

# Sporting Days in Eighteenth Century England

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Spectator sport has seldom been seen as an eighteenth century phenomenon either by the historians of labor and leisure or by sports historians themselves. Yet several English sports of the age did demonstrably seek to attract crowds and by their success presaged the wholesale development of commercial sport in the next century. An analysis of the days of the week on which these sporting events took place—the days presumably when most customers were available—should increase understanding of the broader work and leisure patterns of the period as well as indicate some similarities and differences in the early economic experience of a number of sports.

Much attention has already been given by social historians to the relationship between the work and play of the English people in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This has concentrated upon the irregularity of most working life, its variation through the week and the opportunities which work routines gave for leisure pursuits.<sup>1</sup> As to the leisure pursuits themselves, it has been shown how strongly traditional modes of recreation persisted through into at least the early years of industrialization—how parish wakes could still provide annual holidays and how the old church festivals, together with fairs and markets, still punctuated the year with frequent occasions for play and pleasure.<sup>2</sup> In discussions of this play, most stress has been placed on the traditional, mass-participation folk pursuits and on football in particular.<sup>3</sup> It has usually been assumed by the social historians that organized sport was not worth taking into account before the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

The typical view of the sports historian has not disturbed this accepted analysis of the role of play in eighteenth century life. The argument goes that “modern sport” was born of the industrial revolution, that even in the early nineteenth century sports were

still emerging from medieval inhibitions, still mainly rural in nature, generally informal and unstructured, lacking codification or mass direction, and usually rigidly based upon class distinctions. It was largely during the Victorian era, however, that sport became international and urban, closely allied to technology, a highly organized and complex social force.<sup>5</sup>

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While this account has some proximate truth, it is too precise, sweeping and simple. Bowls, for instance, never fitted into it—as early as the seventeenth century it was a game with a large (if mainly local) following, it had a strong professional element, a whole gamut of tactical practices, a degree of sophistication and fairly well established rules.<sup>6</sup> The broader sociological view is, for once, more promising:

the possibility that both industrialisation and the transformation of specific leisure occupations like sports are interdependent part-trends within an overall transformation of state societies in recent times.<sup>7</sup>

This at least allows account to be taken of what E.P. Thompson has called the “long preliminaries” to the industrial revolution, to accept that some of its concomitants may well have shown themselves much before the nineteenth century. It also invites a particular examination of large centres of population—and London especially—where many of the later common conditions of urban life had already been produced by the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> If organized sport were to become important in Victorian leisure is it not reasonable to expect that its earlier history would give some pointers to the future? A more particular question also poses itself. It has been shown that the development of spectator sport in the later nineteenth century was closely related to the securing of the regular Saturday half holiday.<sup>9</sup> For another hundred years Saturday then became predominantly the day for most sporting activities which sought to attract large numbers of spectators, a monopoly which has been seriously threatened only in the last generation or so. What, though, were the days of the week on which sporting events catering for spectators took place in the earlier days of the industrial revolution, at a time of looser work patterns but when Saturday tended to be *the* working day of the week? The answers are important both for the study of labor and leisure and the history of organized sport.

Three relatively organized sports are acknowledged to have had a considerable popular following in the eighteenth century—horse-racing, boxing and cricket. There are other competitors for attention such as boating, wrestling, foot-racing and cock-fighting, but racing, pugilism and cricket were the sports most consistently reported in the national press and all three came to have a measure of economic dependence upon spectators who paid for their sporting entertainment in one form or another. Boating (rowing and yachting) had an astounding growth in the last two decades of the century although its locations and reliance upon spectators were limited. Wrestling always had regional emphases in its popularity and its styles; foot-racing was still spasmodic and, while cocking probably has much to suggest in terms of the future organization of some other sports, it was predominantly a regionally based sport and demands closer regional study than it has so far received to justify confident conclusions.

Racing, boxing and cricket were certainly all drawing in their crowds well before 1750 and continued to do so for the rest of the century. How big these crowds were is often a matter for speculation. Crowd sizes are notoriously difficult to estimate closely and are susceptible to inflation and uncertainty in the reporting. The repeated evidence of crowd sizes remains impressive, however, particularly when set against a total population one tenth of today's, and figures can sometimes be confirmed against known receipts from a known entrance fee. It is equally certain that we are dealing with sufficient spectators to make these events important in the leisure life of the people. Even if they were promoted by the upper classes primarily for their own pleasure and benefit, they could not in most cases have flourished without a wider popular support, which must have spread over most social classes—certainly too widely spread for the taste of some contemporary commentators.<sup>10</sup>

Malcolmson supports this view in his comment on horse racing—"the followers of the sport were drawn from all social levels" and that given the size of the crowds it could not have been otherwise.<sup>11</sup> Crowds at race meetings were more diffuse and scattered—and harder to estimate—than at cricket or boxing matches. The courses were open; enclosure was not considered before the nineteenth century, and so entrance fees were out of the question. However, many courses built permanent grandstands, which were not only sources of income for race meetings but also could be let out when the ground was used for cricket or boxing matches, which was quite common practice.<sup>12</sup> The dependence of horse racing upon spectators at this early period is a matter of some debate. At Newmarket certainly pedestrian spectators were actively discouraged from the bleak and open heath—Defoe remarked that even females were something of a rarity there: "you see no ladies at New-Market, except a few of their neighboring gentlemen's families who come in their coaches on any day to see a race and so go home again directly."<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere though, the sport does not seem to have been able or willing to rely solely on the entry fees paid by the competitors.

Provincial racing meetings had grown out of local custom and were becoming woven into the pattern of the local year. They were community occasions for leisure and an opportunity for business. Stalls, booths and other attractions gave race meetings a fair like atmosphere and provided income for sponsors. Local corporations were often alive to the commercial as well as the recreational possibilities of the sport. From the beginning of regular horse racing in York, for instance, the corporation supported the meetings, subscribing £15 toward a plate. The corporation prompted the draining of Knavesmire to which the racing was moved in the 1730s; Carr's grandstand and a new road to the course were built in the middle of the century and further buildings were added in 1768.<sup>14</sup> It was recognized that this was good business both directly and in bringing visitors to the town: the greater the number of spectators that could be attracted, the higher the fees that could be levied on stall holders.

This income became all the more desirable—if not a sheer necessity—with the passing of the 1740 Act (designed to protect bloodstock and control crowds) requiring a minimum prize of £50 at each event.

By the early nineteenth century Epsom was said to be attracting crowds of 100,000 on Derby day. Through most of the eighteenth century, crowds of several thousands were probably commonplace and although race meetings were generally once-a-year events, they were making a significant contribution to local leisure life. Meetings were usually lasting at least two or three days, sometimes a full week. They were attracting all social classes, an acceptable state of affairs for writers such as John Lawrence:

The course has from very early times, been the proper theatre of amusement to the most exalted ranks of society, and there need (be) no laws to restrain the middling and lower classes from engagements thereon, since their expensiveness will, in general, confine such to their proper place as spectators.<sup>15</sup>

The attendance of “the middle and lower classes” at race meetings meant that the times at which they occurred took on the nature of a holiday from work. This was sometimes formally recognized in the next century when the usual holidays were traded off for the Saturday half day.<sup>16</sup> However, they belong predominantly to the rhythms of the working *year* rather than the working week because few places apart from Newmarket had more than one meeting annually. The one significant feature revealed by an analysis of race meetings reported in three summer months in one year (1787)<sup>17</sup> is that Saturday was the *least* popular working day for races. Sunday was quite void of arranged meetings although there had been instances of horse races and coach races arousing Sabbatarian anger in the first half of the century.<sup>18</sup> Of the 61 race meetings in this sample, only 6 met on Saturday. Monday was almost equally unpopular (8), while Tuesday (34), Wednesday (48) and Thursday (41) were clearly the peak days with Friday meetings falling away to 17. As will be seen, the relative unpopularity of Monday was not shared by pugilism or cricket and may be accounted for by the different conditions of horse racing: not only was it an annual festival, standing some way outside the normal weekly work patterns, but it also demanded considerable preparation and it would take at least one day to walk most of the competing horses to the course.<sup>19</sup>

Horse racing was the most widespread of the early spectator sports, being common all over England and also taking place in Wales and Scotland. Boxing, in its organized form of prize fighting, was centred largely on London although its precarious legal existence often meant a search for venues away from the capital. Like horse racing it was an occasional sport although there are instances of matches being fought at the same spot at frequent intervals and matches often also tended to take place at race meetings where there was a ready assembly of the “amateurs” who were its mainstay and support.<sup>20</sup>

Elementary pugilism had its place, along with cudgel fights and wrestling at fairs and wakes. The first press report of a prize fight seems to have been in 1681, with a contest between the Duke of Albermarle's footman and a butcher—an early indication of aristocratic patronage and a degree of professionalism in at least one of the combatants.<sup>21</sup> However, pugilism as something approaching a formal sport does not begin to emerge until the late 1720s and early 1730s. The two major contributions to its growth were the establishment, probably in 1720, of Figg's amphitheatre for pugilism at the corner of Oxford Street (then Oxford Road) and Tottenham Court Road and the setting down of Broughton's Rules—"Rules to be observed in all battles on the stage, as agreed by several gentlemen at Mr. Broughton's, August 26, 1743. . . ."

In opening his emporium, James Figg was doing no more than following a common ambition of fairground entrepreneurs to establish a permanent base. His was not the only, or necessarily even the first of such centers but it was the most noted. The various forms of combat which he provided for—"with the Foil, Backsword, Cudgel and Fist," according to one of his advertising bills for Southwark Fair—still tended to merge into each other and some of Figg's own "pugilistic" contests seem to have started with a round or two of cudgel play.<sup>22</sup> It was Jem Broughton's Rules which clearly delineated boxing. These "rules" were still brutal enough, with their fighting to a finish, rounds measured by knockdowns, elements of wrestling remaining and the requirement to come up to scratch—the mark a yard away from the opponent's mark—with no escape, at the start of each round. But they were an improvement on the previous free-for-alls. They represented some degree of restraint, of formalizing, some measure of making more acceptable—and they made pugilism a sport on which gentlemen might wager with more assurance as to the terms of the match.

The two London boxing emporia, Figg's and then its neighbor and rival, Broughton's, were shortlived. Their proprietors charged for admission and paid the boxers. Prizefights were always occasions for gambling and when the matches were driven out of the capital and had to resort to relatively impromptu meetings their promotion was usually a matter for the gentry, but not exclusively so. Ex-pugilists readily assumed the roles of matchmakers and managers and the fighters themselves would throw out and publish challenges to intended opponents. They fell nowhere short of modern boxers in whipping up attention and interest in anticipation of a fight and no other motive can be adduced for this than publicity with a view to attendances. Here is the Irishman's answer to the challenge of the Jumping Soldier in May 1742:

I Patrick Henley known to every one for the truth of a good fellow, who never refused any one on or off the stage, and fights as often for the diversion of 'gentlemen as for money, do accept the challenge of this JUMPING JACK; and shall, if he don't take care, give him one of my bothering blows, which will convince him of his ignorance in the art of boxing.<sup>23</sup>

The advertising had to become more oblique when the magistrates began to look unfavorably on boxing but they still continued, with invitations to prospective challengers to come round to the house and present themselves. The spectators certainly mattered to the boxers because their most assured source of income was from the entrance money, usually in the ratio of 2 parts to the winner and 1 part to the loser, although there are instances of a 50/50 split.

At the amphitheaters the maximum entrance fee was 1/- (at least twice the cost of entrance to contemporary cricket matches) but for other prize fights half a guinea, or even on occasions a guinea was not uncommon. A guinea was appreciably more than a laborer's weekly wage, which averaged around 10/- in London for much of the century. Some highly skilled craftsmen could earn three or four times that amount, more if they were fast workers or employed apprentices. Entrance money would be somewhat easier to find after about 1780 when quickening economic growth could lift these wage levels by up to 50%. There were more than financial difficulties to overcome in actually collecting the gate money given the open-air and often impromptu circumstances of most prize fights. Other pugilists sometimes acted as gatemen and crowd controllers and there were occasions when even they were overwhelmed by the size and excitement of the crowd. This happened at the famous fight between Mendoza and Humphries held at Odiham on 9 January, 1788. Here the stage was erected in a paddock, which was intended to give some degree of enclosure, but the crowd charged the entrance in spite of the exertions of the gatemen.<sup>24</sup> At a match at Newmarket on 3 May 1786, patronized by the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, the admission charge was 1 guinea—"which hundreds cheerfully paid"—all to go to the winner. On this match between £30,000 to £40,000 was wagered. The gate money from the Johnson vs Perrins match which was hurriedly moved from Newmarket to Banbury in 1789 amounted to £800, after all expenses had been paid. One backer won £20,000 on Johnson in this match, and gave Johnson £1,000 out of his profit.<sup>25</sup> Sizes of crowds present the usual difficulty of estimation. Certainly some of the venues were capable of holding large numbers. The "Marylebone-bason," being used in 1760, could hold 3,000; there were reports of wrestling attracting 10,000 in 1777 and of over that number at a boxing match between Richmond and Shelton at Moulsey Hurst (a popular venue for several sports including golf and cricket) in 1815.<sup>26</sup>

Humbler matches produced lower takings. In the long career of Tom Faulkner, cricketer as well as boxer, he was challenging George Taylor for 200 guineas and the gate money in 1758<sup>27</sup> and as a veteran of 60 he was meeting and beating "the Warwickshire Bruiser" at Studley near Redditch for 2/3 of the gate money of "upwards of £80."<sup>28</sup> The numbers attracted to boxing matches were certainly considerable enough for the promoters to make sure that, in spite of difficulties with the law, the matches were arranged for times when many could free themselves from work. The costs were high and many

would have been excluded on this account, but so many spectators were sometimes present that the crowd must have represented all classes. Nor did the remoteness of the meeting places present insuperable obstacles. Nineteenth century commentators repeatedly express surprise that such large numbers could come together in remote spots without the aid of railways<sup>29</sup> but it was a feature of all early spectator sport that large crowds could be attracted from over a wide area. This must have been encouraged in the last quarter of the century by much improved roads and the growth of express coach services.

The days on which matches were arranged show a definite pattern. Taking those matches reported in "*Pancratia*" and "*Pugilistica*" which can be clearly ascribed to specific days, the following figures emerge for the different days of the week:

	1788-1804 ("Pancratia")	1805-1811 ("Pancratia")	1800-1820 ("Pugilistica")
MONDAY	27	7	13
TUESDAY	9	23	36
WEDNESDAY	8	7	6
THURSDAY	7	5	4
FRIDAY	4	7	8
SATURDAY	5	5	10
SUNDAY	0	0	
TOTAL	60	54	77

This shows a clear preference for the first two days of the week, with an interesting change of emphasis from Monday to Tuesday after the turn of the century. The implications of these emphases, both the general and particular, will be taken up after considering the state of eighteenth century cricket. Here too, as with horse racing and boxing, commercialism had already gone a long way.

Cricket rose rapidly in popularity during the first decades of the century. By the 1740s it was both seeking spectators and taking them into account in a number of directions—in terms of crowd control, provision of refreshments and even charging for admission. Cricket was remarkable as a game in which both gentry and common people participated as players. Malcolmson grants that "many of the contests which gentlemen organized or publicans promoted must have attracted a considerable body of plebeian spectators." He says that they were often held on holiday occasions or associated with fairs and were open to public view because they were often played on the green or the open moor.<sup>30</sup> However, to stress these genteel associations and cricket's inherited role as part of the folk play of the people is misleading if it leads to an under-

estimate of the important economic considerations already attached to the game as early as the 1740s. Among these were gambling, catering and (to a less extent) gate money.

Gambling was of course central to cricket: it is hard to imagine any sporting contest of the time which could have attracted the well-to-do without the stimulus of betting. Cricket might well have been sustained, in a world only ruled by economic theory, solely by the gentry players and their immediate backers without need of spectators—and in the parks of the great it did continue to be played privately to a high standard until the 1920s—but the spectators would not be kept away. Even the remoteness and inhospitality of Newmarket did not deter followers as effectively as Defoe had described in the early days: there was enough of a crush to make it popular with pickpockets. Cricket matches were usually played in settings more attractive and accessible than this and the crowds flocked to the special sight of gentry and locals at play together. How far down the social scale gambling went among these crowds is not wholly certain. All the indications are that it was widespread. In 1731 the Duke of Richmond's team had their shirts tom off "by the mob" because a match could not be finished (the Duke's side had arrived late) and the home team seemed certain to win.<sup>31</sup> Something more tangible than local loyalty seems to have been at stake and many instances of crowd disorder are explained by contemporary commentators in terms of the number of wagers at issue. Gambling could draw to the game those who had no right to be there:

Mon. last a young fellow, a butcher, being entrusted with about £40 by his mistress to buy cattle in Smithfield Market, instead went into the Artillery Ground and sported away the whole sum in betting upon the Cricket players.<sup>32</sup>

The patronage of noble patrons was particularly important during the second quarter of the eighteenth century when the game made such rapid developments. The loss of the three most notable of them (the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Richmond and Lord John Sackville) in the early 1750s contributed to a slump in cricket's fortunes for more than a decade but then it recovered to be less dependent upon such injections of money as these noble patrons had given. Patronage, like gambling, might theoretically have rendered spectators unnecessary although one of its effects was to create a recognized body of professional cricketers whose services could be bought—and when the less affluent clubs sought to hire such men for their teams some counterbalancing income had to be looked for. Advertisements for matches made a point of mentioning these visiting players as an added attraction.<sup>33</sup>

As with horse racing, cricket provided an admirable and lengthy opportunity for the sale of refreshment, food and particularly drink. Publicans were not slow to seize the opportunity to exploit fields beside their houses, provide cricket equipment and set themselves up as the base and meeting place for cricket teams. An intriguing advertisement for a match in Suffolk in 1743

instructed those concerned “to meet at the ‘White Lion’ . . . at 10:00 am, and to begin playing by 1 p.m.”!<sup>34</sup> Inn-keepers put up their tents at both race meetings and cricket matches and warned off competitors. The final step toward a fully developed spectator sport was the enclosure of grounds and the charging of entrance fees. There is early reference to grounds being roped around and some matches being played in enclosed parks where there was a catering monopoly in the hands of a local publican and the capacity to charge for entrance.<sup>35</sup>

The direct evidence for charging spectators to watch cricket would be somewhat slim but for the very full details of developments in London and particularly at the Artillery Ground and, after 1787, at Lord's. At the Artillery Ground every subsequent problem that has since faced large-scale spectator sport had been faced well before 1750; the level of admission charges; the provision of spectator facilities; crowd control and payment of players. The ground was in use in 1730 and many matches are reported from 1731 onwards. On 18 June 1744 “the noblemen and gentlemen there present” (at the Kent vs England match) complained of such disorder “that it was with difficulty the match was played out.”<sup>36</sup> To remedy this state of affairs it was decided to provide seating, on benches, for 800 spectators and to increase the price of admission from 2d to 6d—a “solution” not unknown to English association football clubs today, and with similar consequences. The intention in 1744 was clearly to limit the crowd and to raise its social tone. According to contemporary reports it succeeded all too well: a match a fortnight later attracted less than 200 “when before there used to be 7000 or 8000.”<sup>37</sup> However, the proprietor continued this policy of high admission charges with occasional concessions such as a reduction of the charge to 3d at the end of September 1747 for a Hurling Match, as this “is the last match for the season, and as it is not attended with so much charge as Cricket, to oblige the town . . .” Whether or not this was a desperate last throw, the proprietor, George Smith, appears to have become bankrupt during the next winter but subsequently to have staged a comeback. Eighteen months later he was announcing a reduction of entry charges to the old level of 2d.<sup>38</sup> In spite of management problems (which led in 1751, for instance, to Smith closing all but two entrances) the ground and the game firmly established its popularity in London. There was a net profit of £500 from an early three day match at Lord's first cricket ground at Marylebone in 1787, which implies an aggregate attendance of at least 15,000.

The attraction of the cricket grounds could not fail to arouse, from time to time, the age's suspicions of large gatherings. The expectation was that large crowds would be disorderly and riotous: sober behavior was a matter for positive comment by reporters. The popularity of cricket brought its share of the excesses of the day into the grounds and censure from the press was always near at hand:

This sport has too long been perverted from diversion and innocent pastime to excessive gaming and public dissipation: Cricket matches are now degenerated into business of importance.

The increasing evil our magistrates ought to suppress in the Artillery Ground.<sup>39</sup>

It is clear that cricket here was a well developed sport, regularly played and a notable contributor to the recreational life of the capital. In the country too the game could draw large crowds, with people being prepared to ride 40 miles or more to matches.<sup>40</sup>

As with horse racing and pugilism, cricket crowds may well have frequently had an overweighting of gentry and men of leisure, but again the large numbers must have involved a great many working people. All social classes had their potential spectators so that the days for playing cricket were likely to be those when freedom from work was most readily available—the popular days for playing cricket could reflect the patterns of recreational life, as could those of the other spectator sports.

	to 1749	1750-69	1770-89	1790-99	(1792)
MONDAY	39	49	85	22	9
TUESDAY	17	32	38	12	9
WEDNESDAY	18	27	33	11	11
THURSDAY	18	23	34	28	10
FRIDAY	11	16	17	8	10
SATURDAY	6	11	16	5	5
SUNDAY	0	0	0	0	3

The days on which cricket matches started, up to 1799, are shown in the tables above. This is compiled from published records collected in Buckley’s “Fresh Light on Eighteenth Century Cricket” and takes account of 566 matches in all. The final column, which analyses the *playing days* of the twenty-five most important matches played in a single year, 1792,—and these would be matches likely to most attract spectators—shows a similar pattern to that prevailing through the century, but with some interesting variations.

Some of the variation in the single year figures arises from the fuller information available for these matches which enables all the actual days of play to be identified. It is often not possible to identify how long other matches lasted. In this one-year list the matches were mostly 3-day, but included some 1-day and two 4-day. Monday was still the commonest day for starting the big matches in 1792—there were no cases of play being carried forward from the previous week. The next commonest starting day was Thursday and the anticipation would be that the match would end on Friday or Saturday at the latest. Monday and Thursday starts could ensure two games a week.

A number of general conclusions are justifiable on the evidence from these

three spectator sports. The first is that, almost without exception, they avoided Sunday play. This is remarkable in the light of the usual verdicts on the eighteenth century Sabbath observance, typical of which was W. B. Whittaker's, that for much of the century and over much of the country, most Englishmen spent Sunday much as they pleased without paying much heed to the Sunday observance laws.<sup>41</sup> Nor apparently can the absence of spectator sport from Sunday be ascribed to the hurriedly passed 1780 Act which forbade the opening of places of amusement for which entrance fees were charged on Sundays (prompted by the opening of a Sunday "promenade" and passed with other types of amusement than outdoor sports in mind). In fact, for some fifty years before the passing of the act the promoters of sport were arranging their spectator sports on days other than Sunday, either by self-denial or, less likely, out of deference to existing—but largely ignored—Sunday laws which forbade travel out of the home parish for sporting purposes on the Sabbath. The various strands in the age's attitudes toward Sunday play are too complex to be untangled in a brief article.<sup>42</sup> Wakes Sundays aside, such play as persisted on the Sabbath tended to belong to the youngest and poorest and to be rough and extempore. What is clear is that, from the beginning of spectator sport in the eighteenth century, Sunday play was very rarely resorted to. The public sports were being prompted by the "respectable" classes whose sabbath-breaking was usually private and discrete. They were seeking to bring their sports into this respectable world—or at least to avoid giving unnecessary offence to it. Even the few examples of Sunday play that have emerged in cricket are, as it were, accidental. They represent the last day of matches which began on Friday (or in one case Thursday) and which ran on, one presumes, longer than originally anticipated. Sunday inhibitions were strong enough to prevent much active and positive planning for Sunday play—but not strong enough to prevent it where expediency demanded otherwise!

Almost as striking as the absence of play from Sundays is the clear lead of Saturday as the least popular day of the week for sporting events seeking to attract spectators. Friday follows close upon it in unpopularity and this reflects the way in which the eighteenth century working week tended to increase its tempo as it drew to a close.

Saturday was *the* working day under a system which still left a degree of freedom of choice over working hours to the workers themselves. Saturday, as pay day, was the day when there was the sharpest awareness of both the size of the week's wage and of the need to be present to collect it at the end of the day's work. Both employers and employees would find themselves engaged in the business of settling the week's account.<sup>43</sup> Saturday was clearly an unpropitious day for drawing either of them from work for sporting events. The relative unpopularity of Friday can be accounted for similarly—the demands of the week's quota becoming more acute as the day of reckoning drew nearer.

Conversely, Monday was the nearest day to the last wage and the work day furthest away from the wage yet to come. It was the day on which freedom from work was easiest to envisage and one which, for large groups of workers, was regarded as a more or less regular holiday. The phenomenon of St. Monday and of a weekend which covered Sunday and Monday has been generally recognized<sup>44</sup> and the pattern of spectator sports gives support to the view that Monday was the day when freedom from work was easiest to come by. Throughout the eighteenth century Tuesday follows after Monday as the most popular day for spectator sports, as the next furthest away from the demands of earning. Presumably only the more prosperous or less conscientious could afford to discard both Monday and Tuesday from the working week and this probably accounts for the displacement of Monday by Tuesday as the most frequent day for pugilistic contests from about 1800 onwards. This was a time when prize fighting stood high in upper class esteem but was also under strong attack from the law and, while still needing the door money, it did not want an unlimited number of spectators. It was content with that quite considerable group which was able to afford the high entrance fees charged for prize-fights.

The suggestions of this paper are therefore, to sum up, that spectator sports were sufficiently developed in the eighteenth century to constitute a significant element in popular recreation; that the timing of sports events which sought to attract spectators must have had some reference to the more common patterns of the working week; that this working week gave for many its opportunities for relaxation throughout but that these were concentrated particularly on Mondays and the early part of the week. While further analysis by the calendar of individual sporting events is desirable,<sup>45</sup> the evidence is already firm enough to give some sureness to these conclusions.

## Notes

1. See e.g. E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present*, 38 (December 1967), 71-86; K. Thomas, "Work and Leisure in Pre-Industrial Society," *Past and Present*, 29 (December 1964); Douglas A. Reid, "The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876," *Past and Present*, 71 (May 1976).
2. See R.W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 1973) which is an essential starting point for any discussion of popular sport in the period.
3. By, e.g., Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, "Folk Football in Medieval and Early Modern Britain," *The Sociology of Sport: A Selection of Readings*, edited by Eric Dunning (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1971); James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football* (London: Allen Lane, 1975); Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979).
4. A notable qualification of this view is put forward by Professor J.H. Plumb in the 1972 Stenton Lecture—J.H. Plumb, *The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth Century England*, (University of Reading, 1973).
5. This is Gerald Redmond, "Some Aspects of Organized Sport and Leisure in Nineteenth Century Canada," *Loisir et Société*, 2: 1 (Quebec 1979), but it is the commonly accepted tenet, arising from sports' history's preoccupations with nineteenth century developments.

- 6 See Dennis Brailsford, *Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 116-7, 212. Bowls, like wrestling, was losing much of its former gender participation in the eighteenth century, the opposite of what happened in cricket.
7. Norbert Elias, "The Genesis of Sport as a Sociological Problem," in *The Sociology of Sport: A Selection of Readings*, edited by Eric Dunning, p. 92.
8. E.A. Wrigley estimates that by 1750 London's population had reached approximately 675,000, some 11% of the total population of the country. He comments that "it is fair to assume that one adult in six in England in this period had had direct experience of London life, it is probably also fair to assume that this must have acted as a powerful solvent of the customs, prejudices and modes of action of traditional rural England." E.A. Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy 1650-1750," *Past and Present*, 37 (July 1967),<sup>50</sup>.
9. See, e.g., D.D. Molyneux, "The Development of Physical Recreation in the Birmingham District 1871-1892," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: University of Birmingham, 1957), and Roy Rees, "Organisation of Sport in Nineteenth Century Liverpool," in *The History, the Evolution and Diffusion of Sports and Games in Different Cultures*, edited by Roland Renson, Pierre Paul de Nayer, and Michel Ostyn (Brussels: B.L.O.S.O., 1976), pp. 242-3.
10. *The Craftsman* complained in 1738 that horse racing around London was "frequented chiefly by Apprentices, Servants, and the lowest Sort of Tradesmen." (Quoted in R. W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850*, p. 51). Steps were being taken in 1744 to ensure, at a cricket match on Walworth Common, "that no civil spectators may be incommoded by the rabble." (*Penny London Morning Advertiser*, 11 June, 1744).
11. R. W. Malcolmson, *Ibid*, p. 51.
12. There was cricket at, e.g. Knavesmire racecourse, York (*Leeds Mercury*, 27 August, 1796), Bishopsbourne—with one schilling entrance charge to "the great Stand" (*Kentish Gazette*, 5 August, 1780) and Wincanton (*Bath Chronicle*, 20 August, 1772). Boxing took place at e.g. Brighton racecourse in August 1788, when the Prince of Wales was present and one of the combatants was killed by striking his head "against the rail of the stage" as he fell. *Pancratia; or A History of Pugilism* (a new edition, London 1815 (1st Edition, by J.B., London 1811), pp. 80-1.
13. Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1971) (1st edition, London 1722-24), p. 99. See also Chapter 1, "Racing before 1840," in Wray Vamplew, *The Turf: A Social and Economic History of Horse Racing* (London: Allen Lane, 1976).
14. P.M. Tillott (editor), *A History of York* (London: Victoria County History, 1961), pp. 199, 232, 248, 267.
15. John Lawrence, *A Philosophical and Practical Treatise on Horses, and on the Moral Duties of Man towards the Brute Creation* (2 volumes: London, 1796-98). Vol. II, p. 23, quoted by Malcolmson, *op. cit.*, p. 51, note.
16. For example, most of the Nottingham hosiery manufacturers granted the Saturday half-holiday in 1861 by way of exchange for the customary Goose Fair and Race-day holidays. Roy A. Church, *Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham 1850-1900* (London: Frank Cass and Co. 1966), p. 375.
17. This analysis is based on reports and results of meetings in *The Daily Universal Register* between 1 July 1787 and 30 September 1787. The list of meetings would have been almost identical had it been drawn from the current Weatherby's *Racing Calendar*.
18. Horse and chaise races were advertised from Long Acre to Oxford and from Westminster to Newmarket on Sundays in April, 1728, and three years later Lord Cavendish rode from Hyde Park Comer to the Lodge in Windsor Forest on Sunday, 31st January 1731 in 1 hour 6 minutes. The wager was that he would do it in 1 hour 5 minutes, which he achieved the following Sunday. See W.B. Whitaker, *The Eighteenth Century-English Sunday* (London: The Epworth Press, 1940), pp. 56 and 58.
19. The general falling away of interest in sporting events at the end of the week, on the other hand, suited the demands of horse racing because it allowed the horses to be walked back home on Fridays and Saturdays. See also Wray Vamplew, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
20. For example, during Epsom races, on 15 May, 1771 and in June 1777 at Ascot (*Pancratia*, pp. 60 and 63).
21. See Henry Downes Miles, *Pugilistica: The History of British Boxing* (3 volumes: Edinburgh, 1906), Vol. I., p.vi.
22. *Ibid*, pp. 8-12. Miles quotes a poem from Volume vi of *Dodsley's Collection*, p. 312, "Extempore Verses on a Trial of Skill between those two Great Masters of Defence, Messieurs Fig and Sutton" which brings out the close association with cudgel-play. Broughton's rules are set out in *Pancratia*, pp. 42-3. His emporium was closed when a pugilist with heavy aristocratic backing unexpectedly lost a fight.
23. *Ibid*, p. 39.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 74 and *Pugilistica*, p. 86. Of the Jackson versus Ryan fight, a few months earlier, *The Daily Universal Register* reported that "galleries for the Spectators" were set up at the original venue at Staines and then, when the match had to be moved into Buckinghamshire, "a guinea was repeatedly offered and refused for a seat on a post-chaise roof." (20 December, 1787 and 21 December 1787).
25. *Pugilistica*, p. 84.
26. *Pancratia*, p. 47; Malcolmson, *op. cit.*, p. 43; *Pugilistica*, p. 298.
27. *Pugilistica*, p. 19.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
29. For example, Downes, on the Humphries and Mendoza fight: "Odiham was then a distance from town; it is now a steam steed's 'stride.' Everybody was there . . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 86.
30. Malcolmson, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.
31. *Fog's Weekly Journal*, 28 August, 1731.
32. *St. James's Chronicle*, 22 August, 1765.
33. For example, a notice in the *Reading Mercury*, 2 September, 1782: "on Mon., Sept. 16 in Old Field near Maidenhead, . . . Chertsey assisted by John and Michael Woods, and Bedster of Surrey, against the Maidenhead Club, assisted by Bunce and Harris of Hants., for 50 guineas."
34. *Ipswich Journal*, 10 September, 1743.
35. See examples quoted in G.B. Bucklery, *Fresh Light on 18th Century Cricket* (Birmingham: Cotterell and Co., undated (preface 1935)), pp. 27-8, 62, 66.
36. *Daily Advertiser*, 30 June 1744.
37. *Penny London Morning Advertiser*, 6 July 1744.
38. *Daily Advertiser*, 28 September 1744. Bankruptcy notices, *Ibid.*, 9 and 16 January, 31 May, 1748. The story is incomplete and made even more complicated by Christopher Brookes' doubts over whether there might have been two Mr. Smith's each owning cricket grounds! (Christopher Brookes, *English Cricket: The Game and its Players through the Ages* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978, p. 50). Contemporary references hardly leave room for this doubt. The diverse commercial interests of the successful eighteenth century publican have to be remembered and Smith's bankruptcy was unlikely to stem solely from cricket. Apart from the inn (which he leased) and his cricket ground, he also owned stables and an island in the Thames near Hampton court.
39. *Morning Chronicle*, 23 August, 1774.
40. "Nothing can exceed the vogue that Cricket is in in some parts of Surrey and Hampshire: the people are so fond of it that it is common for them to ride 40 miles to be mere spectators at a Cricket Match." *Whitehall Evening Post*, 20 July 1769.
41. W.B. Whittaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 51 and 85.
42. This present article arises in fact out of a long-term study of Sabbatarian influences on the development of sport, in the course of which it became necessary to undertake some close analysis from contemporary calendars of days on which sporting events took place, in a search for Sunday games.
43. See, for instance, M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966 (first published, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1925)), pp. 289-90.
44. See particularly Douglas A. Reid, "The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876," *op. cit.*
45. Studies over a long period can give only partial information and I hope shortly to publish an account of commercial sport in a single year in the 1780's to indicate how far it had become a regular feature of leisure life.

