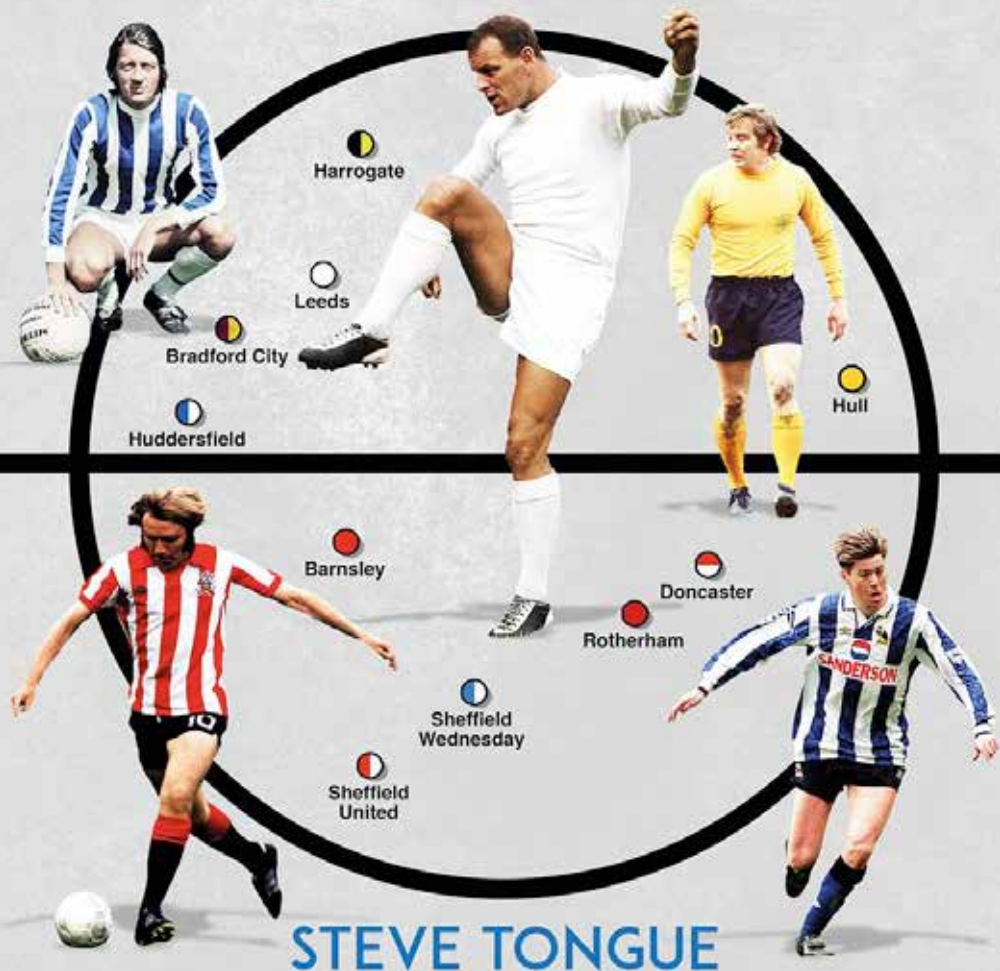


"A Reference Work for Years."

*Programme Monthly*

# YORKSHIRE TURF WARS

A FOOTBALL HISTORY



YORKSHIRE  
**TURF  
WARS**  
A FOOTBALL HISTORY

STEVE TONGUE



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Chapter 1

‘Young Sheffield’  
(1857–1887)

*‘I have established a football club to which most of young  
Sheffield can come and kick.’*

**Nathaniel Creswick, 31 December 1857**

*‘Two teams, selected from the clubs forming the New  
Association, played a match at Holbeck Recreation Ground,  
Leeds, on Wednesday, in order to introduce the Association  
game to the football players of Leeds.’*

**Sheffield Independent, 29 December 1877**

*‘The contest, which took place at the Bramall Lane Ground...  
was the first ever played in this country – or anywhere else,  
we believe – with the aid of artificial illumination.’*

**Sheffield Independent, 19 October 1878**

*‘Rotherham had a sad time against Notts County, for a very  
weak team was sent on a hopeless errand to Trent Bridge...  
they sustained a crushing defeat by 15 goals to nil.’*

**Illustrated Sporting News, 31 October 1885**

YORKSHIRE HAS always loved its sport and it seems appropriate that the county's first football teams from the mid-19th century should have grown out of even older cricket clubs. In much of the county, as well as sporting strongholds like Manchester and Merseyside, desire to fill the winter months with some meaningful activity led to a growing interest in rugby, but in Sheffield two local cricketers took the momentous decision in the summer of 1857 to upgrade the informal kick-about with a rounder ball that clearly existed long before that.

Nathaniel Creswick was a 26-year-old solicitor from a venerable Sheffield family and would end up as an army colonel. His friend William Prest, 25, a wine merchant originally from York, captained Sheffield Cricket Club, a team founded only three years earlier. The rival Hallam and Wednesday cricket clubs, which would both also spawn influential football sections, had been turning over their arm since 1804 and 1820 respectively; indeed, Wednesday were one of half a dozen sides who did so at the Bramall Lane cricket ground, opened in 1855. Prest, who represented the Yorkshire Gentlemen before they became a fully fledged county team in 1863, may have been inspired in his football ambitions by a brother at Eton and then Cambridge University, two educational institutions where the game was already played.

The inaugural meeting of **Sheffield FC** took place in October 1857 at the house of Harry Chambers, a teenager who would go on to become the first president of the Sheffield FA. And by the end of the year Creswick was able to write in his diary, 'I have established a football club to which most of young Sheffield can come and kick.'

The club was not quite as all-encompassing as that understandably proud boast would suggest. Football at the time was very much a middle-class affair, many original club members being drawn from the prestigious Sheffield Collegiate school. Private schools and universities dominated, mostly with their own particular rules, the unification of which was a major issue for the next dozen years. Here Sheffield would have a huge role to play.

In an era when so-called ‘muscular Christianity’ was taking hold in education and beyond, sporting activity of most kinds was being encouraged, with the occasional exception; earlier in 1857 the *Leeds Intelligencer* reported that at a new ‘People’s Park’ in Halifax costing £30,000 ‘dancing, football and other such amusements will be prohibited’. After Sheffield FC concluded their first season the following April, however, with a well-attended sports day that included ‘longest kick of a football’ (won with a punt of 53 yards), a letter to the same newspaper suggested that gentlemen of Leeds should consider following their neighbours’ example, instead of merely concentrating on cricket, which although ‘a fine manly sport ... does not allow so much scope for the development of physical strength’.

Sheffield’s footballers had found a field on East Bank Road, barely half a mile from Bramall Lane. But who would they play? For most of that first year Creswick and co. were content to kick around among themselves in games like Married v Singles or surnames A-L against M-Z. One member, John Shaw, who as we shall see would soon form his own club, recorded later fixtures against soldiers from Rutland of the 58th Regiment, who were garrisoned nearby. ‘And rough games they were,’ Shaw noted.

At the club’s first AGM, in October 1858, Creswick and Prest drew up what became known as the sport’s Sheffield Rules. As a basis for discussion, they had the framework provided by Cambridge University, where ten years earlier former pupils of some of the main public schools came together to try and find some common ground for their different forms of football. The main aim was always to differentiate ‘foot’ ball from the handling version that had grown up at Rugby school in the 1820s, when William Webb Ellis allegedly picked up the ball and ran with it. Handling by outfield players was still, however, allowed for some years to come, a ‘fair catch’, rewarded with a free kick, being made if the ball was caught on the volley.

Only after the formation in London of the Football Association in the autumn of 1863 would that move and ‘hacking’ – basically kicking an opponent’s shins – be made illegal, and even that change required an important intervention by Sheffield’s secretary William Chesterman

after his club joined the FA. On 1 December, the FA's fifth meeting discussed a letter from him, saying that handling and hacking were 'directly opposed to football and more suggestive of wrestling'. His arguments carried the day and at the next meeting a week later the rugby men walked out in disgust, eventually forming their own Rugby Football Union.

Before that, small amendments would be made each year at the Sheffield FC AGM. After the second one in 1859, for instance, the local *Daily Telegraph* reported, 'A committee [including Prest and Creswick] was appointed to revise the rules and laws, and to have them ... printed for circulation amongst the members.' The same report said that 'the number of members had been nearly doubled during the past season, and that the affairs of the club were altogether in a most satisfactory state.'

The rulebook noted among other points, 'That the season commence on the first Saturday in November and last until Easter Eve,' and added, 'That the Play Day of the Club be Saturday, from Two o'Clock until dark.'

December 1860 brought the first published match report and then the arrival of a proper new club in the city, followed by the first derby between them. First came a game against the soldiers of the 58th at the Hillsborough barracks ground; this one, unlike Shaw's memories, was 'conducted in a thoroughly good tempered and friendly manner'. Each team scored once but Sheffield were declared winners by ten 'rouges' to five; rouges were used to decide drawn games, being scored by getting the ball within 12 feet either side of the narrow goal but not between the posts.

Shaw, meanwhile, became involved in forming a second club, **Hallam**, drawn largely from members of the Hallam and Stumperlow Cricket Club (founded as long ago as 1804) at Sandygate, the oldest ground in the world still in use. He was something of a one-man club himself, as captain, secretary and treasurer, who continued playing until well into his 50s. But on a snowy Boxing Day in 1860 he was on the losing side in the first derby, Sheffield winning 2-0 at Sandygate. 'The Sheffielders turned out in their usual scarlet and white, whilst most of the country players wore the blue garment of

the Stumperlow club,' said the *Telegraph*. 'It would be invidious to single out the play of any particular gentleman when all did well, but we must give the palm to the Sheffield players as being the most scientific and also more alive to the advantage of upsetting their opponents.'

Hallam, still described as 'the countrymen' though hardly very far to the west of town, had their revenge in March by 3-0 at Sheffield's East Bank ground, in a contest lasting more than three hours until 'night at last put a stop to the game'. Having 18 players to Sheffield's 15 must have helped. The Christmas game in 1861 was a charity match played at Hyde Park, £15 being raised for the local hospital, where injured footballers were not unknown visitors. Hallam won 2-1, but only after 'many casualties occurred ... [because of] tripping, hacking, pushing, wild kicking'.

Relations were not improved either by the following year's meeting on 29 December, which should have been remembered for being the first football match played at Bramall Lane as well as a generous cross-Pennine gesture in raising money for unemployed Lancashire mill workers who were suffering from a cotton famine caused by the American Civil War. The stadium, and road it lay on, were named after a local manufacturing family. In 1854 Sheffield CC obtained a 99-year lease there on land belonging to the Duke of Norfolk, who insisted on no pigeon shooting, rabbit coursing, or 'race-running for money', but he was happy with cricket. The company owning it shrewdly took a quarter of match receipts, which would deter football clubs for a while later on.

In the far-from-festive 1862 encounter a fight broke out between Creswick and Shaw, the latter assisted by his Hallam team-mate and uncle, William Waterfall. Waistcoats came off, fists were raised and punches exchanged. 'At one time it appeared likely that the match would be turned into a general fight,' reported the *Sheffield Independent*, while insisting, 'Major Creswick, who preserved his temper admirably, did not return a single blow. They were surrounded by partisans and for a few minutes there was every appearance of a general fight amongst players and spectators.' Three days later Hallam demanded a



right of reply, claiming, 'The Major deliberately struck Waterfall on the face, which Waterfall immediately returned.'

William Chesterman, club secretary from 1862, many years later described memories of 'seeing in these matches the ball lying quietly, and groups of half a dozen butting each other like rams yards away'.

It was perhaps as well that the clubs tended to meet only once or twice a year. Fortunately other opponents were now available. In November 1861 another cricket club, **Pitsmoor**, based north of the town centre, became the latest new football disciples, playing both Sheffield and Hallam the following month, and within three years they were regarded as the strongest of them all. **Norfolk** and **Norton**, both to the south, soon followed and by the end of 1862 there were reckoned to be 15 Sheffield clubs. The city was the leading provincial centre of the game, way ahead of places like Manchester, Merseyside and Birmingham, and rivalled only by Nottingham, where the present County and Forest clubs had their origins in 1862 and 1865 respectively.

By the mid-1860s Sheffield FC, bored with playing against the same local teams, were looking further afield, first to Nottingham and then as far south as London for a historic fixture. On 2 January 1865 they played away to Notts County, winning a three-hour 18-a-side match 1-0, despite playing to Nottingham rules 'which differ considerably from their own'. Sheffield clubs were still insisting at that time on their own variation of the FA's laws, which differed in aspects like interpretation of offside. In inter-county matches the convention was that the home side's rules would be applied. Thus for their visit to the capital in March 1866, taking part in the FA's first representative match, Sheffield played under London rules, which they practised as a group the previous week; that could not prevent a 2-0 defeat in Battersea Park, although they amused the southerners by their habit of occasionally heading the ball.

There were familiar names in what was theoretically a county side, although Sheffield FC provided most of the players. Chesterman, who had proposed the match in the first place, was the captain, with Harry Chambers and John Shaw in front

of him. Notable figures among the London XI were one of the most important of all football administrators, Charles Alcock, later to become an England international, FA secretary, father of the FA Cup and a referee of its final, and Lord Alfred Kinnaird, who would play in a record nine finals.

*Sporting Life* felt that 'the game was played together in the most gentlemanly spirit' but according to *Bell's Life*, 'Some of the London team got rather severely kicked and knocked about.' Such incidents led the following year to the introduction of a Football Players Accident Society, used to compensate badly injured players, that lasted for three decades.

It was one of several important landmarks in 1867, including the world's first organised knockout cup competition. In January, 14 clubs became founder members of the Sheffield Football Association, with Harry Chambers as president; so far ahead of the rest of England that it would be fully eight years before a similar organisation was formed in Birmingham, followed by Staffordshire in 1877, Lancashire (1878), London and Nottingham (1882), Manchester (1884) and Liverpool (1892). Now it was time for competitive football and the Youdan Cup.

Thomas Youdan, popular proprietor of the Alexandra Music Hall in Sheffield, offered a silver cup (never actually finished, so the winners received a claret jug) for a knockout competition among local clubs. Sheffield FC, as noted above, were by this time more interested in playing further afield, so they remained aloof as 12 teams took part on Saturday, 16 February 1867 in the first competitive football matches anywhere. The draw had been made as: Broomhall v Pitsmoor; Hallam v Heeley; Mackenzie v Garrick; Norfolk v Fir Vale; Norton v United Mechanics; Wellington v Milton. The 12-a-side games were 'to commence punctually at three o'clock', with the possibility of extra time, which even with 'no waiting for players allowed' meant they must have finished in near-darkness.

As it turned out, a mere 90 minutes sufficed in each case, as the one drawn game was considered to be won by Broomhall having managed two rouges. From then on, however, goals were exceptionally hard to come by. In the three second-round matches, there was only one scored anywhere, rouges

determining that Hallam (after a goalless replay), Mackenzie and Norfolk should go through. The latter were given a bye to the final at Bramall Lane, another goalless game, after which Hallam, captained by John Shaw, became the first cup winners by two rouges to nil. Norfolk then played Mackenzie to determine second place, and won by one rouge after the inevitable 0-0.

Goal drought or not, the competition was regarded as a success, a crowd estimated at 3,000 having attended the final on Shrove Tuesday. But Mr Youdan's pleasure must have been diminished by news that £70 had been stolen from his room at the Alexandra that weekend, the thief being in such a hurry to leave that 'he left untouched £5 in gold which was on a table'. The Youdan Cup was never played again. In financial trouble a decade later, Hallam sold the trophy, but bought it back in 1997 and had it valued on the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* at £100,000 as the world's oldest football prize – a blow to the Scottish dealer who had sold it to them for less than one-50th of that.

Down in London the FA's membership of 30 by the end of 1867 was barely twice that of the infant Sheffield FA, almost all of the supposedly national association's clubs being based in the south of England apart from Donington (Lincolnshire), Sheffield FC themselves and a Wetherby public school team, Bramham College, a rare West Yorkshire outpost. The FA Cup was nearly five years away, no more than a gleam in Charles Alcock's eye – if that – and Sheffield continued to lead the way with competitive football. The Cromwell Cup, restricted to clubs less than two years old, was introduced in 1868 under the patronage of Oliver Cromwell, another local arts impresario. And an unusual name forever more associated with Sheffield football would be inscribed on it as the first winning team.

\* \* \*

On 6 September 1867 the following report appeared in both Sheffield daily newspapers, '**Sheffield Wednesday** Cricket Club and Football Club. At a general meeting held on Wednesday last, at the Adelphi Hotel, it was decided to form a football club in connection with the above influential cricket club, with

the object of keeping together during the winter season the members of this cricket club. From the great unanimity which prevailed as to the desirability of forming the club, there is every reason to expect that it will take first rank.'

Officers elected included Ben Chatterton as president and John Marsh as secretary. The item concluded, 'Sixty good men were enrolled as members, and this without any canvass, amongst whom are many of the best players in the town.' Indeed, by mid-February, Wednesday (as they were generally known until 1929, without the name of the city attached) had won their first trophy.

On Saturday, 12 October, secretary Marsh inserted a notice in the local press announcing, 'WEDNESDAY FOOTBALL CLUB— The First PRACTICE MATCH will be played This Day, on the Ground, top of Brammall-Lane [sic] near Highfield. Kick off at 2.30'. This Highfield pitch would be the club's base for two years, but it was at Norfolk Park on 19 October that they are believed to have played a first game, beating the established United Mechanics team 3-0 in what might have been regarded as a positive goal-fest. Later pickings were more meagre: Wellington were defeated by a rouge to nil in November, before a 1-0 defeat by Heeley. In December Dronfield were beaten, again by the only goal. A reserve team also played regularly, but despite the earlier boasts about the best players in town proved less strong, losing heavily in terms of rouges, if not goals, to teams like Milton and Garrick.

In the new year, however, came the chance to play competitively, as one of four teams in the Cromwell Cup. On 1 February Wednesday played Exchange, also in their first season, at the Mackenzie ground and ran out easy 4-0 winners in the 14-a-side game, qualifying them for a place in the final against Garrick, who had beaten Wellington. A fortnight later at Bramall Lane some 600 spectators saw a goalless but exciting game go to extra time. Wednesday's secretary-goalkeeper, 'gallant little Marsh', was 'always at his post when required, and showed some good play in driving the enemy back'. With darkness closing in, it was just as well that a 'golden goal' then arrived within three minutes of the added period, giving Marsh's club the

prize, which he collected from the stage of the Theatre Royal the following month along with most of his team-mates.

While Wednesdayites bask in the glory of that first success, it is a good moment to introduce two of the most important figures in the history of Sheffield football, Charles and William Clegg, both of whom began as players for Sheffield FC and later Wednesday. Charles, the older by two years, fuller of face and of hair, would go on to become chairman and then president of the national FA for almost half a century from 1890 to 1937. Like his southern counterpart, Charles Alcock, he matured from international footballer to leading referee and then administrator, surpassing Alcock and everyone else in high office. (The West Bromwich Albion chairman Bert Millichip's 15-year reign from 1981 to 1996 was the second-longest at the FA, a mere blink of the eye in comparison).

The Clegg brothers, both solicitors, were mere part-time footballers in the heady days when Alcock's foresight brought about the birth of the FA Cup in November 1871, and then international football a year later. Sheffield's influence remained strong in that crucial period of the sport's development; Sheffield FC's William Chesterman joined the FA committee early in 1869 as a first significant step away from London domination of the ruling body, and the Sheffield FA signed up a year later to pave the way at last for a nationally accepted set of laws.

On 30 November 1872, aged 22, Charles Clegg played in the world's first international match, when England shared a goalless draw with Scotland in Glasgow. He was the one representative of a northern club. 'Snobs from the south who had no use for a lawyer from Sheffield' was how Clegg described his team-mates, so he was presumably not too upset never to be capped again; he was delighted four months later when younger brother William won the first of his two caps in England's first win, 4-2 against the Scots at Kennington Oval. William also played as a forward, as once again Wednesday supplied the only northerner.

A decade on and Charles was refereeing the England-Scotland game and the first of his two FA Cup Finals (1882

and 1892). Appointed to the FA committee in 1886 in spite of – or perhaps because of – his opposition to professionalism introduced a year earlier, he was chairman within four years and still president on his death just before the Second World War, by which time he had also become the first man knighted for his services to football. ‘Grave of manner, though not without sense of humour in its proper place, he was a man of few but well chosen words; as he sat in the armchair at the centre of the Council table, he seemed as solid as the oak furniture itself,’ wrote Geoffrey Green in his *History of the Football Association*.

The combination of inter-county football, a national cup competition (although geographically limited early on) and annual England-Scotland internationals greatly increased interest in the game during the 1870s, helped by the prevailing social and economic conditions. As early as mid-century, the Factory Act allowed for a half-day on Saturdays, followed by the Bank Holidays Act of 1871; the provincial press was flourishing; and Sheffield was growing in population, a town (not officially a city until 1893) already famous for cutlery now turning to steel production. Football grew with it and in December 1871 the *Sheffield Independent* commented, ‘This healthy and exhilarating game has gradually advanced in public favour since the introduction of it into this neighbourhood by the Sheffield Club some years ago. Until at the present time it is quite as popular in the winter as cricket is in the summer with the sport-loving population of Sheffield.’

Matches between Sheffield and London were now an annual fixture, and in 1874 there began a long rivalry and friendship with Glasgow in a series of matches that ran with occasional breaks for almost 100 years; the last one being at Parkhead in November 1960 when players from Celtic, Clyde, Partick Thistle and Third Lanark took on representatives of the two Sheffield clubs plus Rotherham and Barnsley, including United’s England goalkeeper Alan Hodgkinson and Wednesday favourite Don Megson. The programme for the last such game in Sheffield, played at Hillsborough a year earlier, said, ‘The fixture is, apart from the England-Scotland match, the oldest

in football, and forms a valuable and historic link between two of the most famous of soccer centres.'

For the initial 2-2 draw at Bramall Lane in March 1874, goalkeeper Marsh captained the home side with Charles Clegg one of six other Wednesday players in a team described in the *Glasgow Herald* as 'with one exception (Royal Engineers) the finest football players in England'. The paper was therefore impressed with the Scots coming back from a 2-1 deficit at half-time to equalise just before the end. The Glasgow team were mainly internationals from Queen's Park, the oldest Scottish club, who entered the FA Cup in most of its first 15 seasons; not surprisingly Sheffield lost more of the fixtures than they won.

In the meantime 'snobs from the south' in the England team were slowly being helped out by more northern folk, including Sheffield FC's John Owen, who played against Scotland in 1874, and William Carr of Owlerton, who kept goal in the following year's international. They were not harmed by having Chesterman joined on the FA committee by a second Sheffield representative in 1872, and by local representation in the FA Cup from the 1873/74 season onwards.

That was when Sheffield FC first entered – becoming the first north-of-England side to do so and immediately making a piece of history in the only FA Cup tie that has ever been decided by tossing a coin. Drawn at home to the Shrewsbury side Shropshire Wanderers, they drew 0-0, then drew the replay by the same score and rather than face a third game they agreed to take a 50-50 chance with the coin toss. It fell their way and they next beat Pilgrims 1-0 with a goal by another future international, Thomas Sorby, before losing 2-1 to Clapham Rovers in the quarter-final. The match was played on neutral ground at Peterborough, 'the only drawback being that a cart road runs across it to a neighbouring farm'. The London team were prepared to give up ground advantage but not to travel as far as Yorkshire. 'Provincial clubs like Sheffield, situated so far from London, should not enter in the competition for the cup unless prepared to make long journeys,' was their argument – an example of how London-centric the competition was in those days.

For the next two seasons, Sheffield and Shropshire were drawn together again, each of them scratching rather than face heavy losses with an away trip. From then on, however, the Yorkshiremen proved ready to venture wherever the draw took them, facing three successive trips to the capital. They visited the mighty Wanderers, already twice FA Cup winners, for a 2-0 defeat in the third round in 1875/76, then next season beat South Norwood 7-0 with five goals by Owen before narrowly losing to the Royal Engineers. In 1878 they reached the quarter-final again before losing to Wanderers, 3-0 this time. In 1880 they again progressed to the fourth round before stubbornly refusing to play extra time against Nottingham Forest, who were able to claim the tie.

Those results show how well Sheffield measured up against the best teams in the country. During the 1880s, however, as professionalism crept in, first illegally and then officially, their success in the competition and the club's standing slowly subsided. Heavy cup defeats three times in five years by Notts County (6-1, 5-0, 8-0) showed the way the wind was blowing and a 3-1 home loss to fellow Sheffield club Lockwood Brothers in October 1887 was their last match in the competition proper.

Slowly, the FA Cup became a more genuinely national competition and the governing body a more democratic institution. In 1886 a membership of 152 clubs was divided for the first time into ten geographical divisions, each of them entitled to nominate one representative for the new FA Council. Division Four covered Yorkshire and Derbyshire, the former's clubs being Attercliffe, Ecclesfield, Lockwood Brothers, Owlerton, Park Grange, Rotherham, Sheffield, Sheffield Heeley and Wednesday.

**Park Grange** were founded in 1871 as **Sheffield Providence**, playing in Hyde Park, and entering the FA Cup eight years later. They held Sheffield 3-3 before losing a replay, losing in subsequent seasons to Blackburn Rovers and then Wednesday. **Sheffield Heeley** competed for eight consecutive seasons from 1881, always with Sheffield or Nottingham opposition in the early days, and later against Walsall Town Swifts. Their biggest win, 9-0 in 1887, was against **Attercliffe**,



who found the going hard, losing their only previous tie 7-0 to Derbyshire's Staveley. The same season **Ecclesfield** knocked out Derby Midland but unsurprisingly found Derby County more of a handful in the next round, losing 6-0.

In the third round the Rams administered a similar drubbing, 6-2, to **Owlerton**, a name that was more famous for its stadium – later christened Hillsborough – and for giving Wednesday their nickname than its team, formed in 1869 but qualifying for the FA Cup proper only in that 1887/88 season.

We will come to the confusing history of football in Rotherham in the next section. The remaining FA members from Sheffield were **Lockwood Brothers**, who would inadvertently play an important role in Wednesday's history. Lockwoods were a cutlery works team, who had a very local derby with Heeley from their own neighbourhood in their first FA Cup tie, which took place in 1881, lost 5-1. The following season they went out 6-0 to Wednesday, but in 1884 and 1885 won the county cup and in 1886/87 went all the way to the last 16 of the FA Cup. Having beaten Nottingham Forest, they lost by a single goal to West Bromwich Albion, one of the leading three or four clubs in the country, who went on to lose a second successive final.

Lockwoods benefited from the presence of five **Wednesday** players, whose team had failed to register in time to enter that season's competition. For a club who had reached the semi-final five years earlier, this was seen as an amateurish failure on the part of officials who, like most of the Sheffield football community, led by Charles Clegg, were stubbornly holding out against professionalism, which the FA had legalised two years earlier.

The irony was that the town was host almost a decade before that to one of the first players to be imported from Scotland and given a job locally that required little of him except to keep fit for football. Jimmy 'JJ' Lang impressed when playing for Glasgow against Sheffield at Bramall Lane early in 1886; blind in one eye after a shipyard accident on Clydeside, he was given employment in a cutlery firm owned by one of the Wednesday committee. In his first season, 1876/77, he helped them to the inaugural Sheffield FA Challenge Cup Final against Heeley and

found himself up against another Scottish international, Peter Andrews, also a skilful attacking player, who it is believed had more genuine business reasons to move to Yorkshire.

Whoever was being paid how much for what, the first county final, after 25 clubs entered, was another important milestone and proved an epic occasion. In the semi-final Wednesday had beaten Attercliffe in awful weather, 'the men so benumbed that several had to cut their bootlaces, being unable to untie them'. Heeley, meanwhile, crushed Hallam 7-3 and in the 12-a-side final at Bramall Lane on 10 March 1877 they led 3-0 at half-time before Wednesday's remarkable recovery with the wind behind them to win by the odd goal in seven following extra time.

The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, estimating the attendance at up to 8,000, was ecstatic, 'The highest excitement was manifested in the result of the struggle, not in Sheffield alone, but in all the football circles of this and the neighbouring counties ... the Wednesday Club thus became the victor of this magnificent and gloriously contested match – unquestionably the best of this season.'

Both Clegg brothers were in the winning team, William scoring the equaliser that took the tie to an extra half an hour. And seven months later they were opposing captains as the wider football public looked on with even greater interest at the country's first floodlit match. 'The contest, which took place at Bramall Lane Ground between two teams selected by the Sheffield Football Association, was the first ever played in this country – or anywhere else, we believe – with the aid of artificial illumination,' reported the *Sheffield Independent*.

An estimated 20,000 made up a record attendance at the ground, for which one large wooden tower in each corner provided lighting equivalent to '8,000 candles'. The historic occasion was regarded as 'an undeniable boon, and is certain sooner or later to come into more general use', but similar experiments proved disappointing at venues like Chorley, the Aston Grounds, Birmingham and Kennington Oval. Heavy rain and wind, plus the costs, all proved problematic, the FA remained lukewarm and in 1930 they banned lights altogether.

## YORKSHIRE TURF WARS

It would be the 1950s before competitive floodlit football was allowed and finally became widespread.

Throughout the 1880s Wednesday became the most successful team in both the Challenge Cup, once (1881) winning the final 8-1 against Ecclesfield, and the Wharnccliffe Charity Cup, both of which they won four times. They soon made a name in the FA Cup too; entering for the first time in 1880/81 they were drawn away to the mighty Blackburn Rovers and romped to a 4-0 win with a hat-trick by Bob Gregory. Turton, one of the oldest of all the pioneering Lancashire clubs, were beaten in the third round but another of them, Darwen, ended Wednesday's hopes by 5-2.

In 1881/82, with six goals apiece from Rhodes and Tom Cawley, they went as far as the last four and another meeting – which became two – with Rovers. For the first time, the FA picked a semi-final venue outside London, hoping for new converts in the rugby stronghold of Huddersfield. Some 900 Wednesday followers took a special train west with the team, who had to take their own goalposts to the St John's rugby ground. Gregory put the ball between them and referee Major Marindin gave a goal, but Rovers successfully appealed to their umpire (linesman), who turned it down for offside. 'Both teams played in brilliant form,' according to the *Sheffield Independent*, with little outside-left and early hero Billy Mosforth (a winner of nine England caps) outstanding. At the replay nine days later in Manchester, Marindin still felt it was a perfectly good goal, but Rovers made the most of their reprieve and after conceding an own goal by the famous Fergie Suter (another of the earliest paid players) they stormed back to win 5-1.

So Blackburn, not Wednesday, became the first northern club to reach the FA Cup Final, where they lost by the only goal to Old Etonians in the last stand of the southern amateurs who had hitherto dominated the competition. When Blackburn Olympic, the second great (though short-lived) club from that town, beat the Etonians the following year it was the last time that any southern amateurs reached the final. Blackburn Rovers, Aston Villa, West Bromwich Albion, Preston North End and Wolverhampton Wanderers won the next ten between them,

underlining the Lancashire/Midlands domination that would shape membership of the first Football League competition in 1888 – to Sheffield's annoyance.

This changing of the guard was reflected too when Dr E.S. Morley of Blackburn told the FA, 'I cannot hide from myself that the committee consists largely of Londoners, and I object to the power being centralised in their hands.' He was backed up by the Lancashire FA and many of that county's other leading clubs, whose voices were heard loudest in the growing debate surrounding whether players should be paid.

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Suter and Jimmy Love of Blackburn Rovers, Scots who originally moved south to play for Darwen in 1878, were, like JJ Lang, among the first 'shamateurs'; Heeley's former England international defender Jack Hunter, having moved to Blackburn Olympic, caused questions to be asked with his week's special training in Blackpool for a supposedly amateur side, that helped towards winning the FA Cup.

Back in Sheffield a team called the **Zulus** courted controversy, not with their habit of blacking up and wearing native feathers and beads, but for accusations that they were siphoning off some of the money from their charity matches. In 1881 11 of them, including Hunter and seven from the **Exchange** club, were suspended by the Sheffield FA, causing such chaos that the Wharnccliffe Charity Cup Final, which they had reached, never took place.

The critical year of 1884 began with Preston thrown out of the FA Cup after admitting paying players – their defence being that all the leading clubs did so – which prompted FA secretary Alcock to agree that 'professionals are a necessity to the growth of the game' while 'veiled professionalism is the evil to be repressed'. His motion to that effect failed at an FA meeting in February, the Sheffield and Birmingham associations leading the opposition, despite Preston's Sudell claiming that professionalism existed in both centres and he could prove it. Sheffield officials still spoke of professionalism itself as 'the evil', even decrying 'the scum of Scottish villages'

brutalising the game. Charles Clegg said that payment would hand the sport over to 'betting men' and 'gamblers' and claimed more ammunition after crowd trouble when Wednesday played Bolton at Bramall Lane in January 1885. The Sheffield players were described, unlikely as it may seem, of being 'positively frightened of their burly antagonists' who won 6-2. And when some spectators attacked the referee, the local paper took this as an example of 'the evils of professionalism'.

Crucially, however, 31 clubs in favour of payment threatened to set up a breakaway British Football Association and finally, on 20 July 1885, the historic legislation was passed by 35 votes to 15, still only just securing the necessary two-thirds majority. The qualification for all competitive cup matches was to have been born or to have lived for two years within six miles of the club's ground. 'I cannot see why men cannot labour at football, as at cricket,' said Alcock; cricket had been paying some players since the 18th century, and somehow managed to maintain a distinction between Players (professional) and so-called Gentlemen (amateurs) in the same teams until as late as 1962.

Still the Sheffield FA resisted, along with those of Birmingham, Nottingham and Scotland. But in 1886/87 came the aforementioned debacle when Wednesday missed the FA Cup deadline and five players including star turn Mosforth took Lockwood Brothers to the fifth round, then as part of their demand for professionalism formed a new club called Sheffield Rovers (who only ever played two games), prompting Wednesday to back down. At a special meeting on 22 April 1887, the Owls reluctantly joined the professional ranks, paying five shillings (25p) in wages for home games and slightly more for aways. Having lost 16-0 to Halliwell from Bolton in January may have helped make up their minds, for without swallowing their pride and principles the club could have disappeared as a serious football force.

Now there were new financial imperatives. Fed up with the cost of hiring Bramall Lane, Wednesday needed a new ground for this new era, and for the 1887/88 season – the last before league football – the committee obtained a seven-year lease on

a site near the Midland Railway line, naming it Olive Grove. The first game there on 12 September was an entertaining 4-4 draw with Blackburn Rovers, Mosforth scoring the opening goal.

It was a good first season in the paid ranks, winning the two local cups and reaching the FA Cup quarter-final with four away wins before losing at home to Preston, who had been reluctant to travel because of a smallpox outbreak in the steel city. 'The greatest excitement prevailed throughout' for the 10,000 crowd but North End were deemed worthy winners by 3-1. The cup run should have helped Wednesday's claims for Football League admission, but Sheffield was to be as disappointed as Nottingham, the other earliest provincial football stronghold, at being overlooked.

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As well as being heavily involved at national level with negotiations over the laws of the game and, later, professionalism, the Sheffield FA also found itself caught up in one potentially damaging domestic dispute. In April 1877 agreement was finally reached with the Football Association to give the country a nationally agreed set of rules for the first time. On some issues, like the use of free kicks and corners, the Yorkshiremen had always been ahead of the game. Now they achieved one final victory, the governing body agreeing that throw-ins could be taken in any direction, not just square to the touchline as in rugby. 'This union makes one code for Association players in England, so that, at last, after many attempts, the FA and Sheffield have amalgamated; a step that will be greatly conducive to the advancement of the dribbling game,' said the *Sheffield Independent*.

That very same month, however, came a serious blow with the formation of a breakaway organisation. Clubs were told they could only join the Sheffield FA once they had been in existence for two years, so a dozen signed up for a new body, the Sheffield New Football Association, which started its own Challenge Cup. Relations were not always good; when the new boys challenged the old association to a charity match for the Mayor's Distress Fund they received a swift refusal.

In October 1879 the local *Independent* reported that 15 new members had joined and added, 'The new association bids fair to take rank among the leading institutions of its kind in the country, and has made rapid strides under its energetic new management.' By 1880 it had the larger number of clubs affiliated and when amalgamation came about in 1886 – inevitably negotiated by Charles Clegg – it brought 35 of the 56 teams to the table under the new name, still used today, of the Sheffield & Hallamshire FA.

It will be evident from that figure that football was spreading beyond the town boundaries. Although there was still surprisingly little activity in the north and west of the county, where rugby remained the main winter sport, South Yorkshire offered more fertile ground, above all in Rotherham.

Football's history there is complicated and has often been misreported, but certainly began with a team of that name. Football Association records from 1870 confirm the existence of **Rotherham FC**, 'Colours: blue and white,' who were based at the Clifton Lane cricket ground and began with matches for 'intended members' on Boxing Day and 27 December 1870. The *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* announced the following day, 'Their efforts have so far been successful ... and there is every likelihood that the club will be well supported.' A first AGM the following October reported that three matches had been won, two drawn and three lost, though 'this was not regarded as a satisfactory state of affairs'.

The most common confusion arises from two teams of different vintage but with the same name: **Rotherham Town**. The first can be traced back to the 1870 club, who became **Lunar Rovers** (1878), named so oddly because they normally played evening games at Doncaster Road; then as Town they became the first local Football League club (1893–1896) but disbanded. The second Town club emerged in 1899 with the amalgamation of Rotherham Casuals and Rotherham Grammar School Old Boys, and then amalgamated in 1925 with Rotherham County as the current Rotherham United.

County was the name adopted by **Thornhill**, founded in 1877 and playing their first game that October before changing

their name to Thornhill United in 1884. None of which offers any justification for the Millers celebrating their official centenary, as they did, in 1984.

One of the Lunar Rovers' earliest mentions in the press in February 1879 detailed a complaint they made about a friendly with the local **Wesleyans** club, 'by no means an equal and just match', as their opponents borrowed some of their players, plus two from Thornhill, 'who kicked six of the eight goals obtained' and even worse 'tripping and hacking seem to be a very common practice amongst them'. In November they hosted Effingham Brass Works, having lost only one game that season, but were beaten 3-2, although again not without controversy. 'Much dissatisfaction was manifested by the public with the Rovers' umpire, who evidently did not understand the rules of the game,' the *Sheffield Independent* noted. (Neutral linesmen were not introduced until almost the turn of the century).

The original Town had a stab at the FA Cup from 1883, playing in the competition proper every year until qualifying rounds were introduced in 1888/89. In five seasons before that they reached the second round three times, but found Nottingham opposition too tough, especially after twice conceding home advantage for modest financial reward; in 1884 Forest beat them 5-0 and a year later they returned south for a 15-0 humiliation by County. 'A very weak team was sent on a hopeless errand to Trent Bridge,' as the *Illustrated Sporting News* put it. They did, however, reach the final of the Wharncliffe Charity Cup in 1888, losing 2-0 to Wednesday, and within five more years they would be a Football League club.

The first Rotherham side to figure in the FA Cup were **Phoenix Bessemer**, a factory team from the local steel works, who in 1882/83 received a bye to the second round where they humbled Grimsby Town 9-1 away from home (still the Mariners' heaviest home defeat) before losing 4-1 at Notts County. **Rotherham Wanderers**, possibly founded in 1872/73, joined the New Sheffield FA in 1878. **Rotherham Swifts** were founded that year after another amalgamation, between Holmes and Kimberworth clubs, but folded in April 1891 as players left to join the emerging Sheffield United.



## YORKSHIRE TURF WARS

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Two particular individuals were instrumental in forming clubs that became Football League stalwarts in **Doncaster Rovers** and **Barnsley**.

In the former's case, it was Albert Jenkins, an 18-year-old fitter who in the autumn of 1879 was asked to raise a team from fellow workmen at the Great Northern Railway Engineering Works to play the Doncaster Deaf and Dumb Institution – now the Doncaster School for the Deaf. Possibly to their surprise, Jenkins's side found themselves 4-0 down at half-time but were so exhilarated after reviving to draw 4-4 that on the way home they decided to join the growing number of clubs in their increasingly industrialised town, and came up with the name of Doncaster Rovers.

On 3 October 1879 a first match under that name, with full-back Jenkins as captain, was drawn at Rawmarsh in Rotherham. Playing originally at the famous racecourse in blue and white, they settled from 1885 on the institution's playing fields which became known as the Intake Ground and served them until the First World War.

In that year Jenkins's successor as captain, John Mitchell, became the first Rover to be snapped up by a bigger club when he impressed railway works team Newton Heath in a match against them and was offered a job in the railway carriage shop plus a place in the team.

An obvious step forward was to enter the county association's cup competitions, starting with the Sheffield and Hallamshire Minor Cup, in which they reached the 1886 semi-final at Bramall Lane, and the following year the senior version. It was a hard school and like most clubs of the time Rovers were caught up in occasional disputes; at Brigg Town early in 1886 they walked off complaining about the home players' tackling and the spectators' stone-throwing.

1885 is often given as the year Rovers turned professional, and although that seems remarkably early, they were able to pay players from that time and may have done so with Sam Hunt from Mexborough, a prolific goalscorer, and the Scot Alex Munro. Now clearly established as the town's leading club,

the next step forward would be the FA Cup – albeit with an embarrassing outcome.

In the case of **Barnsley**, an enthusiastic rugby area, the key individual was a man of the cloth, the Rev Tiverton Preedy, who hailed from East Anglia but became curate of Barnsley St Peter's church. He played cricket for the church team but left Barnsley Rugby Club when they agreed to play on Good Friday, seeking for his winter recreation 'an Association club such as the rugbyites will not crush out'.

In September 1887 he founded one, which first played Manor House, wearing maroon and blue and winning 4-0, with star forward Steve Denton scoring two of the goals. Barnsley St Peter's found a ground in the working-class Oakwell district on the east side of town – their home ever since – and were told they could have the site 'as long as you behave'. It was something the Rev Preedy was renowned for insisting on, from both his players and later the spectators.

He could not guarantee the same of opposing teams and the Saints staged a walk-off at half-time in an early game at Silkstone, resenting the home team's over-physical approach.

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What of West Riding? On Boxing Day 1877, fully 20 years after the foundation of Sheffield FC, the Sheffield New Association sent two missionary teams to play an exhibition match on the Holbeck Recreation Ground 'in order to introduce the Association game to the football players of Leeds'. Despite several inches of snow, the Whites beat the Blues 4-3, a good time was had by all and a small step had been taken towards converting the rugby heathens.

Rugby and cricket had long been the sporting religions in that corner of Yorkshire. Just occasionally the main Leeds Athletic rugby club would have a go with the round ball, as in November 1865 when *The Sportsman* reported that they travelled to Sheffield to play Norfolk FC and lost by a goal (and two rouges) to nil, 'Leeds players being unpractised in the Sheffield rules, nearly all of which were different from those which guide their own play on Woodhouse Moor.'

The latter ground was where the egg-chasers had first advertised practice matches a year earlier, starting at 7am for its middle-class clientele, who would have an hour's play before their business day began. They were happy to host Norfolk for a return game just after Christmas that year but clearly preferred the handling and hacking version and were understandably better at it – for one visit to Bramham College they agreed to play association rules but 'kicked the ball over the tape three times' which, while fine for rugby, did them no good on the day.

So it was a team by the name of **Hunslet** in south-east Leeds that first used the round ball in West Yorkshire on a regular basis, beginning a couple of months before Sheffield's wise men arrived bearing gifts at Christmas 1877. A Sheffield man called Sam Gilbert started the Hunslet club and teams from **Oulton**, **Rothwell** and **Meanwood** as well as the local **Wesleyans** were among those who followed suit. One advantage of being in such a keen rugby area was that just like the Leeds rugby team a dozen years earlier, oval-ball clubs such as Kirkstall, in November 1877, and even Wakefield Trinity a couple of years later would occasionally change code for a day to take them on. But there was less enthusiasm among the public and in April 1883 Hunslet folded, while Oulton and the Wesleyans later switched to rugby. The first football team named plain **Leeds** played at the Star and Garter ground in Kirkstall and kept going until the end of 1885/86 but disbanded until the introduction of the Football League in 1888 created new interest.

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In neither Huddersfield, even after being favoured with that 1882 FA Cup semi-final, nor Bradford was there much sign of football life, though North Riding and in particular the county town offered possibilities, being less devoted to rugby. Works teams grew up in York around the main factories of Rowntrees and John Smiths and the railway company.

There was sufficient interest for a North Riding Senior Cup to begin in 1882, dominated early on by north-eastern teams like Middlesbrough and Stockton, though the **Redcar and Coatham** club (1878–1895 and later 1913–1922), were regular

finalists. For five years in the 1880s they also entered the FA Cup, progressing as far as the quarter-final in the best season by far, 1885/86, when beating both Sunderland and Middlesbrough before losing to Small Heath Alliance, the original name of Birmingham City.

Further down the coast there was activity too at **Scarborough** where the principal town club was founded in 1879 and **Whitby Town**, the teams starting a long-running rivalry in 1881, a year after the latter had begun playing as **Streaneshalch FC** and then **Whitby Church Temperance**. Scarborough were yet another team that grew out of the local cricket club, whose ground they shared at first. They made one FA Cup appearance in 1887, losing 5-3 at home to Shankhouse, a Northumberland club, and exactly 100 years later they would finally reach the Football League.

**Hull Town** were a group of cricketers attracted to football rather than rugby in the winter months, competing in the Scarborough & East Riding Cup, then the FA Cup for two seasons from 1883, in which they lost in the first round to Grimsby Town and Lincoln City.