigated* by George Lambert.[174] Lambert explicitly deals with Hazard and the probabilistic advantages built into the game's rules. Lambert lived in Newmarket, and published there, and was most likely a hazard player because of the frequent race meetings in the town which brought all manner of gambling opportunities.[175] He was not the first, but perhaps the most explicit, author to address the inherent advantages built into the game of hazard.[176] Lambert informed his

[173] Rouse, *Doctrine,* p. xxiii.

[174] George Lambert, *The Game Of Hazard Investigated, The Difference Between The Caster And The Setter's Expectations Correctly Ascertained And Exemplified In A Clear And Concise Manner, Together With Other Calculations On Event Arising From That Game* (Newmarket, 1816).

[175] This will be discussed further in chapter four.

[176] Incidentally, the Hazard loophole is the mathematical discrepancy that nets casinos good profits on modern games of Craps.

readers of the very simple laws to follow in order to profit from hazard in the long run, whilst explaining the odds and mathematics.

Unfortunately, the publications explored above cannot irrevocably prove that understanding of probability was common place. Even if the information was considered worthy of publication, it is almost impossible to be sure about how well probabilistic knowledge spread within gaming culture. Even nowadays the average gambler would most likely struggle with some the calculations and inferences which Moivre and Co. published. Indeed, a knowledge of odds could actually appear to have been a somewhat mysterious and uncommon trait. For example, in an instructional manual for magicians published in 1795, at the heart of our period of concern, the author states that "nothing at first glance seems more foreign to the province of mathematics than chance."[177] This clearly implies an epistemological barrier between popular thought and a 'modern' understanding of probability. Furthermore, the fact that it is published in the back of a magician's book only further implies its position as a curiosity, a passing interest, and not a central pillar of popular culture. Barrett goes on to explain the various dice combinations and conduct calculations of odds in a poor, unclear way.[178] It is evident that he has little grasp of probability himself, and perhaps should have stuck to the magic tricks. However, the bumbling dice throws of a magician are not strong enough to completely disregard contemporary

[177] Giles Barrett, *The Conjuror's Repository: or, the whole art and mystery of magic displayed* (London, 1795), p. 95.

[178] Barrett, *Conjuror's Repository,* pp. 96-101.

understanding of odds and probability, as a study of Hoyle will corroborate.

The various editions of Hoyle published before and during the period are actually rich in information on probability and chance. More importantly, although Hoyle and his updaters do not explain the science behind the probability, they condense the information into a digestible guide for the savvy gamer. Indeed, Hoyle armed players with the ability to utilise probabilistic calculations to their advantage, perhaps without ever really understanding how or why it was actually advantageous.

Hoyle opens his 1742 treatise with a list of, albeit incorrect, odds for estimating the likelihood that your opponent has a particular card, or pair of cards. A table of betting odds is also provided for the wagering gentleman. What is bizarre is that whilst conventional wisdom says laymen's knowledge of odds and probability was lacking, Hoyle provides probabilistic reasoning for positions of risk in a game of Whist, without any explanation. For the uninitiated, the concept of "32 to 26" is not particularly useful.[179] Even if Hoyle's work was elitist and exclusive, as I have previously suggested, it implies a far wider understanding of probability than conventional historiography has allowed. But that is not the only spanner which Hoyle merrily throws in the works: if the calculations of odds are incorrect, then why was Hoyle a successful and revered Whist player? Hoyle may have lied or exaggerated in his lessons

[179] Hoyle (1842), p. 2.

and treatise about the importance of odds.[180] This seems unlikely since he actually later published a whole treatise on odds in whist.[181] More likely, the calculations (although incorrect) were close enough to get by on. It probably doesn't matter.

What does matter is that odds and probabilities were very much a part of Whist strategy. In the 1796 Hoyle, the instructions on odds and wagers are expanded under the heading "An explanation and application of the calculations necessary to be understood by those who read this treatise."[182] It is evident by now that odds are not just a minor distraction from gaming discipline and instinct – they are integral. Indeed, odds tables are included for other game such as faro, billiards, and unsurprising, Hazard.[183] The hazard section still struggles with the concept of the Hazard loophole, but does a decent job at arming any would-be problem gambler.[184]

By the 1814 and 1817 editions, this lean had become a full on tumble towards the integration of questions of probability. There are three separate sections of odds and probabilities for whist, two for the discussion of playing the odds of the dice at backgammon, and

[180] The "N.B" he wrote next to the odds meant they must be remembered and considered throughout the treatise.

[181] Edmund Hoyle, *An Essay Towards Making The Doctrine Of Chances Easy To Those Who Understand Vulgar Arithmetick Only, To Which Are Added Some Useful Tables On Annuities Of Lives* (London, 1764).

[182] Hoyle (1796), p. 61.

[183] Hoyle (1796), p. 281, 265 and 227 respectively.

[184] See note 159 for information on the Hazard loophole.

instructions for betting profitably at piquet along the lines of "If B has a hand when A is two love, the odds in favour of A are about three and a half to one."[185] The 1814 edition of Hoyle even includes information on betting on horseracing. It actually refers to the process of *laying* horses against other people, that is, acting as a bookmaker. The use of fractional odds and ratios is deeply confusing, as are the relatively meaningless tables.[186] The tables purport to allow readers to calculate their risk of laying two or three horses, between odds 6-1 and 1-6. However, the writer offers no reasoning of how the reader might turn this information into potential profit, beyond taking a chance. No method of properly compiling a 'book' with an overlay is explained – either the methods of the bookmaker were shrouded in mystery (not surprising since they were still in their infancy) or indeed it wasn't considered important for the reader to know.[187]

At any rate, the increasing prevalence of odds and probabilistic calculations in the gaming manuals published in Hoyle's name is testament to a more mathematically savvy and strategic gaming culture. It is unfortunately true that we can not be entirely sure how many of Hoyle's readers actually memorised or calculated their own odds and used them at play. However, gamblers were indeed becoming smarter and better informed, with more information available to them. Gaming no longer had

[185] Hoyle (1817), p. 59.

[186] Hoyle (1814), p. 484.

[187] An 'overlay' or 'overround' is the margin which nets the bookmaker a guaranteed profit over time. It is calculated by summing the implied chance of each outcome based on the odds offered, and will always be over 100%.

to be a punt at fortune, it was technically feasible with the information available to learn to gamble in a (anachronistically) "modern" way.

So what can we assume or expect an early nineteenth-century gambler to understand and execute at games of chance and skill? He could suck Hoyle dry for information, memorise all situations and odds combinations, and even correct the erroneous calculations. Strategy at games of skill are one thing, but correct betting strategy is also essential. In order to almost guarantee long-term profit, the gambler must ensure he has an overall positive probabilistic expectation on his bets.[188] As long as random chance allowed him to remain within one or two standard deviations of this mean expectation, he could expect to make a profit long term, thanks to the Law of Large Numbers. Of course in practice, this is quite complicated, even in the modern age – or bookmakers and casinos would go out of business. As historians of gambling, we must first question how expertly a nineteenth-century gambler could master odds at certain games. This is the easy part. The difficult part is actually proving anyone had such skills, read the literature that was available and studied accordingly: and whether they won any money for that matter. Scrope Davies, who will be visited in the next chapter, has been touted as the perfect example. However, before discussing his life, there are other avenues (albeit, short and narrow ones.)

[188] If you are curious, Huygens defined it as $E(X) = p_1x_1 + p_2x_2 + \ldots + p_nx_n$

An interesting shred of a clue regarding popular understanding of probabilities can be found in a letter at the Wigan family archives. Ralph Lowe writes about, most likely, an edition of *Hoyle's Complete Games* which he has been reading – the point of interest is the application of probability:

"Well suppose the cards dealt, and I hold two honours, what is the chance of my partner holding one of the other two? It is 2:1 that he holds not one of them, and it is 2:1 that he holds not the other. Therefore it is 4:1 that he holds not both."[189]

These calculations appear to be taken from Hoyle, but they are slightly incorrect interpretations of Hoyle's text, but his grasp of dice probabilities later in the fragment is more accurate: "I throw two dice, it is 36:1 that I do throw 12 at the first throw" despite having no "practice in this calculation."[190] Adept or not, Ralph displays a healthy curiosity in odds calculations in gambling games. It is feasible, that with extra study and practice, Ralph could have mastered the odds of Whist (or Hazard) in order to make his play most profitable, especially if playing against friends instead of a "house."

For example, Hoyle makes it clear that leading a king as second player against a weaker card of the same suit gives you the best chance of success, since your partner will only hold the ace one third of the time. Of course, it is phrased in an inherently confusing way, with double

[189] Letter from Ralph Lowe, 6th May, 1788, (D/D Lei C/890), Leigh Family Private Papers, Wigan Family Archives.

[190] Letter from Ralph Lowe.

negatives abound: "it is 2 to 1 that my partner has not one certain card."[191] A gambler might be expected to understand Hoyle's phrasing, learn the application of odds and gain an edge, but only if he was the studious and analytical type.

A masterly grasp of betting technique and mathematics is the other side of the coin. Methods for managing bankroll, income and losses are vital for the long term successful gambler. Charles Babbage, father of the modern computer, was deeply interested in the quest for the perfect betting system. He gave a paper in 1820 titled "An examination of some questions connected with Games of Chance," which endeavoured to discover a successful betting system for events with a probability of 1/2 or less.[192] We might easily think of this as a coin flip, or betting on red or black at roulette. The first system, referred to as the *martingal* is "double your stake whenever a loss occurs."[193] This is not an uncommon system used by roulette gamblers these days.[194] Babbage says it is "well known and has been so frequently practiced" that it was given its own name.[195] The system actually has a negative expectation, because of imposed house edge on casino games (pushing odds below 1/2) and limits on stakes. For these reasons, Babbage concludes that the system is unsuccessful. Other

[191] Hoyle (1776), p. 2.

[192] Charles Babbage, 'An Examination Of Some Questions Connected With Games Of Chance' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society of Edinburgh,* Vol. IX (1825).

[193] Babbage, 'An Examination', p. 153.

[194] Ethier, *Doctrine Of Chances,* pp. 115-6.

[195] Babbage, 'An Examination', p. 153.

betting systems Babbage explains are basically variations of a martingale, only reducing and increasing stakes by a factor of *v* every *n* wins or losses. His failure to produce any system with a larger expectation than zero (break even betting) is testament to the impossibility of the task, but also how out of reach it was for most contemporary gamers if one of the best scientific and mathematical minds of the age could not get his head round it. Other systems, such as the *labouchere* claimed to be successful, but knowledge of its inner workings was limited to a (un)lucky few.[196]

Franklin Bellhouse has attempted to address the question of common familiarity with probability by studying the occurrence of certain titles in personal libraries, such as tracing the works of Cardano and Pacioli to the Bodleian library in the seventeenth century.[197] However, the truth of the matter is that all but an extremely select handful of gamers and gamblers will have been exposed to probabilistic writing and instruction except for in Hoyle. The theorems of Bernoulli, Pascal and Laplace were integral to the understanding of statistical probability, but most likely of little help to the average gambler. De Moivre, Rouse and Lambert all offered more gamer-friendly treatises on gambling probability, but I have found no

[196] Ethier, *Doctrine of Chances,* pp. 312-3. The Labouchere system is basically a method of varying stakes of betting on roulette depending on a ladder of numbers, which are crossed off depending on the profit or loss of previous bets. It's nonsense. Further betting strategies of the time are documented in Dickens, Ainsworth, Smith, Cruikshank (eds.), *Bentley's Miscellany,* Vol. xviii (1845), pp. 596-8.

[197] Franklin Bellhouse, 'The Language Of Chance' *International Statistical Review,* Vol. 65, No. 1 (1997), p. 75.

evidence that this was actually widely disseminated. Hoyle was the key source of odds and probability for the majority of gamblers.

Regardless, we must reassess the question: was winning a priority? Was it becoming a priority as time passed? Although aristocratic gambling culture had a theme of expendable income and bombastic wagering, some players would relish the feeling of victory and profit. If strategy such as Hoyle's lessons were being ever widely disseminated and developed for more games, and probability and odds manipulation more widely understood, it would not be surprising if winning were at the forefront of more minds. The concept of conspicuous consumption might also be applied to the expert at the whist table, or the demon with the dice. Great skill and success could come with great respect. Steinmetz speaks of the admiration and aura which followed around Dennis O'Kelly, the "Napoleon of the turf and gaming table" who carried rolls of bank notes, using fifty pounds a time to set the caster at Hazard.[198]

Let us take an example from a quasi-gambling-diary. The anonymous author of *Confessions Of A Gamester* was an avid patron of the gambling hells at Newmarket. A true punter, he even remarks that "I do not like chess; it is a game of skill and calculation; it exercises the mind too much, and is a study rather than a diversion."[199] His priority, however, is winning. It's what he plays for. He is hooked on the E&O tables after

[198] Steinmetz, *The Gaming Table,* Vol. 1 (1870), p. 198.

[199] Anon., *Confessions of a Gamester* (1825), p. 136.

winning £70 in his first evening of play. He has a strange relationship with probability, claiming to make "myself acquainted with all the particulars, and having decided to which the probability of winning seemed to incline accordingly, we betted according and won."[200] His approach with horses was not the same with E&O, where he relied on lady fortune, and lost heavily. Although the author is not a member of the aristocratic culture discussed before, and does not have the disposable income of the Lords and Dukes of White's and Brooks's, he shows winning to not be his most important priority, rather the thrill of the tumble of the E&O balls, or the cacophony of hooves.

Gaming manuals during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries expanded quickly but developed slowly. By the 1817 edition, the portfolio of games had expanded to offer advice on all manner of pastimes. Their integration of odds became slowly more widespread and sophisticated, and better suited to beginners. This information was most likely not taken to extreme conclusions, and there was most certainly not an explosion of professional gamblers. However, by the time wagering had faded in the clubs of White's and Brooks's, gambling strategy was probably highly sophisticated at the cards tables of the rich. A lesser gamer will have floundered in the face of the expert finessing and see-sawing of their adversaries. Or perhaps not. Gamers had the tools to be more prepared than ever, and master the odds and calculations to be consistently profitable in their betting. This doesn't mean that they necessarily did, of

[200] Anon., *Confessions of a Gamester,* p. 48.

course – sometimes the thrill of the punt is the pastime itself – but gaming strategy had come a long way during the period regardless. This progress was indicative of gaming's increasing universal appeal, as games of cards and dice spread away from aristocratic clubs. Without the aristocratic code, winning had become far more of a priority, and the methods of calculating winning strategies more complex and sophisticated.

As for contemporary probability science, Richard Epstein summed it up well: "Gamblers can rightfully claim to be the Godfathers of Probability theory since they are responsible for provoking the stimulating interplay of gambling and mathematics that provided the impetus to the study of probability."[201] However, whilst eloquent, it is incomplete. Gamblers might claim to the impetus for the calculation of probability theory, but mathematicians might struggle to argue that the relationship was symbiotic. Contemporary gamblers were happy with a few ratios of probability calculated incorrectly by Hoyle, and questions of profitable expectation of wagering systems would appear to be largely ignored.

[201] Epstein, *The Theory Of Gambling,* p. 10.

III: Dandy In Debt

The previous chapter has discussed at length the logical limits for any would-be professional gambler at the start of the nineteenth century. The problem with assessing such limits is they are all theoretical. The historiography needs an example of a player who must profit in order to support themselves. The Lords and Dukes of White's and Brooks's might have been able to completely ruin themselves at the gaming table, but this freedom was partly because gambling was not their only source of income.

Scrope Berdmore Davies is one such example of, what might be deemed, a 'professional' gambler.[202] Known by contemporaries and remembered by history as a Dandy and man about town, Scrope's chief source of income was betting on horse racing, hazard, and card games. His reputation was impressive. Captain Rees Howell Gronow, a fellow dandy, friend, and serial memoir writer said of Scrope: "As was the case with many of the foremost men of that day, the greater number of his hours were passed at the gambling-table, where for a length of time he was eminently successful; for he was a first-rate calculator."[203]

However, what seems to be overlooked is the fact that ultimately, Scrope eventually acquired so much debt that he had to flee the country from his creditors. Surely these were not the actions of a successful gambler. This

[202] Incidentally, Scrope is pronounced 'Scroop.'

[203] Rees Howell Gronow, *Recollections And Anecdotes, Being A Second Series Of Reminiscences, Of The Camp, The Court, And The Clubs* (1863), p. 108. Gronow churned out 4 volumes of memoirs in the final 4 years of his life.

chapter will assess how Scrope is documented by contemporaries and in the limited historiography on his life, as well looking at his personal archive. Was Scrope one of the first professional gamblers to infiltrate London gaming clubs? What made him different? This chapter will begin with a brief look at Dandyism itself and its link with gaming and gambling, before dissecting Scrope's betting books in order to ascertain where he went right, and ultimately, wrong. In each instance, an argument favouring his gambling mastery may be put forward using the evidence, but then this will be followed by a more realistic interpretation and counter argument.

Scrope Davies is interesting because he seemed to inhabit an incarnation of successful gambling, without ever sustaining long-term success. This flawed reputation alone tells us of the frighteningly low awareness of tangible success and failure within contemporary gambling culture: Scrope is the embodiment of conspicuous consumption. Revered by his peers as a successful gambler simply because of the manner in which he conducted his risk-taking, and certainly not his winnings!

Dandy culture, popularised and perhaps created by George Bryan Brummel, appeared around the close of the eighteenth century at a time of great unease for the aristocracy. The French Revolution had shaken up notions of entitlement and the label of a gentleman was only applicable to those who earned it. The Dandy was the manifestation of the justified

gentleman: witty, elegant and polite.[204] He mixed with the aristocracy but was not of the same breeding. In essence, he defined a certain social mobility, at least as far as it was possible. He had no coat of arms or title.

Beau Brummel was just such a professional gentleman. In this respect, he was also a keen gambler, and his appearance in the betting book at White's is unsurprising:

"February 2nd 1811. Mr. Brummell bets Mr. Blackford thirty guineas to twenty-five guineas that Sir William Guise beats Mr. Dalton for the County of Gloucestershire, now contesting between them."[205]

Doubtless this wager came into being after a few choice witticisms from the mouth of Mr. Brummell. His stakes went a little higher than that, too:

"December 16th 1812. Mr. Brummell bets Mr. Udney 100 gs. to 20 gs., that Buonaparte returns to Paris."[206]

At any rate, we can assume that a membership at White's also meant table games, such as Hazard, especially since it was partly gambling debts which forced Brummell into exile. Indeed, he is alleged to have won a staggering £26,000 at one game of cards in 1813, before losing £10,000 the following year in similar circumstances.[207] Brummell is more commonly visited in existing historiography then Scrope Davies. However,

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[204] Ellen Moer, *The Dandy: Brummel to Beerbolm* (1978), p. 17.

[205] White's Betting Book, p. 71.

[206] White's Betting Book, p. 95.

[207] Philip Carter, 'Brummell, George Bryan [Beau Brummell] (1778–1840)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3771, accessed 6 June 2012].

it remains worthy context since Scrope's story is so similar to Brummell's, who also gambled freely and eventually went into exile.

Phyllis Deutsch attempts to place Scrope within a realm of quasi-aristocratic Dandyism through her discussion on gaming. She claims Scrope was an example of the Dandy existing within Aristocratic gaming culture through his own wit and intelligence, not through power or family money.[208] The problem is that her assessment of Scrope Davies is wrong. For some reason, it is accepted that Scrope was a successful gambler, perhaps spurred by the sparse contemporary sources on him, and maybe Gronow's complimentary account. His sustained run of 15 years was not an example of success in terms of calculations, rather success in terms of juggling debt.

Indeed, very limited work has been done on the life of Scrope Davies. This is perhaps due to his life in the shadow of Byron. However, a chest of papers belonging to Scrope was discovered in the vaults of Barclay's Bank in 1976.[209] Inside the chest there are over twenty volumes of letters, commonplace books, credit notes and even school books. The notebooks contain many incomplete, but intriguing records of wins and losses from

[208] Deutsch, 'Fortune and Chance', p. 138.

[209] Annette Peach, 'Davies, Scrope Berdmore (1782–1852)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/59368, accessed 6 June 2012].

billiards, throwing stones, shooting and fishing among the usual suspects of hazard and horse racing.[210]

The discovery of this cache of sources warranted interest from the popular press based on the monetary value of the letters, especially the correspondence from Byron. The interest from the historical world was equally Byron-centric. T. A. J. Burnett completed and published a full biography of Scrope in 1981. This is the only scholarly work devoted to Scrope, using the trunks from Barclay's.

All the core information is there. Scrope was born in Gloucester, and attended Eton on scholarship in 1796. He was not of the highest stock, but was the son of a vicar and obviously well enough connected to get a top education.[211] Various bills from this time at school show Scrope took to the interests of the Dandy early, spending lots of his money at school on fine clothes and washing bills.[212] Moving on to Cambridge, Scrope gamed with Byron and John Hobhouse in the Long Chamber at Kings, winning or losing stakes of up to £18 per night.[213] Byron left Cambridge early due to debt, and Scrope followed him to London where they began their lives gambling and whoring. Young and reckless, Byron recalls a drinking binge which ended in Hobhouse stabbing Scrope after a disagreement, although

[210] The volumes are now kept under Loan 70 of the Manuscripts Collection of the British library. All subsequent mentions of Volumes I-XXI refer to this collection.

[211] T.A. J. Burnett, *The Rise And Fall Of A Regency Dandy: The life and times of Scrope Berdmore Davies* (1981), pp. 11-3; Peach, 'Davies, Scrope Berdmore (1782–1852)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[212] Burnett, *Rise And Fall,* pp. 17-20.

[213] Burnett, *Rise And Fall,* pp. 22-29.

the two patched up any differences and remained lifetime friends.[214] Scrope maintained a £111 yearly income from a position of Fellowship at Cambridge, but his gambling and expensive tastes caught up with him by the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century.[215] Scrope fled to the continent in 1820, where he lived for over thirty years in apparent comfort before passing away.[216]

Scrope's reputation as a wit did not come without study. A pocketbook found in the trunk at Barclay's contains details of bets and expenses among copied out passages from texts which Scrope was apparently memorising. Passages from the works of Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson are hastily scrawled out, ready to be recited, alongside his own aphorisms.[217] Scrope was evidently a political man too, as a brief and unsuccessful stint in politics and various political correspondences will attest.[218]

Burnett's biography of Scrope details many similar topics to the chosen few above. However, there are also problems. Burnett takes a Byron-centric view of Scrope much like the majority of scholarly work. He pieces together the majority of the biography from correspondence with Byron

[214] Burnett, *Rise And Fall,* p. 46.

[215] Burnett, *Rise And Fall,* p. 71.

[216] Gronow, *Recollections,* p. 110.

[217] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XXI, Commonplace book, ff. 15-9.

[218] This interest in politics burned early, as correspondence with Hobhouse in October 1812 suggests: "Pray look at the new members of Parliament. I do not think there is a single fool of our acquaintance who is not returned" in Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. II, f. 3.

or other caches of Byron's letters which reference Scrope. This is not ideal for several reasons. Firstly, Byron was not a regular gambler, and many times declared his disassociation from gambling.[219] As a result, any reports of Scrope's gambling by Byron are rare and circumstantial, and there is limited information to be extracted. Secondly, Byron was not always around Scrope, especially later in the 1810s, where Byron was out of the country for large periods of time.[220] This results in Burnett's biography being a more of a description of Byron and Scrope's friendship, vicariously depicted in a timeline of Scrope's financial troubles.

I am not calling the integrity or accomplishment of Burnett's biography into question. Merely I am asserting that it is lacking information for a historian of gambling. This is partly due to problems with the limited sources, but also perhaps to Burnett's chosen slant on the subject. The few passages on gambling fail to understand the very nature of the games Scrope was playing. Burnett describes Scrope's affinity to Hazard, gleaned from notes (unsurprisingly) written by Byron, who had supposedly given up Hazard himself.[221] The trouble is that Burnett assumes Scrope was playing Hazard against other punters, despite his attendance at Watiers and the Cocoa Tree where he would have most likely played against the house. Burnett claims that Hazard is structured to "favour the intelligent player" and indeed Gronow's insists that Scrope was a "first rate

[219] In 1809 he declared that the devil presided at Newmarket and the Cocoa Tree in a letter to Scrope, Scrope Davies Collection, Vol I. f. 1.

[220] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. I, f. 18 and f. 22.

[221] Burnett, *Rise And Fall,* pp. 45-6.

calculator."[222] Therefore, something does not add up given the losses Scrope suffered at gambling clubs. The games must have been against the house, disallowing Scrope any edge gleaned from an understanding of the odds. Furthermore, Burnett does not actually analyse Scrope's supposed professionally assembled books of horse backing and laying. He does not assess Scrope's actual ability to make money at the races.[223] Burnett's base of knowledge on gaming and gambling history is not broad enough to allow him a satisfying evaluation of Scrope as a gambler, which is the purpose of this chapter.

What I pose to add to the historiography is an alternative interpretation of the life of Scrope Berdmore Davies. I will be assessing him as a professional gambler, due to his notoriety as a successful bettor on horses and games of chance. His profits coincide with the emergence of popular bookmaking and the rise of William Crockford, a most important man in the changing nature of gambling in England. Scrope's reputation and lack of any profession beyond betting makes him an irresistible test subject for any historian of gambling. Whilst Burnett's biography is perfectly apt for investigations into his and Byron's social life and interaction, it fails to position Scrope anywhere to the spectrum of gambling history.

My argument runs thus: Scrope Berdmore Davies was an incorrigible gambler, and a lucky one. However, he was not a successful bettor, which

[222] Burnett, *Rise And Fall*, p. 45; Gronow, *Recollections,* p. 108.

[223] Burnett, *Rise And Fall,* p. 57.

in the long term spelled his fall. He displayed many of the signs of a habitual and unsuccessful gambling man: loss chasing, poor understanding of odds, and poor record keeping. His ultimate ruin was inevitable from the moment he began betting, because he does not appear to learn much from his mistakes. His proximity to Byron and his income from his Fellowship at Cambridge allowed him to gain more credit than he was due, which forced him into exile. I will examine first his gambling habits, both at the racetrack in Newmarket and at his favourite London clubs, in order to show his failures, or at least document them. His bills will be shown to demonstrate his lack of control of his finances, and anecdotal evidence will attest to an attitude not in keeping with the vital ruthlessness of a professional gambler.

Overall, close analysis of available evidence unfortunately suggests that Scrope was in fact, merely lucky during his early career. His success in gambling was not down to any skill with odds, calculations or bookmaking, as he appears not to have possessed any such skills. Scrope may therefore, in future, be largely omitted from gambling historiography. I am aware that the volumes are in some cases incomplete, and Scrope's own memoirs were lost in time. Therefore the sources are not entirely decisive, as there could exist another trunk showcasing entirely opposite evidence. However, the likelihood of such a possibility is minimal. I rather look to what the source cache can tell us, not what it cannot.

Although the records are not entirely intact, several of the volumes of the Scrope Davies trunk from Barclay's bank show his bookmaking practices

at Newmarket. Scrope should be commended for his carefully recorded book, which displays bets in a (usually) logical and legible manner of *stake/risk, return if successful, horses name, name of bettor.*[224] Scrope would take bets from other gentlemen at the race course, giving them certain odds for any given horse and attempt to accrue enough bets at the appropriate odds to ensure a profit every time. The best example of this is in volume XXI, which not only records a full book for a race, but includes Scrope's calculations as to his appropriate wins and losses for each outcome of the race.[225] The best outcome for Scrope in this particular race (the Derby for six year olds at 2.30 p.m.) was if "Cartage" wins, netting Scrope £600. Similarly, a win for "O. P" would give £560, or a win for "The Dandy" netted £130. The only problem was that Scrope did not entirely rid himself of risk, as some horses which he presumably did not fancy are recorded as potential loss makers. If horses such as "Whalebone" or "Pledge" had won, it would have resulted in a net loss of £191 and £108 respectively. Scrope may not have intended it this way. Perhaps he didn't have the time to make a full book before post time, or perhaps he had already wagered all his potential credit from his Newmarket account. Either way, they show shortcomings which cannot be ignored. Scrope should not have been accepting any bets which extended his risk on any

[224] Scrope Davies Collection, Volume XII, Goldsmiths Almanack 1811. He displays this anal approach to money earlier in life, especially during his trip to the Highlands with John Hobhouse, recorded in volume XVIII which includes money in and out for food, drink, waiters, lodgings, dogs, horses, tea and games.

[225] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XXI, ff. 20-7.

horse if he knew he had not layed off the risk with another backer. Furthermore, he should not have exceeded his credit limit knowing he had not created a complete book. This was as early as 1809 and should have been the time of Scrope's winning ways. If this race was to be profitable for Scrope, then that means he had to be lucky, and luck does not last. Unfortunately, Burnett reports that Whalebone won, although I have been unable to source this information.

Other examples of this sort of poor bookmaking are to be found elsewhere in the volumes recording his betting activities. It is not surprising that by risking up to £100 per race, Scrope might have had winning streaks (read 'lucky streaks'), which netted him an impressive income. There was often just one Newmarket meeting per year at this time, but many of the other 94 British racetracks offered multiple meetings per annum.[226] If not at the track, betting could be carried out at Tattersall's.[227] Some races saw even more risked on single horses, such as on September 1st 1809 when Scrope risked £1000 laying a bet of £500 on "David" to beat "Eaton."[228] This risk is only recorded to have been hedged by a further bet against it of a potential £10. Other bets are scratched out, but it is unclear whether they have been settled, or were made void. In other races, Scrope placed bets amounting to £600, betting horses against

[226] Wray Vamplew, *The Turf: A social and economic history of horse racing* (1979), p. 18.

[227] Tattersall's was a vendor of bloodstock in London, which doubled up as a place of betting in London. It will be discussed further in the fourth chapter.

[228] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XXI, f. 30.

one another and taking bets from other punters as well as placing them himself.[229] One incredibly risky race in 1816 has over 4 pages of bets recorded, including laying one punter 25 to 1 on a certain outsider for a stake of £100, as well as backing other horses at 4 to 1, and 5 to 1, for variable stakes of £10 to £100.[230] Volume XIV, a commonplace book from 1814, show stubs of pages which have been ripped out. The stubs show the remains of the odds and figures written on the pages before being torn away.[231] It seems likely that they were ripped out to be used as bet slips, for Scrope's backers to keep, or indeed for Scrope to claim money from punters he had beaten. The betting books show Scrope was a heavy gambler, an amateur and slapdash bookmaker, and an extreme risk-taker. He was not a master calculator or system better. He didn't appear to have an edge. His eventual ruin was always inevitable because of his lack of tactics. It is possible that there are missing betting books which show Scrope's masterful bookmaking skill as mentioned by Burnett, but there is little implication of such skill in the volumes that we have. Scrope also failed to adapt to his losses and maintained frequent betting contracts with the same ring of bettors at Newmarket. The names of Crockford, Collett, Greville, Langwith and Waldrom are reoccurring. He was

[229] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XXI, f. 8.

[230] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XX, ff. 9-12. So much of the horses names are illegible, and the meeting is not titled, nor the race. Unfortunately, I have not been able to track who won this race and what it meant financially for Scrope. His financial records do not show any large glut of income around this time either, so we can only wildly (and pointlessly) speculate.

[231] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XIV, throughout the volume.

consistently losing money to the same men and yet not changing his habits.

If Scrope bet frequently with these men, it is likely that he knew them well. Many successful horse gamblers bet using inside knowledge gained from such connections. However, the cache of sources offered little in the way of evidence for such connections for Scrope. Indeed, very little of the correspondence even mentions horses at all. One of the few examples is a letter from Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury in 1817, which discussed the sale of one of his fillies, and the entering of another filly into a race in July.[232] What this information was worth in betting terms would probably amount to very little, if not nothing. It is strange that a gambler as notorious as Scrope Davies would not have more discussion about gambling in his correspondence! Perhaps this explains Burnett's apparent shyness on the subject. At any rate, other letters on horse racing are no less revealing. A letter from Sir Francis Burdett in April 1818 informed Scrope he has withdrawn his horses from the race on that Saturday on Davies's own request: "I hope you will take care that this sacrifice is duly appreciated."[233] It is unfortunately unclear why Scrope has made such a request, or whether it relates to any matter of betting.[234] Ambitious

[232] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. II, f. 45.

[233] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. II, f. 56.

[234] Perhaps Scrope was just playing the wit. That is what later correspondence perhaps implies. Ludlow's later letter on folio 79 reads "I am just this morning returned home and find your letter of the 15th, you say you 'do not recollect, as some are apt to do, more than has ever taken place.' This is at best but a blunder, for it is improbable that anyone can

scholarly expectations of a multitude of correspondence involving 'inside knowledge' on horse racing were unfortunately not met.

An interesting series of events in 1819 perhaps confirm Scrope's less than masterful grasp of betting on the turf, and also, his desperation for money. After correspondence with Richard Milnes, Scrope became involved in a betting coup.[235] Milnes's figured that his own horse 'The Laird', which was entered in the St. Leger race on September 20th, was performing terribly in the stables and would be beaten. He asked Scrope to take any bets against The Laird, "on any terms."[236] This was inside knowledge which surely any bettor would not resist, especially one desperate for 'luck' as Scrope was. A month later, Milnes wrote again retracting his original statement and asking that money be placed in favour of The Laird. In the end, the race was run twice and after a stewards enquiry, won by an outsider. The Laird did not place, and neither did many of the favourites, resulting in heavy losses on the coup.[237] It is perhaps not a coincidence that these losses come just months before Scrope's choice to flee the country.

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recollect what has never happened, but it may have a meaning beyond my humble comprehension, which I must request an explanation of."

[235] A betting coup is an organised series of bets, often perpetrated by more than one person, in order to take advantage of illicit or inside information. Nowadays, a flurry of bets for one particular horse or event results in a shortening of odds, and coups are designed to strategically place bets in the most profitable, efficient way. Scrope's coup is somewhat of a poorly executed example.

[236] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. II, f. 65 and f. 75.

[237] Burnett recounts the debacle on pp. 57-9.

It is harder to track Scrope's betting activity at gaming clubs. Table games at clubs do not need to be meticulously recorded as bookmaking should be. It is sure that he was a regular patron of clubs from at least 1809, as many of the letters from Lord Byron and other correspondents from this year and later are addressed to "Scrope B. Davies, The Cocoa Tree Club."[238] The Cocoa Tree was a popular club for Gentlemen and gambling was conducted within, similarly to White's or Brooks's.[239] Byron even refers to Scrope as a "Cocoan," although this was several years later.[240]

Whilst any individual games he might have played can only be documented through anecdotal evidence, the cache of sources did include credit notes for various clubs. A note from volume XIV, a commonplace book of 1814, shows a line of credit with the Union Cub. The note, evidently updated after every trip or stay, starts with Scrope having £500, then £300, £20 and finally £75.[241] Whatever early success or money transfer started Scrope off at the club did not last long. Only one winning trip of £55 in four recorded figures. A more successful career is evident at Watiers, where a similar credit note of £3050 records Scrope's handsome account in July 1814.[242] This is reduced to zero by May 1817, and then a bill of £39-19-8 by April 1819.[243] His gambling winnings could not keep

[238] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. 1, f. 4, f. 13.

[239] Ashton, *History Of Gambling,* p. 90.

[240] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol 1, f. 13

[241] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol XIV. Commonplace book, 1814.

[242] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. III, f. 77.

[243] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. III, f. 157 and f. 212.

up with the £11 monthly subscription to the club. The card showing the debt in April is reissued in July, perhaps indicative of a pushy ownership demanding payment.

It is probable that Scrope's losses at Watier's were a result of two games of Scrope was reportedly fond of: Hazard and Macao.[244] Although this paper has many times stressed the Hazard loophole as a method for consistently gaining advantageous odds at the game, the rule cannot be applied to games of Hazard played against a house, in the same way as Craps is played in modern casinos. Therefore, Scrope was bound to lose money. Knowledge of the odds of Hazard was well known and published by this time, and Scrope's addiction to the game was part of his ruin.[245] This was surely not the behaviour of a 'calculator of the house'.

Although Watiers appeared to be Scrope's most frequent haunt in the late 1810s, he did gain membership to Brooks's, a far more exciting prospect. A most interesting credit note from E. Charlton of Ludlow in July 1818 was in favour of Scrope by 150 guineas, being placed in Scrope's account

[244] An obituary-esque account of Scrope's life mentions winnings of £30,000 at the race course, and losses of more than that at the dice and card table. I am not sure where these figures are calculated from. See *Manchester Times* (January 21st, 1865).

[245] Hoyle, Lambert, Rouse, De Moivre. Take your pick. Incidentally, there is only one mention of Whist within the cache of sources, in a letter inviting Scrope to play Whist at a gentile function in 1819, Vol. II, f. 168. It was perhaps not thrilling enough for Scrope, who enjoyed the thrill of risk. However, in correspondence from Scrope to *The Morning Post* he claimed to never gamble, except at "low whist and ecarte." See *The Morning Post* (Issue 19937, October 31st 1834.) He may have been speaking truthfully, since it is well after his exile began.

at Brooks's.[246] However, a credit note in June 1819 shows Scrope was by then drawn by £34 in this account, and a card with no date shows a shocking debt of £417-16-6 at the London club.[247] This was likely a contributing factor to his decision to flee the country. Scrope's gambling habits and well-studied gentlemanly demeanour had gained him membership to one of the most exclusive clubs in London – nonetheless, he squandered the opportunity to win money from other patrons and continued to frequently lose.

Despite consecutive losses in the majority of the volumes during the 1810s, Scrope managed to maintain at least a decent mastery of profiting from tennis. Scrope was, apparently, a rather elite tennis player. Volume XVI of the cache is an account with R. Matt, tennis professional, recording the expenditure of Scrope at a tennis club during 1818. Costs include the price of membership, games, rackets, balls and refreshments.[248] These expenses are dwarfed by his successful wagering with other club members, on the outcome of matches. These may have been wagers on matches Scrope played himself, or on other players in the spirit of aristocratic bet-on-everything culture. Bets are in guineas, just as they are at the race course and at clubs, and stakes are fairly high for a single game of tennis. Wins of over ten guineas were not uncommon. In fact, Scrope is

[246] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. 2, f. 77.

[247] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. 3, Various bills from spikes, f. 222; f. 248.

[248] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XVI, Account with R. Matt, Tennis Professional, 1818.

recorded as having won up to 22 guineas per match from one Colonel Ponsonby, winning in total 59 guineas in 5 months, whilst losing just one bet of 11 guineas to him.[249] After total expenses of £39-4-0, Scrope made a profit of £24-7-0 at this particular tennis club in 5 months. Perhaps this would have been a better route of regular income for Scrope.[250] Unfortunately, when each bet at the races could be over £500, such small figures of profit elsewhere hardly make a dent. Scrope was obviously addicted to larger scores than pittance for tennis, perhaps through greed, perhaps through addiction to headier thrills.

Scrope was never ruthless enough to be a professional gambler. His gentlemanly exterior was unfortunately an obstacle to profit. Gronow recounts the story of Scrope cleaning out a young man at the Hazard table, before giving him back his winnings and telling him never to gamble again.[251] This story is quite wrongly often recounted as an example of Scrope's decadence and success. Perhaps he should have kept the winnings and heeded his own advice.[252]

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[249] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XVI, ff. 1-3.

[250] A postscript in an interesting letter from Arthur Matthews, of Brasenose College, 5th May 1818 on the subject of Scrope's backhand dominance: "I am much improved at tennis; and shall be ready to renew our sinister contest of last year. By the bye, I have not forgotten that I am much in your debt on that score, as well as another. Farewell. Fail not to write – and that you may not fail, do it immediately." All gamblers it seems, like Scrope, were slow at paying their debts. Of course, it is doubtable that the few guineas he would have been owed would have delayed Scrope's exile for long.

[251] Gronow, *Recollections,* p. 108.

[252] Also recounted in, oddly, *The York Herald,* (Issue 15141, December 16th, 1899), p. 12.

In early years, Scrope paid debts with ease considering, perhaps due to 'beginner's luck.' His cellar book of 1811 and 1812 show an astounding £202-19-10 spent on one year's drinks consumption, predominantly on bottles of Port, Claret and Madeira.[253] Scrope was evidently not one to let questions of political affiliation affect his imbibing habits.[254] Luxury drinking, perhaps, but unavoidable for a fashionable man in London. In the same year, Scrope spent roughly equal amounts through his stable accounts, keeping and shoeing horses, paying his groom, coach fares and of course more drinks.[255]

Scrope's account with Cock's and Ridge's Bankers in 1813 through 1815 are demonstrative of the amount of money Scrope was capable of spending and the violent fluctuations of account expenditure and income which a gambling-centric means of living created. The account has a total of £5952-10-0 in November 1813.[256] Scrope closes the account in March 1815, after withdrawing his final £307-10-14. Withdrawals of hundreds, even thousands of pounds at a time indicate the need for large amounts of money, at the same time as many of the records of Scrope's

[253] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol XIII.

[254] Scrope drank Port and Claret in equal quantities. Each drink had political connotations with the Whigs and Tories respectively.

[255] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XV. Shows a monthly spend of £26-14-8.

[256] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XVII, Records with Cock's and Ridge's Bankers, 1813-1815.

bookmaking.[257] Furthermore, payments to individuals, including one William Crockford are recorded, for equally vast sums. This is not to say there are not similar sums paid into the account, indicating successful gambling wins, but not enough to still the £5645 of net loss on the account over just two years. Earlier in his bookmaking career, things were much healthier in his accounts, particularly during 1810 when Scrope won large amounts at Newmarket. His account with Eaton & Co. show Scrope earning almost £1300 over several days at a race meeting, after expenses of £836.[258] This was evidently the height of his bookmaking success.

Volume III of Scrope's cache of sources is further indicative of the volatile nature of his income. The bill receipts for withdrawals and deposits at Scrope's bank account at Newmarket are numerous and of handsome sums. Payments are often made in cash 'by yourself' (Scrope) and indicate uncertain profit and loss at the racetrack. Scrope pays £813-15-0 into his account on one day in 1810, only to withdraw £735 the next day.[259] On August 4th, Scrope has £3175-17-6 in his account. Therefore, we know that Mr. Davies was fairly accustomed to the movement of large swathes of capital through various accounts, although his continued bills and debts for tailors and refreshments perhaps indicate mixed judgement in terms of priority.

[257] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XIX and Vol. XIV contain bookmaking for 1813 and 1814 respectively.

[258] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. XXI, ff. 3-4.

[259] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. III, f. 3.

Littered throughout the volumes are various letters or notes discussing the swapping of debt or repayments among friends. Lord Byron helped Scrope to appease a creditor in January of 1812, suggesting that "these people will not allow time."[260] Regardless of that, Scrope was prepared to let debts run as late as he possibly could, whilst using borrowed money to purchase annuities, in an effort to secure extra income. For example, an annuity investment in August 1813 gave Scrope an extra £3000 of money to fritter away.[261] He was probably using this money to simply move his debt around, paying off past creditors and making new ones. Such habits could not last, of course, after all bank account opportunities were exhausted.

Still, the money from these annuities were Scrope's third source of income (and ultimately debt), after gambling and his Fellowship at Cambridge. He did not stay on top of all his debts as some of his correspondence will attest: Scrope received £100 from the death of one of Hobhouse's friends, who had owed money to him, and Lord Alverny wrote in 1814 informing him that he had money yet to send to Scrope to settle a past debt of £500.[262] It is unlikely that the various amounts of money owed to him would have covered his vast debts at clubs and to banks, but it is indicative of a man who did not keep on top of his accounts.

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[260] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. I, f. 10.

[261] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. III, ff. 60-71. Various folios of annuity investments.

[262] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. I, f. 51; Vol. II, f. 13.

The culture of debt swapping is enshrined in the correspondence of June 1819, when Mr. Hibbert wrote requesting that Scrope aid him in recovering debts from one J. Weatherby. A few days later, a letter from Weatherby to Scrope declared "all undecided bets off and [he] will not make another until everybody is paid" as Scrope himself owes Weatherby £75.[263] These debts pale in comparison to the hundreds of thousands accrued by aristocratic men such as Charles James Fox, and are perhaps illustrative of one of the problems Scrope had to face: debt worked differently for the non-aristocratic.

In chapter one, it was discussed how aristocratic debt culture was unique in its casual and trusting nature among debtors. One member of White's might owe another member 100 guineas, but the debt would remain at that amount for as long as he chose not to pay it. The trust among debtors was down partly to the bloodline and background of each lender and borrower, whose title and land would ensure debts would eventually be paid. For Scrope, debt was different. He had no land or bloodline to rely on for trust, and impatience would set in with his lenders more quickly. This is why he used annuities to juggle and move debt around different accounts. For example, Scrope's enormous debt of £417 at Brooks's was a serious problem for a man struggling to fend of creditors elsewhere. It was perhaps a trifle to other members who lost such amounts every night, but Scrope's only way to win it back was to gamble. This meant he became a habitual loss chaser, and his eventual ruin was sure. Scrope could not

[263] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. II, ff. 107-9.

borrow or lend as the aristocracy could. An illustrative example of this comes in the form of correspondence with one Robert Milnes, the brother of Scrope's friend in the failed betting coup. He was a member of Parliament, an ostensibly respectable and noble man, but in 1819 wrote to Scrope asking for a loan of £1000.[264] This was laughably unlikely given Scrope's monetary situation, but it is illustrative of how Scrope had attempted to fit in with a lending culture which he would never be able to sustain.

Scrope was a failure as a gambler and a poor manager of money. So was Brummell. This throws Phyllis Deutsch's interpretation of Dandy anti-culture into question. Dandies were not able to survive the fluctuations of gambling losses because of their very lack of title, land and wealth. In the absence of any other evidence for the close relationship between Dandyism and Aristocratic gaming culture, I question its relevance when assessing English gambling history as a whole. The effect of two, albeit unique, but not particularly wealthy men pales in comparison to the effect of fluttering juggernauts such as Charles James Fox. Fox's actions politicised and brought infamy to clubs. Scrope and Brummel won some money and lost it again in the space of a decade. The two are barely comparable. Deutsch discusses Dandyism in such a way as to imply its greater significance to gaming and aristocratic culture, but the evidence for this is very limited. Indeed, evidence of other gambling gentlemen

[264] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. 2, f. 161.

similar to Davies and Brummell doesn't even seem to exist. In terms of my research, Scrope is an interesting and colourful character. However, he is not an important figure in the history of gaming culture. His impact at the course was no different to the losing punters who surrounded the best emerging bookmakers. His impact in clubs was no different to the many patrons who lost money there. And his lack of existing wealth meant his legacy would not last long before he had to vacate the culture and the country altogether. However, if Scrope is not important, his reputation as a fine gambling man implies his superiority to the majority of other gamblers. This would mean that in reality, winning was incredibly difficult at this time, perhaps unless you were a devoted bookmaker. Modern professional gamblers exploit the value in odds of different bookmakers who have to make their margins paper-thin in order to stay competitive. In the early nineteenth century, bookmakers did not compete with each other in the same way, and would have been able to price bets at a more advantageous rate for themselves. Therefore, even with a mind of great calculation, Scrope would still have required a large amount of luck.[265] Luck, unfortunately, is not guaranteed.

An apt conclusion to this short chapter is to observe some correspondence from volume II of the Scrope Davies collection. The letter

[265] For a tangible example, suppose you were betting on a coin flip. A modern bookmaker would have to offer you close to even money for win in order to maintain your custom, perhaps 9/10 in order to get a slight edge. A bookmaker on the nineteenth century might offer you much less, such as 2/3, but you would have to take those odds if you wanted to gamble. Therefore, to win long term, your luck would have to outplay the probabilities quite considerably.

is from John Newman of Newmarket in May 1817. It informs Scrope that one Mr William Crockford had purchased a property in the town which housed some of Scrope's belongings, and discusses arrangements for having them sent back to their owner.[266] There is a hint of irony in that the man who would go on to be one of the most successful gambling house proprietors of the nineteenth century would cross paths so closely with Scrope so many times near the track. The thought of Mr. Crockford in effect kicking Scrope's belongings out of Newmarket is a poignant one. The baton was passed from failed, washed-up gambler, to successful gambling capitalist at the start of his rise. This will be further explored in the final chapter.

[266] Scrope Davies Collection, Vol. II, f. 37.

IV: The Run-Up To Regulation

The Select Committee on Gaming was held in 1844. It was called in response to the rejection of a bill in the Lords which aimed to make manly sports, such as cricket, more easily pursued.[267] The bill's changes to laws concerning wagering were considered either too extreme or relaxed, and the matter was referred to a select committee. After a long investigation, it advised the government to change gaming and gambling laws by scrapping previous statutes illegalising private gaming and certain games of chance. Instead, the Select Committee recommended laws which suppressed gaming houses and allowed horse racing to thrive.[268] This chapter will broadly examine the evidence given at the Select Committee and discuss what it suggests about how gaming culture changed during the first half of the nineteenth century. This will be supplemented with evidence from elsewhere in order to ascertain which direction British gaming culture was moving. It will be shown that publicly visible gaming was spreading. Not only could the elite game, but gentlemen and the middle classes had access to increasing amounts of common gaming houses. The chapter will show that elite gaming culture was becoming

[267] House of Lords Hansard, *The Lords Sitting Of Monday, February 5th, 1844* (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:rec:LDS3V0072P0-0003, accessed 1st August 2011).

[268] *Report Of The Select Committee On Gaming, 1844* republished *British Parliamentary Papers, Social Problems: Gambling* (Irish University Press, 1968), part 1, pp. v-viii. Hereafter, this source will be referred to as 'Select Committee 1844.'

less exclusive, and therefore fading from its original position as dominant. The pool of frequent gamblers had been diluted. Horse racing was ever increasing in popularity and availability to all walks of the social spectrum, and the reckless wagering of White's and Brooks's had long since been eclipsed by Crockford's open doors as the focal point of British gaming culture. Now that more people were involved in institutionalised gambling, a state crackdown was somewhat inevitable. The blindly turned eye of the law could no longer ignore the popularity of gaming in London and racetracks nationwide.

This chapter will be structured by first examining what the evidence suggests about changes in gaming culture. This will cover the decline of wagers as previously discussed, growth of common gaming houses, the rise of Crockfords, and increasing popularity of the races. Secondly, we will see how these changes caused problems in policing, and a perceived rise of foul play. Finally, I will entertain an alternative interpretation, placing the effects of the industrial revolution and aftermath of France's experience as a catalyst for change.

The Select Committee introduced its findings with an interesting observation that I will quote in full:

"[The] practice of betting was much more common in this country than it is now; bets about disputed facts and upon future events were a daily

occurrence, and a wager was proverbially known to be an English way of settling a controversy."[269]

The conclusion of the Select Committee was that gambling, or at least wagering on opinion, had declined in Britain. It is not specific about a period of time over which this perceived decline occurred. However, the evidence from the betting books from Brooks's and White's (as discussed in chapter one) suggests that this decline began at the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the popular impression of wagering was driven by infamous wagers and hedonistic gamblers.[270] However, there was no character comparable to someone such as Charles James Fox in the decades following his death. The wagers at White's, too, became less grossly over-indulged. Logically the popular impression of gambling would have been that it was decreasing, because it lacked the impression of infamous beacons of gambling excess, as previously personified by Fox and the clubs.

"At present," the report continues, "wagers are chiefly confined to sporting events."[271] If this was true, then things had certainly changed. Consider the anonymous writer of *The London Guide* in 1819, writing on the dangers one invited when making wagers in London. So ubiquitous and blasé were their integration into life, that the threat of dishonest wagers was a constant concern for the author: "The propensity to gamble

[269] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. v.

[270] The images referenced in chapter one most commonly depict great wealth changing hands at games of chance.

[271] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. v.

pervades the entire population of the North of England; and most Welchmen [sic] settle the commonest dispute by wager, offering to lay more money upon one senseless dispute than perhaps ever belonged to their whole family at any one time."[272] The author continues by recounting an anecdote of an unfair wager made by a visitor to London. The implication is that making wagers was a normal activity and therefore an easily exploited tool for an unjust man. However, at some point, the wager had fallen out of public favour.

A decline in wagers was partly due to alternative outlets of readily available gambling. Institutions of vice now were open to more than just heavily paying patrons; gone were the days of exclusive clubs. Frederick Byng's testimony to the Select Committee said that gaming clubs simply did not exist in the same way, and were being replaced with gambling houses.[273] His evidence stated that the establishments were once lowly arenas for the poor, but had evolved to become grander and more appealing to elite gaming, and are now "frequented by a better class of

[272] A Gentleman (Anonymous), *The London Guide, And Stranger's Safeguard Against The Cheats, Swindlers, And Pickpockets That Abound Within The Bills Of Mortality* (1819), p. 49. The committee recommended altering gambling law, since at the time wagers were enforceable in court. This made sense because it took strain off the courts in cases where members of clubs were unhappy with the arbitration of the club management and members. An example would be Lord Douglas and the case of the wager over the already-dead man. See chapter one for more. See also the case of Lord Henry de Ros who took a messy case of alleged cheating and slander to court. For more, see Deutch, 'Fortune and Chance', p. 217 and Strachy and Fulford (eds.), *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860,* Vol. 3 (1938), p. 312.

[273] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 76. Mr. Byng was a magistrate in the area, and admits to knowing about gaming houses only from his close proximity to them, though he had entered Crockford's once or twice.

individuals."[274] Of course this did not mean that Copper Hells did not still accompany the Golden ones. Gaming houses were built for differing types of clientele. Furthermore, clubs such as White's still physically existed, and the betting book shows wagers throughout the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, they had assumed a side-show for common gaming houses.

Gaming houses would vary in their market. Thomas Baker, superintendent in London, gave evidence suggesting a wide spectrum of different houses for different incomes, from the "lowest of the low" to "respectable" gentlemen.[275] He claimed his label of "respectable" was in reference to wealth. However, his evidence claimed that wealthy or not, the gambling houses were all considered "common."[276] As a policeman, he was making little differentiation between the two classes of "hell."[277] The potent image presented by George Smeeton in *Doings In London* depicts a man, fallen to his knees and clutching his head in despair as the croupier rakes all the money on the adjacent table away from the patrons.[278] The men's dress implies they are at least wealthy, perhaps gentlemen. The ornate decorations of the gaming house do not match its filthy state, with cards strewn all over the floor and furniture knocked over. To add insult

[274] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 76.

[275] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 33.

[276] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 37.

[277] The terms "Golden Hells" and "Copper Hells" are not colourful expression on my part. They are contemporary slang terminology for the varying wealth of gambling houses

[278] Captioned 'Doings in a Hell' in George Smeeton, *Doings In London: or, the day and night scenes of the frauds and frolics, manners and depravites of the metropolis* (London, 1828), p. 33.

to the man's financial injury, two sharpers collude to steal his pocketbook during his fits of anguish.[279] The popular impression of these establishments was as tyrannous houses of ruin, fit to bankrupt the rich and poor alike.

It is therefore evident from the report that English gambling culture had changed quite dramatically between the 1790s and 1840s. One of the catalysts, which would have promoted and popularised common gaming houses was the successful story of Crockford's. William Crockford (briefly discussed earlier in relation to Scrope Davies), was a skilful bookmaker, businessman and gambling house capitalist. Crockford was born around 1775, an apprentice to a fishmonger.[280] His successful betting began at an early age, and eventually he bought out the premises. After making a living largely from horse racing, and owning, he took the premises of Watier's over (one of Scrope Davies's favourite haunts) and opened Crockford's in partnership with a man named Taylor.[281] Crockford eventually rid himself of his colleague and opened a brand new, purpose built goliath of a gaming house in 1828.[282] Patrons ate for free, but paid

[279] Smeeton, *Doings In London,* p. 33.

[280] 'Turf Celebrities: William Crockford' in *The Sporting Times* (London, May 1885, Issue 1131, p. 2).

[281] Watier's had to close operations, according to the evidence of the Select Committee, because it had ruined all its patrons and there was simply no money left. It cannibalised itself.

[282] Anita McConnell, 'Crockford, William (*bap.* 1776, *d.* 1844)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6713, accessed 14 June 2012]

dearly for their drinking and gambling, which netted Crockford a fortune. Crockford's was far less exclusive in its membership than the elitist admission process of White's or Brooks's: the doors were open to thousands of members, such as William Philip, Earl of Sefton, who allegedly lost over £200,000 at their tables over his lifetime.[283] Unlike White's or Brooks's, Crockfords held no alternative motive for its construction. The owner had envisioned a "palace of gambling."[284] It was the first gaming house in London to resemble entirely a modern casino, unlike past clubs which had had political affiliations and public imbibing as their supposed primary motive.[285] Indeed, Mr. Byng told the Select Committee of Crockford's importance to the general increase of gambling establishments:

"I think the increase of gambling houses is entirely the offspring of Crockford's. The facility for every body to gamble at Crockfords has led to the establishment of other gambling houses, fitted up in superior style, and attractive to gentlemen, who never would have thought of going in them formally."

[283] 'Turf Celebrities: William Crockford.'

[284] Anita McConnell, 'Crockford, William'.

[285] Of course the early days of White's and Brooks's were gambling havens but the actual intention of the club was exclusivity in gatherings, born from coffeehouses of the past. According to Steinmetz (Vol. 1, Ch. V), France's gaming houses were sophisticated and efficient establishments. He details expenses of games in Paris, implying a more developed infrastructure than the British equivalents. He also argues that French immigrants of the Revolution "vastly increased" gaming in England. Steinmetz, *The Gaming Table,* Vol. 1, p. 63.

William Crockford himself gave evidence at the Select Committee about the state of public gaming houses. It is interesting, but noticeably guarded.[286] He frustratingly chose to reveal very little about the proceedings at the club, which he had retired from as proprietor four years previously. Indeed, he argued he was "not at liberty" to divulge the actions of "private gentlemen" in the club.[287] He was grilled also on the nature of games of luck, and the difference between a bet on hazard and a bet on horseracing. Crockford responded that there was a great difference, perhaps to defend the reputation of racing.[288] It is unclear why he would not want racing and gaming placed on the same intellectual level, as this would avoid further laws against gaming which would be economically harmful. However, it is worth noting that by 1844 he relinquished his control and retired an extremely wealthy man.

Crockford's remained open regardless of its illegality. This was partly due to very vague laws, which had been part of the reason for the Select Committee's conception. The law had stated since 1710 that houses could

[286] Crockford passed away just a couple of months after giving his evidence to the committee. They are in effect, his last testimony. Historiographical work on Crockford is relatively rich, although all tends to be quite dated. A. L. Humphrey's *Crockford's, Or, The Goddess Of Chance In St. James's Street, 1828-1844* (1953) and H. T. Waddy's *The Devonshire Club And 'Crockfords'* (1919) provide a decent bulk on information on the club and its history. I have failed to find any personal papers for Crockford, although this is perhaps unsurprising since he was renowned for a reliance on his fantastic memory. If any such papers did surface, they would provide a fantastic basis to further scholarship on the history of English gambling and gaming culture.

[287] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 170.

[288] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 179.

be entered if suspected of housing unlawful games.[289] However, without the intervention of Justices, a house would simply stay open. Gaming house popularity was getting out of hand as they sprang up throughout the city during the 1830s, leading to raids by the quite newly formed Metropolitan police. Between 1839 and 1844, seven gambling houses were raided, though many more were known of, with as many as five per parish.[290] The police wanted to carry out more crackdowns, but cutting the red tape in order to permit raids was difficult under active statues. This had allowed illegal gambling houses to thrive and grow in numbers during the first half of the nineteenth century.[291] This increased the accessibility and visibility of public gambling, leading it to become more of a nuisance and a social problem. Although I have found no public figures or quantitative evidence for this, perception is perhaps more important than real numbers. In his 1838 *Sketches in London*, James Grant wrote that although gambling houses had always existing in the metropolis, "the thing was managed with a lot more secrecy than it is now. Then the hells were in secluded streets and lanes: now they court distinction not only by being in the most crowded thoroughfares, but by

[289] The laws are vague, but reasonably well explained in a handy pamphlet published at the time of Anne's 1710 Gaming Act. See Sam Butler, *The Gamesters Law; Wherein Is Treated, Of Unlawful Games, And What Are Esteemed Such In Law* (London, 1710), particularly pp. 113-20. The gaming acts of 1739 and 1745 looked to suppress individual games rather than the directly suppress the establishments.

[290] Evidence of Richard Mayne, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in Select Committee 1844, part 1, pp. 6-9.

[291] Select Committee 1844, p. 8.

the blaze of light which is seen above their doors."[292] Grant also suggests his own figures for the number of common gaming houses in London. He claims there were at least 12 of the "larger class of hell" in 1818, rising to 16 in 1836, rising to at least 25 in 1838.[293] This does not include the smaller, more discreet gambling houses. Grant also writes about the increased hours of gambling (including the Sabbath), the resilient and brilliant (but detestable) minds of the proprietors of such establishments, and the cons of the croupiers.[294] His sketch, marked *Deep Play,* depicts smartly dressed men around a hazard table. One player stumbles backwards, drunk. Another appears crooked and infatuated in the dice. Another digs deep into his pockets for more money. The stick-man is grossly fat and stereotypically Jewish, and he scowls in expectation of the money.[295] This image is an example of public opinion and hysteria about the rise of gaming houses, which prompted the Select Committee of 1844 to be held at all.

The growing availability of public gambling in the Metropolis was mirrored by an increase in horse racing meetings and racetracks throughout the country. Similarly to common gaming houses, horse racing appealed to all classes who could watch and bet among each other. Indeed,

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[292] James Grant, *Sketches In London* (1838), p. 354.

[293] James Grant, *Sketches In London,* p. 354.

[294] James Grant, *Sketches In London,* pp. 355-64.

[295] *Deep Play,* picture between p. 358 and p.359 of Grant, *Sketches In London.*

the Select Committee of 1844 opted not to advise a crackdown on horse racing because the sport was a favourite of "all classes."[296] Races were free to watch in most cases, and tents were set up around the perimeter offering gambling games, places for punters to swap bets on the horses, and even food tents and other activities.[297] In that respect, the races were not all that dissimilar to their modern form. Charles Apperly, popular journalist who wrote under the pseudonym *Nimrod* remarked in the 1830s that Britain's gambling culture had become more civilised, in that there was more horse racing and less cockfighting and hunting.[298] The number of racecourses grew from 95 to 137 between 1823 and 1840, some of them offering more than the standard single meeting per year, the most exclusive of which was Newmarket, offering up to £115,000 of prize money at any one meeting.[299] This rise in horse racing is also important because it fostered an elite culture just as the clubs of London had done, by segregating the lowlier race-goers from the grandstands and exclusive tents. The passion of horseracing was helped to grow in London through the presence of Tattersall's, the main auctioneer of horse bloodstock in the country, which is arguably still as important in the modern era. Situated on Hyde Park Corner, it allowed betting rings to be established illegally away from the trackside, although it was never challenged by the authorities. This was perhaps because of Tattersall's

[296] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. viii.

[297] Wray Vamplew, *The Turf,* p. 18; pp. 22.

[298] Vamplew, *The Turf,* p. 22.

[299] Vamplew, *The Turf,* p. 23.

established name.[300] Richard Tattersall gave evidence to the Select Committee, describing the high stakes betting carried out on his premises twice a week, describing networks of bettors, agents and complicated commission set-ups.[301] In effect, it was England's first openly operating off-course betting shop. Entrance to Tattersall's required payment, but was taken up by many punters. Horse racing had become very much a part of the gambling culture in London through this institution.

The Select Committee also focused on the gambling on the peripheries of the races. The races were considered good sport, and very British. The concern was the unregulated gaming tents which offered all manner of illegal, uncontrolled gaming opportunities. Robert Baxter's testimony spoke specifically, for example, of Doncaster races in 1824 where men from over twenty different temporary gambling houses were giving out business cards advertising roulette and £1000 banks, along with countless thimble men working the race attendees.[302] Mr. Baxter also

[300] Moncrieff's Tom and Jerry remark of Tattersall that his name is "not only high, but of long standing in the sporting world; and everything connected with this splendid establishment is conducted in the most gentlemanly manner." See W. T. Moncrieff, *Tom And Jerry* (1821), p. 210. It is remarked, however, in Egan's original *Real Life In London,* that horse dealing is a species of gambling and "Even noblemen and gentlemen, who in other transactions of life are honest, will make no scruple of cheating you in horse-dealing." See Pierce Egan, *Real Life In London,* (1821), p. 161.

[301] Richard Tattersalls evidence begins in part 1, p. 122 of the Select Committee on Gaming, 1844.

[302] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 86. Thimble men were tricksters who played the Pea and Thimble game, whereby players bet on the location of the pea under three different thimbles. Unsurprisingly, the game is crooked and cannot be won. The game would be worked by a master of sleight of hand, who could move the pea around the thimbles undetected,

remarked that there had been no police effort to crackdown on these illegal gambling institutions despite their public nature. The anonymous author of *Confessions Of Gamester* experienced this glut of gambling whilst attending Newmarket, losing his money not just on the horses but at the Hazard and E&O tables which accompanied the racing.[303] Similarly, John Rushbridger, long time groundsman at Goodwood racecourse, gave similar accounts of multiple gaming booths, principally for Hazard.[304] When asked if he knew it was against the law to run such operations, Mr. Rushbridger simply remarked that it was the "done thing at races" and therefore did not realise it was illegal since all he did was let the plots of ground.[305] The evidence all suggests an increasingly popular racing culture which was not being mirrored by increasing state control or policing of any kind.

It is apparent from the evidence given to the Select Committee that a lot had changed in the gambling landscape of Britain in the past half century. There had been a move towards more mixed gambling, as opposed to elite clubs which fell back into obscurity. The availability of local races had pushed gambling more strongly out of the metropolis, and Crockford's became the ultimate example of institutionalised gambling. However, all

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or even simpler, a shill bystander would raise a potential winner's bet thereby bullying them out their winnings.

[303] Anon., *Confessions Of A Gamester.*

[304] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 100.

[305] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 100. This evidence is echoed also by William Hibbert, Race clerk at Egham, starting on page 103 of part 1.

this could not happen without having a profound effect on the perception of gambling culture and therefore the problems associated with it. It would be absurd to suggest that opponents of gaming did not already have something to complain about: the ills of gaming had been well publicised throughout the political machinations of Pitt and Fox or after the arrest of the Faro ladies at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Regardless of resistance to the popular pastime, police intervention had been extremely limited. Elite gaming went unchallenged, few gaming houses were shut down and figures such as Fox revelled publically in his orgy of gambling. The reasons for the limited crackdown have been mostly previously highlighted, such as unclear laws, problems with obtaining warrants for raids, lackadaisical police chiefs and perhaps the British notion of harmless fun. However, the Report of the Select Committee of 1844 uncovered increasing problems associated with the rise in common gaming houses and race tracks which spurred the very report itself. Crockford's indefatigable success, it might be said, represents the final straw before government decided it had got out of hand. New laws and precautions were perhaps inevitable once Crockford's opened, as its very form represented a step too far towards easily accessible, glamorised gambling.

The problem with gambling was not just social concern over the loss of money to heartless capitalist vultures. There appeared also to be an eruption of foul play at both gaming houses and the races. The Select Committee's questions to Frederick Byng about foul play imply a distrust

of any gaming house which makes money, perhaps because of the wrongful assumption that the chances are fair between customers and the house. Mr. Byng had to explain house edge:

"It is not necessary [for Crockford's croupiers to cheat]. According to fair calculation of the game, when fairly played… the man who plays every time the dice are thrown, a stake of 100l. ought, by fair pull of the table, to lose about 100l. at the end of about two hours and six minutes."[306]

In 63 throws the bank realised 100% profit, on average. It is no wonder therefore that people believed Mr. Crockford to be a dishonest man. Any of the many gamers at his club without a decent understanding of probability would no doubt he was cheating them! James Grant said Hazard was the game of choice at Crockford's: "The loss of 10000l., 15000l. or even 20000l. at this game, by one person in a night is by no means a rare occurrence. It is well known that a distinguished gambler ventured, a few years since, no less than 5000l. on a single game of French Hazard; which game only occupied a few minutes of playing."[307] With this sort of capital flowing through the hazard tables in the club, even a small house edge would realise immense profit over one evening. An image of Crockford printed after the opening of his gaming house depicts him with horns and goat legs, gorging on oysters and using their shells to construct a gaming house. A nearby patron remarks "Alas, Brother Mace, we are

[306] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 82.

[307] James Grant, *Sketches In London*, p. 378.

undone!"[308] 'Mace' was slang for a cheat or sharper, implying Crockford has taken all gambling business, crooked and lawful.

Of course, genuine incidents of crooked operations also existed. A somewhat scaremongering article by Nimrod describing gaming houses focuses on the many possible methods of the unjust proprietors.[309] He writes confidently that there is fraud at all games of chance, including confederacy between players and the false cards and shuffling exposed by *The Whole Art And Mystery Of Gaming Exposed* and other publications.[310]

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[308] William Heath, *Greedy Old Nick Eating Oysters,* no publication listed (1825-30) http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1666683&partid=1&searchText=crockford&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&orig=%2fresearch%2fsearch_the_collection_database.aspx&currentPage=1.

[309] Nimrod, 'The Anatomy Of Gaming' *Fraser's Magazine For Town And Country,* Vol. 17 (1838). Nimrod was the pen name of Charles James Apperly. His writing is very intelligent, displaying genuine understanding of gambling and institutionalised betting. He explains in depth the inbuilt edge of *Rouge Et Noir* (a somewhat dull but profitable card guessing game for the gaming houses) quoting the figure of one-and-one-third per cent, meaning any skill or luck will be neutralised in the long run. Although he somewhat sullies his apparent reputation by claiming French Hazard has a 100% edge, which is absurd as it would imply a bettor could never win. Perhaps this is a misunderstanding, perhaps simply a joke at the French's expense. Incidentally, Nimrod also briefly explains the Hazard loophole, and references Lambert's work on Hazard.

[310] *The Whole Art And Mystery Gaming Exposed* (1726) is just one of many entries into the rich and deeply worrying English cheating literature. The first gaming manual published in England at all was in fact about how to cheat at dice, *A Manifest Detection Of The Most Vyle And Detestable Use Of Diceplay* in 1555 by Gilbert Walker was followed ably by a number of knock-offs and add-ons. The catalogue includes Robert Greene, *A Notable Discouery Of Coosenage, Now Daily Practiced By Sundry Lewd Persons, Called Connie-Catchers And Crosse-Byters* In 1592, the anonymous *The Nicker Nicked: or, the cheats of gaming discovered in 1668,* S. H. Misodolus's *Do No Right, Take No Wrong* in 1711, John Badcock's *London Guide* and later John Maskelyne's *Sharps And Flats* (1894). These manuals purport to warn the reader against the ills of cheating, but then

Nimrod claims there are over 100 hells in the country, which actually seems like an underestimation, and they are all filled with sharpers.[311] To illustrate his point, Nimrod quotes a letter his unnamed friend apparently sent him, describing a situation which I will quote in full mostly because of its entertainment value but partly because of its use in picturing a contemporary gaming house:

"I was playing at Hazard the other night at the Athenæum, and have something to say about it. I lost 200l. ready money, borrowed 100l. of the house and lost it all but 10l; watched the run of the dice; and the casters all round the table threw out. I knew not what put it into my head – I suppose for once, the devil was on my side – but I squeezed out my last ten, and, just as the caster took the box and cried 'seven's the main!' I sang out to the croupier '*Ten pounds on aces!*' Up came aces the first throw, which made me a winner by the night, and after supping off a boars head stuffed with truffles, washed down with a bottle of capitally iced champagne on the spot, rolled joyfully to my bed."[312]

Hedonistic, idealistic, fanciful tales. Nimrod concluded that his friend was lucky, and that the 'crabs' (double aces) were fixed to take money off the majority of gamers. Another of Nimrod's stories purporting to prove the existence of rampant cheating is that of one unnamed Northern Baronet,

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unashamedly explain the techniques for cheating in didactic detail. Cheating techniques, incidentally, barely change or develop and are almost entirely based around collusion with minimal sleight of hand. The modern budding cheat might look to Steve Forte, *Casino Game Protection* (2004) for more complete modern history.

[311] Nimrod, 'The Anatomy of Gaming' (1838), p. 272.

[312] Quotation from Nimrod, 'The Anatomy of Gaming' (1838), p. 272.

who upon losing much of a fortune at Hazard, grabbed the dice and put his seal upon them. He told the owners to return the dice to him or his money, whereupon they sheepishly returned the money.[313] This sort of widespread cheating seemed to be accepted by most, as publications such as Smeeton's *Doings In London* claimed foul play at "that great hell in St. James street" which is surely implying Crockford's "where they used the loader, or false dice, which bring up certain numbers; they are used only at hazard, and made either low or high dice; and all those sharpers who use them always have a pair of each in their possession, which they change with great dexterity. They use also cramped boxes; and they have a means of cogging, or fastening the dice in the box."[314]

Corruption of course was not just limited to gaming houses. Shady betting at the races was the subject of close scrutiny by the 1844 Select Committee, who grilled many of the interviewees on the subject. It came to the conclusion that this corruption was unfortunately not realistically suppressible.[315] John Day, a long time horse trainer, spoke explicitly hypothetically about betting on one's own horse at long odds with several

[313] Nimrod, 'The Anatomy Of Gaming' (1838), p. 274.

[314] Smeeton, *Doings In London,* p. 35. Cogging is a slang term for the loading of dice, with *flats* (misshapen dice), *weights* (heavy metals) or *tops* (miss-spotted dice.) Fastening the dice in the box is a method with which to throw the dice without it spinning or toppling over, often called *slurring* in contemporary literature. For more on dice cheating, see *The Whole Art And Mystery Of Gaming Exposed,* or Forte, *Casino Game Protection.* Other cant gaming terms are scattered around various contemporary slang dictionaries, listed in the bibliography.

[315] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. viii.

takers (40 to 1 is suggested), and then using one's connections to convince others to back the horse into the favourite spot in order that one can hedge their bets and ensure a profit.[316] Although this was unethical, it was not illegal: the provoked hysteria of opinions in order to change the price of a given commodity are part of any trading coup. Day also spoke of secret 'inside' information on lame or injured horses, which were perfect to lay in a race, so that betting rings (basically early bookmakers) could make books which pushed all risk onto horses with almost no chance of winning. When asked by the Select Committee if Mr. Day ever partook in these sorts of practices, he cagily responded "I don't know," "ask a bettor."[317] These are just a few examples of possible corruption within the world of horse racing, and evidence given by other horse owners and trainers or racecourse staff in the Report of the Select Committee attest to a widespread problem of unfair betting coups.

This evidence lead to a further report by the Select Committee of 1844 in response to the "extensive frauds which have of late been perpetrated on the turf."[318] It is perhaps naïve to assume this was a recent contemporary phenomenon, and the Committee did not recommend any court action to stop it beyond a relatively weak statement urging "all persons who wager [on horses] with honest intentions should be compelled by motives of self-protection to use greater vigilance… they should refuse to lay wagers with men whose honour and solvency they have not sufficient

[316] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 110.

[317] Select Committee 1844, part 1, p. 112.

[318] Select Committee 1844, part 2, p. v.

knowledge."[319] This was different from the freely wagering culture of the previous century. However, in reality the problems were not just with betting on the horses themselves, but also with the unregulated gambling which come alongside the races. Once again Nimrod has his wild stories of crooked gambling at the races, with fixed E&O tables rigged with pins to reflect the ball away from certain quadrants.[320] Regulation of gambling at the races was as poor as it was at London gaming houses.

The implication of the evidence from the 1844 Select Committee is of a gambling culture without realistic regulation, and without a care for the existing laws. Its recommendations were to spur the government into passing the 1845 Gaming Act, which illegalised cheating and unlawful play at games of cards, dice, tables or wagering on sports or other games.[321] It also enabled easier prosecutions of illegal gambling houses, removing the need to prove there was an exchange of money if proof of games of chance had been established. Furthermore, it made gambling wagers undisputable in court. Some of these statutes were long overdue, but mostly it was a reaction to the rapidly changing nature of British gambling in the first half of the nineteenth century. Whilst 'Hells' had always existed, their scale and number had expanded rapidly and caught

[319] Select Committee 1844, part 2, p. v.

[320] Nimrod, 'The Anatomy Of Gaming' (1838), p. 274.

[321] *An Act To The Law Concerning Games And Wagers,* 8 & 9 Vict., c. 109. Full details of the Act can be accessed at *The Gaming Act 1845*, [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/8-9/109/enacted, accessed 14th June 2012].

the attention of authorities and critics. Gambling and wagering no longer had to take place next to the consumption of coffee, alcohol or other suppers: gambling houses were the ultimate incarnation of institutionalised gambling for gambling's sake. The lack of regulation meant these economically successful institutions were multiplying and becoming more public and infamous.

Nimrod highlights another problem with gaming in an earlier article of his: "One of the greatest evils of gambling – and the notice of the last named public conviction brings it to mind – is the introduction, through its means, of improper persons into society, from which they otherwise would, and ought to be, excluded."[322] The man Nimrod uses as an example is an Irish adventurer, Matthias O'Byrne, of whom Nimrod complains about his spelling and incorrect use of the past tense.[323] This creation of wealth did not suit the capitalist and industrial values of working for one's earnings.

Elite gaming was almost unrecognisable compared with what it had been. The wagers at White's were for pitiful stakes compared to its early days. The real gamblers attended Crockford's thus relinquishing the elitism of gaming. Gilliam Russell has entertained the idea that the French Revolution increased the scrutiny of elite behaviour, which could of course lead to less gambling and the frittering away of money, as has

[322] Nimrod, 'The Anatomy Of Gaming', *Fraser's Magazine For Town And Country,* Vol. 16 (1837), p. 15.

[323] Nimrod, 'The Anatomy Of Gaming' (1837), p. 15, see the footnote.

previously been discussed.[324] Furthermore, Phyllis Deutsch has argued that the eighteenth century had seen the aristocracy exploring the universal design of randomness and chance, which was replaced with "the flattened mechanistic connections of the modern world."[325] It is a fanciful, but undoubtedly interesting theory. Perhaps it is too metaphysical to be realistically applied to the gambling habits of real human beings.

I propose a slightly more practical theory as to the changing popularity of gaming amongst the elites and a move of central attention to the more maligned common gambling house. This theory works off the first principle that the drop in wagering observed in the betting books of White's is indicative of a contemporary avoidance of frittering and fluttering excess, prompted perhaps by the events in France and fear of revolutionary values as discussed in chapter one. This crash in the gambling and wagering economy pushed fringe bettors with large bankrolls into other institutions in an attempt to satisfy their gambling satiety. These gamblers, wholly addicted to the thrill of risk, found their fix at common gaming houses and through the doors of establishments personified by Crockford's – institutions built for the express purpose of gross gambling. Once this change had occurred, the reputation of the respective establishments prevented a switch back: any would be gambler attended a house like Crockford's, regardless of their social status. A club such as Brooks's or White's might have been more fitting for

[324] Gillian Russell, 'Faro's Daughters', p. 481.

[325] Deutsch, 'Fortune and Chance', p. 18.

their stock, but not their wallet. This was coupled with the lack of proper police control and growing opportunities for gambling on the turf. A culture of bombastic gambling and ruin was inevitable. The elite behind closed doors still bet amongst each other, and probably still lost great amounts, but their experience paled in comparison to popular perceptions of common gaming houses where fortunes were turned over nightly (and daily).[326] Contemporary anecdotes are more likely to report on the most egregious betting, and this no longer meant the aristocracy. A state response became increasingly inevitable as gaming houses because more visible in London, and the pleasure of losing a fortune at the gaming table was no longer confined to the experience of the aristocracy. Alongside this change in the gambling world, it is worth remembering that the establishment of the Metropolitan police in 1829 illustrates a greater state emphasis on the institutionalised suppression of crime.

As an interesting note to end this chapter, the evidence of Frederick Byng provides an amusing, and perhaps more flippant, interpretation of the move from elite gaming clubs. He was asked if the decreasing gambling at membership clubs was because most people who played for high stakes "are pretty well cleaned out?" He responded "entirely."

[326] The image of Crockford eating oysters and the ruin of his patrons is an apt example of this sort of perception. See note 41.

Conclusion

Gaming culture had changed drastically in just several short decades. Gone were the days of orgiastic elite gambling within politically aligned clubs. Gone also, were any pretences of an alternative purpose of the existing gambling houses. The Industrial Revolution would see British industry heave into an efficient, mechanical behemoth, reflected in the clockwork cacophony of Crockford's gambling accounts sloughing yet more money away from hapless gamers.

Overall, the change was first ignited by a shift of attitude towards the excess of deep gaming. The public ruin of Charles James Fox and the fear of anti-aristocratic values emanating from either side of England's shores was perhaps fresh in the mind of potential club gamblers in the years that began the nineteenth century. A dip in activity in the betting books at White's is indicative of a deceleration of prime risk taking in elite clubs. Perhaps wild wagering simply fell out of fashion. We might speculate that the experiences of one generation resulted in a more reserved conservative bettor of the next generation.

A dip in gambling action would not necessarily mean an equal dip in the urge to gamble. Betting is an addictive pastime, and potential problem gamblers will always be in supply, regardless of the threat of revolutionary values or public shame. This supply was then diluted with the emerging middle class gambler at the multiplying gambling houses throughout London and, as suggested by the evidence of the Select Committee of 1844, other parts of the country. Inspired by Crockford's,

these establishments could cater to the elite who did not have to attempt to satisfy their gambling urges at expensive aristocratic clubs. The propensity of the English to gamble was also developed at the racetrack, particularly during the early part of the nineteenth century, and would go on to thrive alongside gambling houses thanks to a laissez faire attitude directed at horse racing because of the 1844 Select Committee's recommendations. The racing industry would grow, along side a burgeoning British bookmaking tradition which would maintain a uncertain relationship with government through to the modern era.

As far as this research has found, and existing historiography suggests, the only winners in the early nineteenth century were the men who made books and ran tables – the bookmakers and proprietors were the factory industrialists of the gambling world. Even if a gambler mastered the odds of Hazard, he would find only ruin within the walls of gambling houses. Even if a bettor mastered an understanding of horse racing, his true challenge would be finding punters willing to lay his bets for in order to be profitable.

It might be argued that by 1850 the state of gambling in Britain was not unlike its modern state, save for a less mature bookmaking industry. Gambling houses could exist in a legal form, much like modern casinos. Horseracing had become a popular betting pastime, for all walks of society, much like modern racing. Expensive membership clubs existed but were fenced off to the elite who could afford, and were willing to pay, for an environment where gaming and gossip met, much like the modern form of White's and Crockford's. The games in vogue have changed too,

but not drastically. Faro, a card banking game based on betting on the turn of the next card, has been replaced with blackjack and baccarat. Whist, a skill based card game with inbuilt wagering, has been replaced by Bridge and arguably modern Poker. E&O and Roulet was replaced with modern Roulette and Hazard, of course, became Craps. The games are inherently similar, and illustrate the way in which gambling culture changes whilst the games can remain quite static. Wagering of course, is still a common part of modern life. Whilst the stakes may indeed not indicate any monetary value, the phrase 'I bet' can merely mean 'I am certain.'[327]

My research has left further questions unfortunately unanswered, or at least unanswerable from the evidence I have been able to acquire. A richer biography of William Crockford's early life might shed intriguing light upon the upstart bookmaking industry, as would a study of one Crutch Robinson, apparently widely considered to be one of the first masters of the turf.[328] Much of the evidence of this duo's early life is based on anecdotal evidence, or other hearsay which does not currently provide any sort of foundation for historical research. A greater search for existing

[327] bet, v., Second edition, 1989; online version June 2012. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/18255>; accessed 20 June 2012. Earlier version first published in *New English Dictionary*, 1887.

[328] Carl Chinn, 'Robinson, Crutch (*fl.* 1804–1830)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56622, accessed 20 June 2012]

personal papers, or the records of close compatriots might contribute towards such a study.

Another life undocumented by historians is Edmond Hoyle's. His writing reveals perhaps an arrogant man, but undoubtedly a brilliantly clever mind. His memory system, interest in odds and publishing debacles would all allow for an interesting study, if a decent body of personal papers could be sourced with which to work from. Unfortunately, my search here ended unsuccessfully. I have also been unable to acquire much information concerning illegal gambling houses in the late eighteenth century. They are sure to have existed, just as any ale house with a pair of dice might be easily classed as one. Unfortunately, evidence is sparse and would require far greater time allowances than my year has allowed me. The problem of defining a gaming house is also prevalent here: at what point does a meeting place become a gambling house, and when is the gambling considered a main event as opposed to a side show?

Finally, I would consider it a great challenge, but incredibly interesting and fulfilling to do a full history of gambling cheats in England, and their techniques, successes and failures. Cheating at games of chance can be both a ham-fisted bludgeoning, or a technical marvel, and occasionally a devilish mix of the two. However, without a great deal of time to collate evidence over several hundred years of history in England and its fringes, a paper of rich content would be unlikely.[329] Perhaps this is more likely to be the work of an eager hobbyist.

[329] The only properly scholarly work dealing exclusively with the heritage of cheating is M. M. McDowell, 'A Cursory View Of Cheating At Whist In

I would hope that further historiography on the history of gaming can add to the history of institutionalised gambling, casinos and bookmakers. A history is waiting to be written on horse racing too, to update the undeniably sparse library on the subject.[330] There are already works on gambling in England between 1844 and the present day, such as Roger Munting's *Economic And Social History Of Gambling* or Carl Chinn's *Better Betting With A Decent Feller.* Therefore, perhaps it is not yet time to renew or expand on that period and to look backwards instead, to the medieval period to ascertain where our gambling culture began to develop. Until such a work is undertaken, it's back to the bookies.

The Eighteenth Century' *Harvard Library Bulletin,* No. 2 (1974). Unfortunately the work is short and merely recycles a few chance anecdotes and passages from the pages of well-trodden sources. Nick Tosney provides a better chapter on cheating in his York thesis. However, Tosney's approach is largely a narrative constructed by consulting contemporary literature and a few court cases, rather than attempt a deeper investigation. An extremely rich bibliography can be constructed of sources on cheating in the United State of America, starting perhaps with: A Retired Professional, *How Gamblers Win, Or The Secrets Of Advantage Playing* (1865) and the magician's classic S. W. Erdnase, *The Expert At The Card Table: The classic treatise on card manipulation* (1901). I have not considered a study of this area myself, due mostly to geographical (and of course financial) constraints.

[330] Aside from Wray Vamplew's *The Turf* which has been mentioned before, see Christopher Hill, *Horse Power: The politics of the turf* (1988); Mike Huggins, *Horseracing And The British, 1919-1939* (2003).

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