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'It is pleasing to know that football can be devoted to charitable purposes': British football and charity 1870–1918

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ABSTRACT

Football charity matches and tournaments played a significant role in the development of the sport in Britain, overlapping the era of friendly games and the coming of competitive leagues. The football community prided itself on its contributions to charity, raising more money than any other sport before 1918, and stakeholders within the game – associations, clubs, players and patrons – gained kudos for this perceived altruism. However the amounts donated, though welcomed by the recipients, were relatively minor sources of revenue for both institutions and individuals. Moreover the charity match became less important to clubs in an era of growing professionalism and commercialisation.

Comment

Sport and charity are major British institutions with significant resources devoted to their activities but which in the main are not profit-driven. However, they are linked by more than their 'peculiar economics': charity makes use of sports stars and sports events to raise revenue and sport itself has over 150,000 charitable organisations within its ranks. Yet the connection between the two remains largely unexplored save for a growing academic literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in modern sport.¹

However the relationship between sport and charity is a longstanding one. The 1840s and 1850s saw horseracing authorities establish the Bentinck and Rous Funds to offer aid to distressed jockeys. Aristocratic shoots often presented game to local hospitals and a Hunt Servants Benefit Society was set up in the 1870s: by the Edwardian era 'field sports ... (had developed) ... hand in hand with the charitable and the philanthropic' (Salt 1906, 490). Alongside traditional rural-based sports the late nineteenth century witnessed the rapid development of commercialised, urban-based, mass spectator sports and a consequent new relationship between sport and charity. Regular fixtures provided opportunities for frequent charitable collections and the increased number of sports professionals employed led to the emergence of yet more benevolent organisations to look after their interests such as the Professional Golfers' Association (from 1901) and the Association Football Players' Union (from 1907).

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The antecedents to football's involvement in CSR can be traced to late nineteenth-century charity matches and tournaments by which clubs and associations raised money for hospitals, homes and other 'good causes'. They began as a symbiotic relationship in which charities obtained funds and the clubs gained meaningful competitive games at a time when fixture lists were dominated by friendly matches. However, even when leagues, at both the elite and local level, developed such competitions continued. By 1914 there were over 100 regular charity tournaments in Britain including the Glasgow Charity Cup (which from 1874 to its demise in 1966) raised the present day equivalent of over £12 million) and the Charity Shield (founded in 1908, now significantly renamed the Community Shield).² Additionally throughout the period to 1914 one-off matches were often staged in the aftermath of tragedies such as mining disasters, railway crashes, and the sinking of the *Titanic*.

This is a revised and expanded version of an article authored by Joyce Kay and myself titled 'Beyond altruism: British football and charity 1877–1914' originally published in *Soccer and Society*, vol. 11, no. 10 (2010), 181–197. I applied for grants to pursue this topic further but was unsuccessful. Perhaps it was not an appealing topic, though I hazard a guess that my criticism of 'charitable' trusts did not go down well with some awarding bodies, themselves holding that status. Thanks go the Nuffield Foundation and the Professional Footballers' Association for financial assistance towards the research costs of this paper and the staff of the National Football Museum, Preston and the Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow for access to research materials.

Introduction

Ten minutes into the 1902 football international between Scotland and England at Ibrox Park, Glasgow, a wooden stand collapsed plunging spectators 40 feet through the broken boards. Twenty-six of them were killed and over 500 injured (Sheils 1997). It was Britain's first football disaster. In Scotland the Scottish Football Association (SFA) immediately subscribed £3000 to the Lord Provost's relief fund and, via the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee, broadened that end-of-season tournament 'under the exceptional circumstances' to increase the number of games and include teams from Edinburgh in an attempt to secure more funds for the relief of victims and their families (*Annual Reports of SFA*, 1901/02; Minutes of GCCC, April 17, 1902). In England the Football Association (FA) opened a relief fund with a donation of £500; requested clubs to play games to supplement that money; and arranged a special international match against Scotland with the gross proceeds going to the fund. In all £3000 was raised (Minutes of FA Council, April 18, 1902, August 8, 1902).

In providing aid to those killed and injured at a football match both Associations were doing what might have been expected, but there were occasions when their generosity went beyond the boundaries of the game. On its maiden voyage in April 1912 the British passenger liner *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank off Newfoundland with the loss of over 1500 lives. The immediate reaction of the FA was to donate 200 guineas to the relief fund organised by the Lord Mayor of London; promise to add the gross receipts of its Charity Shield match; and appeal to all affiliated clubs and associations to hold collections or arrange special matches. In total £2235 was raised (Minutes of FA Council, April 19, 1912, June 3, 1912). Such generosity to the unfortunate outside football was not unprecedented. In 1897 the FA had given £157, the whole proceeds of an international trial match, to the Mansion House Indian Famine Relief Fund and two years later it subscribed 100 guineas for the benefit of those widowed, orphaned or wounded as a result of the South African War as well

as declaring a 'Football Saturday' on which it 'invited' all affiliated clubs and associations to donate a minimum 10% of gate receipts from matches played on that day (Minutes of FA Council, March 1, 1897, December 18, 1899).

Throughout Britain regional associations and individual clubs often responded to local disasters and tragedies by playing matches or allowing collections to be made. The Lancashire FA organised matches to help the families of those killed in the county's major mining disasters at Altham (1883), Maypole (1908) and Pretoria (1910); the victims of the latter were also assisted by Chelsea, West Ham, Leicester Fosse and the Football League itself which raised £1200 (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, January 16, 1911; Bentley 1912, 390; Sutcliffe and Hargreaves 1992, 278). Three years later the gross receipts of £391 from the FA Charity Shield match was given to the sufferers of the Senghennydd colliery explosion in Wales in which 439 miners were killed (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, February 21, 1910; Minutes of FA Council, November 3, 1913). In 1883 Dumbarton played Rangers to raise funds for the victims of the Daphne tragedy in which almost 200 workers perished in the hull of a ship that capsized on launch at its Glasgow shipyard (Goldblatt 2006, 70). Everton played a game in 1910 for the relief of the families of those lost when the steam packet *Ellan Vannin* sank in Liverpool Bay and Exeter one the following year for the victims of the Brixham fishing fleet disaster (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, January 17, 1910; January 16, 1911).

Disaster funds were only part of the connection between philanthropy and football. In an age of limited state intervention, Victorian social welfare was founded on private charitable enterprise: orphanages, hospitals and convalescent homes all relied on regular voluntary subscriptions and donations, while economic depression and unemployment were alleviated by privately-resourced soup kitchens and distress relief funds. Football contributed to all these. In May 1877 Glasgow Rangers played a match which raised £30 in aid of the unemployed in the weaving village of Newmilns (*Glasgow Evening Times*, May 21, 1877). In season 1878/79 a charity tournament was played under electric light, which, although the illumination was 'far from what was desired', raised £50 for the Glasgow Unemployed Fund (*SFA Annual*, 1879–80, 25). In 1893 Everton played a match to raise funds to help the destitute families of cotton trade operatives thrown out of work leading the *Athletic News* to comment 'it is pleasing to know that football can be devoted to charitable purposes' (*Athletic News*, February 6, 1891, 1). The following season Walsall played a match for the Mayor's Distress Fund (Minutes of FA Council, February 14, 1894). In 1908, when the West of Scotland faced its worst industrial slump since the 1870s with unemployment rising to over 20%, the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee (GCCC) gave £200 to the Glasgow Unemployed Distress Relief Fund, and £25 for the same cause in Govan and Partick, while the SFA donated £500 to similar funds throughout Scotland (Minutes of GCCC, May 13, 1908; Minutes of SFA, November 17, 1908). Distress was relieved by matches and collections at games for local soup kitchens in Fulham and Portsmouth; to aid the poor boys of Manchester (Minutes of FA Emergency Committee, September 5–30, 1895); to provide Christmas dinners for destitute children; and to house waifs and strays at Millwall (Minutes of FA Council, December 6, 1909; December 5, 1910; Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, January 17, 1910; February 21, 1910). Many matches were also played to raise money for local hospitals and it was these that provided the rationale for the emergence of regular tournaments rather than the one-off reactive event. At the end of

the 1880s there were at least 23 Scottish charity competitions of note being played and on the eve of the First World War over 200 in England.³

The War itself offered further opportunities for charitable actions by those involved in football. The FA immediately donated £1000 to the National Relief Fund inaugurated by the Prince of Wales, recommended all associations, clubs, and competitions to make a grant, and authorised matches to be played during the forthcoming season to raise further money. An additional £250 was given to the Belgian Relief Fund. The body urged all those interested in the game to volunteer for the forces or to help ‘in all possible ways’ and ‘to those who are unable to render personal assistance the Association would appeal for their generous support of the funds for the relief and assistance of the dependents of those who are engaged in serving their country.’ North of the border the Scottish Football League subscribed £300 to the National Relief Fund (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, August 31, 1914; Crampsey 1990, 57). As the war progressed associations such as the Hampshire FA set up wounded soldiers funds and the sectionalised Football League raised £4722 for war charities and the London Combination £840 (*Gamage’s Football Annual*, 1919–20, 364; Pickford 1937, 83).

Stakeholders

Several groups had an interest in the football/charity relationship, not least the charities themselves who were concerned with obtaining funds to finance their activities. Football associations authorised, and sometimes organised, charity matches; clubs and their players participated in the games; patrons provided trophies and lent status; and fans paid to watch, thus funding the charities.

Associations

The pioneering association in organising regular charity competitions was the SFA which, three years after its foundation in 1873, was so confident that it had become ‘a very prominent public institution’ and that the matches held under its auspices had given considerable pleasure to thousands of spectators, felt that it would be ‘a graceful as well as a rightful act ... to close the season with a match for the benefit of some Charitable Institution.’ A game was accordingly played in April 1876 between Glasgow and Dumbartonshire which raised £100 for the Glasgow Western Infirmary (*Scottish Football Association Annual*, 1876–77, 27, 45).⁴ Around the same time a group of Glasgow merchants also organised a charity football contest, but by 1878 the two competitions had merged into one which was run by the GCCC, a joint board of merchants and SFA representatives. It was suggested by a contemporary sporting newspaper that this tournament acted as a catalyst for the wider development of charity matches as the fund-raising success of the Glasgow Charity Cup competition proved to have ‘the power of a magnet ... so that [by 1880] a season without its charity games would present the same spectacle as a man without his nose’ (*Athletic News*, April 14, 1880, 3).

The Glasgow Association (founded 1884) did not sponsor a charity competition, although it gave its blessing to those hosted by local associations within its jurisdiction. It may have seen little point in competing with the one already established by the SFA (with whom it shared a secretary, several committee members, and office premises) given that the trophy was generally restricted to the leading Glasgow and West of Scotland clubs. In 1886 a Rangers’ spokesman asked the SFA what steps could be taken by the Glasgow Association

to get the Glasgow Charity Cup under its control. He was told that only the GCCC could consider the matter and nothing further eventuated (Minutes of SFA, March 9, 1886).

Several other leading regional associations followed the Glasgow Charity Cup example. When, in September 1878, Lord Wharnccliffe offered a cup to the Sheffield Association (founded 1871) 'to serve the interests of Sheffield footballers' it was decided to accept the proposal of the secretary that it be for a competition in aid of medical charities 'on the custom in favour at Glasgow' (*Athletic News*, September 11, 1878, 6; Sparling 1926, 49). Similarly N.L. Jackson, a member of the FA Council, claimed that when he persuaded Sir Reginald Hanson, Lord Mayor of London and patron of the London FA (founded 1882), to present a charity trophy in 1886 for competition among the London clubs it was 'in imitation of Glasgow' with hopes of 'similar success' (Jackson 1900, 153). This tournament came under the management of the London FA (Jackson 1932, 99). It had already been noted by a Scottish critic that there were charity competitions in all the principal cities in England but that in London 'the idea has not been deemed worthy of adoption' (*Scottish Athletic News*, May 4, 1883, 4). Whether this barb was aimed at the London FA or the national organisation based in the city is not clear.

Of the other two major English associations, the Birmingham and District FA (founded 1875) began a charity competition in 1880 which became the Mayor of Birmingham's Charity Cup in 1882 and it is possible that it too was influenced by the Glasgow precedent, given the close relationship between itself and its Glasgow counterpart which included regular inter-association fixtures (Green 1953, 55). The Lancashire FA was established in 1878 but it was four constituent clubs that set up the major regional charity tournament, the East Lancashire Charity Cup in 1882 (Baron 1906, 22). Three of these clubs were known to have played matches in Glasgow.

In contrast to other major associations, the FA itself was late in instituting its own charity competition, the Charity Shield not being played for until 1908. However it did become involved with the holding of three Charity Football Festivals held annually at the Kennington Oval in London from 1886, the first of which, along with an associated smoking concert, raised £405. Unusually these featured both football and rugby matches (FA Balance Sheet, August 31, 1886; Wilson 1981, 12; Jackson 1900, 65). The FA had first become involved in charity donations in 1882 when an above-expected FA Cup semi-final gate in the match between Blackburn Rovers and Sheffield Wednesday led it to allocate £70 to the charities of the two towns, the money to be distributed by the respective mayors (Green 1953, 66). Three years later, on the recommendation of its Finance Committee donations of either £25 or £50 were sent for distribution to charities in towns where the largest receipts had been taken by the Association in matches (FA Balance Sheet, August 31, 1886). However from then on there were no specific donations cited in the balance sheets until one to the Indian Famine Relief Fund in 1897. In essence the FA adopted a policy of keeping football's charitable activities under control without becoming seriously involved in fund-raising itself until 1908, apart from the occasional foray to support victims of major disasters such as the Indian Famine and the Ibrox stand collapse.

The establishment of the FA Charity Shield stemmed from a major dispute with amateur clubs when several of them refused to accept an FA ruling that the associations to which they belonged must accept membership and responsibility for professional clubs in their area and in 1907 broke away to form the Amateur Football Association. The FA then ruled that any team that played against one of the renegades would itself be liable for

disaffiliation. When the organisers of the Sheriff of London charity competition, begun in 1898, asked if they were still free to chose the teams to play for their trophy, traditionally a match between a professional and an amateur side, even if one of them was not affiliated to the FA, they were told that this would be against FA policy but that the Council was 'most anxious that the cause of charity should not suffer, and would be pleased to arrange with the Committee for a match between two teams of this association, either club teams or selected teams' (Minutes of FA Council, November 4, 1907). No more was heard from the Sheriff of London Committee till March 1908 when it asked for, and was given, consent for a match between Queen's Park from Glasgow and a professional club but the match never took place. In the meantime the FA had decided to run its own annual match, 'the object being that charity should benefit by receiving the gross receipts of the matches' (Minutes of FA Council, February 24; March 9, 1908). Accordingly it was arranged for the Football League champions Manchester United to play Queen's Park Rangers, its Southern League counterpart. This match had to be replayed before the northern side became the first holders of the FA Charity Shield. In total £1275 was raised for charity. Next season saw Newcastle United versus Northampton Town. Both teams received £45 for distribution to local charities and twelve London hospitals each received between £5 and £10 (Minutes of FA Benevolent Fund Committee, July 10, 1909). In total some £226 was given out, all but £12 going to medical charities. The Sheriff of London trophy remained in abeyance and the Charity Shield became the major charity match in England. Customarily it was the Southern League and Football League champions who played but in 1913 it involved a professional eleven versus an amateur one.

Clubs

Although clubs often loaned out their grounds for one-off charity matches – between groups as diverse as boxers versus jockeys, sweeps against bakers, or, more commonly, touring theatrical troupes and pantomime companies (FA Minutes *passim*; Minutes of Sheffield Wednesday FC, January 29, October 27, 1897, May 4, 1898, May 31, 1901; Curry 2004, 193; Huggins 2004, 138) – they often welcomed the opportunity to play in charity tournaments. In the 1870s and 1880s, prior to the development of leagues with regular matches scheduled, there was virtually a free market in fixtures. These were mainly friendly games which might be cast aside if one of the clubs progressed in a cup competition or obtained a better offer in terms of the quality of the opposition or expenses promised. Charity matches with a trophy attached meant that the clubs obtained meaningful fixtures, often with selected opponents rather than the random draw of cup competitions. This was as true of the village club as of the elite teams. Charity competitions if played at the end of the season, as many were, gave clubs a chance of redeeming a poor year by winning a cup, often at the expense of a local rival. This remained cogent even when the league system spread bringing with it a regularity of fixtures.⁵ There could only be one league winner: the majority of teams were losers. It could be argued that over time friendly fixtures lost their gloss but league titles, challenge cup wins, and charity cup trophies (in that order) maintained their attraction for clubs.

It can be suggested that many clubs exhibited a sense of what is now termed CSR in which businesses see it as in their interest to foster good relations with relevant stakeholders which, in the case of football teams, includes fans and the local community. They organised charity matches at the time of local depressions and disasters and, as Huggins put it regarding the early years of organised football in the North East, charity 'cups helped to link soccer

more firmly into the community, acting in support of local enterprises, often hospitals, but increasingly also for the benefit of individuals, widows and orphans' (Huggins 1989, 310).

Players

An editorial in a leading sports journal in 1880 argued that 'our football players, if only they had the inclination, have the power to enrich many of our needy institutions' (*Athletic News*, April 14, 1880, 4). Some at least were so disposed and in the early 1880s the SFA gave public thanks given to all the players who took part in the Glasgow Charity Cup 'for the ready and cheerful way in which they responded to the appeal made to them' (*SFA Annual*, 1882–83, 32). These of course were amateurs but, as was pointed out by 'an old player' in 1902 'it must not be forgotten that professional players have throughout been prominent in contributing to deserving charities' (An Old Player 1902, 77). Individuals such as Billy Meredith, later a stalwart of the Players' Union, helped out their fellow professionals by playing in their benefit games. He also helped organise a match to aid the poor of Manchester and in 1907, played for a George Robey XI at Stamford Bridge against Chelsea to raise money for charity (Harding 1985, 44).

Collectively players aided each other via the benevolent fund of their unions. The first semi-permanent union for professional footballers, the Association Footballers' Union (AFU) set up a benevolent fund, financed partly by contributions from players but also via other fund-raising activities including a benefit match, English versus Scottish players, at Ibrox in April 1898, for which it received permission from the FA and SFA (Minutes of FA Emergency Committee, January 4–27, 1899). Although this was poorly attended, nevertheless subscriptions from over 400 members enabled the organisation to send money to relatives of deceased players. During the next two years several matches were played to raise funds to assist individual players and their families. Such matches of course required permission of the FA or its affiliated associations (Harding 1991, 13, 25). Within a few months of being established, its successor, the Association Football Players Union (AFPU), was arranging money for families of men who had died leaving inadequate provision. When Frank Levich of Sheffield United died the Union sent his mother £20 and wrote to the Sheffield club to ask that the amount equal to his wages for rest of season be paid. It also wrote to FA asking for a grant from its Benevolent Fund (Minutes of AFPU, April 1, 1908). In 1908 the first AGM of the Union agreed that in the case of the death of a member a shilling levy would be made on each member to be paid to his nearest relative without any deduction (Minutes of AFPU, December 15, 1908). Although the AFPU made little headway in its challenge to the issues of wage limitation and the retain and transfer system, day-to-day benevolent work was a 'solid achievement'. Between 1908 and 1914 hundreds of players and their families were assisted. Widows automatically received a £10 grant (raised by a levy on all members) and other small but crucial sums were paid towards funeral expenses, removal costs, furniture replacement, and hospital fees (Harding 1991, 108).

Patrons

Patronage came from various sources. Some charity competitions followed the pattern of patronage at association level where titled men and those from the professions and politics were dominant.⁶ In London Sir Thomas Dewar, at the time Sheriff of London, had already donated a cup for London schoolboy football competition, when, in early 1898, he applied to the FA to organise a match between the best amateur and best professional team under the

title Champion Charity Cup Competition. He would provide the trophy and the proceeds (after payment of the expenses of the match and one-third of the net receipts to the professional club) would be distributed to charities selected by a committee headed by himself. Consent was given, provided that the match was held after 21 March so as not to interfere with the home international matches, but the FA suggested that the title be changed to the Sheriff of London Charity Cup. Eventually a shield, an imposing six feet high, rather than a cup became the preferred trophy (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, February 2, 1898). Most of the money raised went to London charities but some also to charities of the towns represented by the professional team (Creek 1933, 125).

In Burnley the local Medical Officer of Health, Dr Dean, donated a trophy with the funds raised from the associated matches to go to the new hospital (Wiseman 1973, 15). North of the border the Paisley Charity Cup was funded by subscriptions from local gentlemen, and, thanks to the generosity of several noblemen and MPs, together with the gentry and a large number of smaller subscribers, the Southern Counties Football Association purchased a cup which, 'for beauty of design, is not equalled in Scotland.' Eight clubs, including those from Moffat, Dumfries, Stranraer and Lockerbie, were invited to compete for the prize and raised £24 for charities in the south of Scotland (*SFA Annual*, 1884–85, 85). Over the water a 'number of leading merchants and gentlemen' subscribed for the Irish Football Association Charity Cup, placing the power to invite clubs to compete and to distribute the proceeds to 'certain charitable institutions' in a board of trustees (*SFA Annual*, 1885–86, 108).

Some patrons came from the commercial world. The press were prominent with the *Grimsby Mirror* Charity Association, the *Hull Times* Charity Cup and the Southern Combination Charity Cup established in 1900 'for and on behalf of southern charities' was organised by J.M. Dick, editor of the *Football News*, and the cup itself was donated by the [London] *Evening News* (Minutes of FA Council, February 28, 1894; Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, February 3, 1897; *Gamage's Association Football Annual*, 1914/15, 598–600). Others included the Glasgow merchants who purchased the Glasgow Charity Cup, the Bass brewing firm and the donors of the Sunderland Shipowners Charity Cup.

Fans

Most of the major charity competitions began before the creation of elite leagues which came in England in 1888 and Scotland two years later. Hence spectators had not become used to the idea of regular, competitive fixtures between high quality teams and were often willing to turn up in large numbers, thus providing revenue for the charities and status to those that provided the competition. There is no strong evidence that this spectator support for charity matches fell away as the elite leagues developed. Certainly Barnsley had its highest attendance to that date in the town's 1892 charity cup final and a Glasgow Charity Cup tie between Rangers and Celtic in 1897 produced a record week-night crowd of over 23,000 (*SFA Annual*, 1898–99, 50; Firth 1978, 10).

Charities

No evidence has been found that charities themselves instigated football matches as a means of raising funds. Some sent letters to the football authorities requesting contributions, usually unsuccessfully, though the GCCC finally rewarded Sister Aloysius for her persistence and added the St Vincent School for the Deaf to its list of recipients in 1913 (Letter book of J.K. MacDowell, May 16, 1913; Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow). They did, however,

reject the applications of the Royal Normal College and the local cat and dog home in 1912. The FA Council turned down an application from St Thomas's Hospital in 1895 on the grounds that 'it was not within the province of the Council to deal with such matters, the Council having declined all such applications before' (Minutes of FA Council, July 12, 1895).

Not necessarily [just] altruism

Public image and psychic income

Football's contribution to charities led to psychic income, in terms of a favourable image and public acclaim, for those running the game, chairing the clubs or donating trophies. An editorial in the *Athletic News* claimed that once the 'thread of philanthropy was woven into its constitution ... the [Scottish Football] Association was elevated into a position at once enviable and sacred' ("Sport and Charity." *Athletic News*, April 14, 1880, 4). Each year of competition reinforced the admiring view in some quarters of the football entrepreneur as a civic benefactor.

Patronage of charity football kept the name of Members of Parliament in front of the electorate; for mayors it provided a legacy of their term of office. Admittedly the initial outlay could be high but, once the trophy had been purchased, it was others who had to make the competition work. Yet it was the donor's name that continued to be associated with the event. Some patronage was commercially oriented. If newspapers and businessmen were totally disinterested in promoting themselves they could have donated cups anonymously. Instead their name became indelibly associated with the competitions that they sponsored, a relatively cheap form of advertising; even when the cup could cost over £100 it was a one-off payment that brought renewed publicity every year. For others, however, it was more a question of kudos and approbation. N.L. 'Pa' Jackson's charity matches for the funds of the Poplar Hospital brought him a life governorship of that institution (Jackson 1932, 51).⁷

Not everyone shared the fans' enthusiasm for the game and there were some trenchant critiques of association football, particularly of the professional and mass-spectator versions. Some critics felt that those who watched really should be playing; others believed that the passion for football distracted its followers from real world issues. There were warnings of the sport's relationship with the alcohol trade and the opportunities it provided for gambling and misbehaviour (Edwardes 1892, 622; Smith 1897, 571; Ensor 1898, 758; Thorne 1906, 196–198; Peatling 2005, 353–371). It could be speculated that football assisted charity to counter some of the criticism it received. But did those who ran football care about the views of those outside the game? Possibly not until the First World War when, stung by criticisms of the continuance of the game while men were dying at the front, the FA retaliated by pointing out that 'it [football] is producing more men for the Army and money for relief than all the other' sports (Minutes of FA Council, October 12, 1914).

Power relations

Charity fixtures provided an opportunity for the governors of football to exercise their authority. The Lancashire FA, for example, had a rule from its inauguration in 1878 that 'any club competing for a prize offered by an individual or individuals unless the net proceeds go to some football club or clubs or charity or charities, shall cease to be members of this Association' (Sutcliffe and Hargreaves 1992, 24). Simultaneously charity matches were encouraged and the threat of disaffiliation used to consolidate the position of the Association.

The FA itself had cemented its authority over English football in the 1870s and was effectively in charge of the game by the 1880s by which time its cup competition was recognised as *the* trophy to win. Hence any threat to disaffiliate a club or association was meaningful. Its Council was determined to keep charity football under [its] control and passed regulations as to when games could be played, who could participate, and what should happen to the proceeds and, of course, whether it was a final of a serious charity competition or a burlesque involving pantomime artists, no game was allowed unless it was played under FA match rules. Normal disciplinary procedures were expected to be upheld and no charity was shown to Manchester United player E.J. West who was not allowed to receive a Charity Shield medal because he was under suspension at the time of the final (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, November 20, 1911).

By the early 1890s every meeting of the FA Council or Consultative Committee was dealing with at least half-a-dozen applications for charity or benefit matches, so many in fact that the approval decision was delegated to the regional associations. Nevertheless the FA was adamant that the hierarchy of control should be maintained. When the Rotherham Charity Cup Association applied for affiliation in 1892 it was turned down as it lay within the Sheffield Association's catchment area and eventually it was that association which approved the competition (Minutes of FA Council, December 12, 1892, August 7, 1893). In 1899 the FA had no objection to an application from the Norwood Junior Charity Cup Committee to expand the number of teams in its competition but refused to let it transfer supervision of the event from its local association to the Southern Suburban League, that organisation 'having been authorised for a certain competition should keep within its jurisdiction' (Minutes of FA Emergency Committee, 30 June–5 August 1899).

The FA's insistence that all charity matches must be officially approved was even used to sanction one of its own executive members, N.L. Jackson, when he arranged scratch matches for charity without first gaining approval (Minutes of FA Council, December 14, 1896; X.Y. 1897, 574–576; Jackson 1932, 174).⁸ It also proved a major weapon in its confrontation with the Players' Union over the latter's non-benevolent activities. To meet the legal costs of a test case which challenged the retain and transfer system, the Union borrowed money from its benevolent fund leading to the consequent refusal of the FA to sanction the Union's annual fund-raising match (Minutes of AFPU, November 2, 1909).

When the SFA became involved in the Glasgow Charity Cup it had only been established for three years and was scarcely in control of the Scottish game though it was in charge of the nation's challenge cup competition. The charity competition gave it an opportunity to cement its position at the head of Scottish football with two major trophies held under its auspices. However the inauguration of the Scottish Football League (SFL) meant that the Glasgow Charity Cup became the site of a power struggle between the two bodies. They were already at odds as the SFA, who chose the national team, had set aside without consultation two Saturdays for international trial matches thus interfering with league games fixed for those days. When the GCCC [comprising local merchants and SFA representatives] then also scheduled its ties for Saturdays before the end of the league season the SFL instructed its member clubs, Celtic, Rangers and Third Lanark, not to play in the competition. Without these leading teams, the Charity Cup, consisting of Airdrieonians, Partick Thistle, and Queen's Park who played Northern in the final, raised only £150. Moreover the League flexed its muscles and organised its own charity competition which brought in £820 (Minutes of SFA, March 24, 1891, April 2, 1891; *Scottish Sport*, 5 April 1892, 4; Robinson

1920, 181–182). A lesson learned, the Committee gave way and next season switched its fixtures to dates after the League season ended, but the SFA Annual General Meeting also passed a rule saying that all matches including charities and friendlies had to have their permission (Minutes of SFA, May 12, 1891). In turn the League dropped its charity tournament and the official records encompass the revenue from both the 1891 charity cups, though labelling the League contribution as coming via a supplementary charity committee (*Athletic News Football Annual*, 1894, 109). It was, as a Scottish newspaper noted, ‘certainly not too creditable to the boasted generosity of footballers that we should have the prospect of yearly disputes over the details of the Charity competition’ (*Scottish Sport*, April 22, 1892, 30). Ironically, after the Charity Cup Committee faced reality and switched to more suitable dates for the League teams, Queen’s Park, a stalwart of the Charity Cup but a club that refused to join the League for a decade, did not play in the 1893 tournament as it ended its season before League fixtures were complete and hence before the Charity Cup competition began (Minutes of GCCC, April 18, 1893).

The level of control by the football authorities could operate against the interests of charity, specifically in terms of the close season. For many years the FA refused to allow clubs to charge entrance fees or hold collections for charity at pre-season practice matches. After this decision was rescinded some 50 clubs took advantage of the situation in 1909 to raise money for charity, suggesting that an opportunity had been missed earlier (Minutes of FA Council, September 16, 1890; Minutes of FA Emergency Committee, June 11–August 19, 1897; Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, September 5, 1910). At the other end of the season the FA restricted matches to the pre-determined cut-off date ‘except under very special circumstances’ (Minutes of FA Council, July 10, 1909). In Scotland the SFA adopted a similar policy but decided that matches to aid victims of the Ibrox disaster could be allowed ‘under the exceptional circumstances’. It had done the same in the mid 1890s when bad weather had led to a fixture backlog ‘in the interests of the many institutions which depend so largely on football for a helping hand’ (Minutes of GCCC, April 17, 1902; *Annual Report of SFA*, 1894/95, 6).

There was also power involved in the selection of teams to play in the various charity fixtures. In 1902 Aston Villa was not invited to defend the Sheriff of London Shield even though the team had again won the league; instead the committee in charge ‘in considering the interests of charity’ chose Tottenham, the FA Cup winners, to play against the Corinthians at White Hart Lane, their own ground (Creek 1933, 131). In contrast petty politics meant that Everton refused to participate in an annual charitable fixture between professional footballers and pantomime artistes in support of local hospitals because it was to be held at Anfield, home of their arch rivals Liverpool, leading to the scathing query in the local press as to whether ‘Charity is to be ridden over for Jealousy’s sake?’ ([*Liverpool Review*, December 17, 1892]). The choice of teams to play in the Glasgow Charity Cup was at the discretion of the organising committee and no criteria were published. When SFA cup-winners Vale of Leven queried its non-selection in 1890 it was simply told that those chosen were ‘the most suitable’ (Minutes of SFA, March 28, 1890). Throughout the 1880s clubs used SFA meetings to make recommendations about the composition of the charity tournament, but the cup committee, with merchant representation in the majority and in the chair, remained of independent mind. In 1885, for example, there was a movement by a group of clubs to expand the competition to eight clubs. The SFA went so far as to select the eight from ten nominations, but when one of the omitted clubs protested to organisers, the

committee refused to join the debate and opted again to have only four clubs (Minutes of SFA, March 10, 19, 1885). However, in later years, aware of the drawing power of the leading clubs, the Glasgow committee often capitulated to their demands, though usually after a show of resistance. Hence, at the instigation of the clubs, the committee approved neutral venues (1894), accepted that clubs could switch match dates by mutual agreement (1897) and allowed players SFA-cup tied for other clubs to play in the Charity Cup matches (1902) (Minutes of GCCC, March 1, 1894; April 22, 1897; June 6, 1902). Political machinations also contrasted with the overt aims of charity elsewhere in Scotland. In Dundee there were complaints that four established clubs – East End, Our Boys, Harp and Johnstone – set up a Charity Football Association which deliberately excluded clubs like Strathmore and Lochee United to prevent them from improving and the Southern Counties Football Association began the report on its charity tournament with the ominous statement, ‘there must be considerable eliminations from the committee before harmonious working can be attained’ with the vice-president explained that the some members of the outgoing committee had ‘pretty much decided among themselves’ which clubs were to play (*SFA Annual*, 1886–87, 101; *Scottish Sport*, January 5, 1892).

Another aspect of power was to decide who were the deserving poor. In most cases this involved only the selection of charitable organisations who were then left to distribute the money as they saw fit. In Glasgow this was done by the Charity Cup Committee though in Edinburgh it was ‘subject to the approval of the Earl of Rosebery’, the patron of the charity tournament (*SFA Annual*, 1884–85, 81). None of the GCCC Minute Books consulted give any indication as to how or why deserving causes were chosen by the various committees. Presumably a consensus had to be reached, though personal advocacy in favour of a pet project probably occurred: it is notable that no Catholic charities were funded until a representative from Celtic joined the GCCC in 1894. Perhaps the most powerful voices also held sway in the selection of even more controversial recipients such as the Lock Hospitals for female venereal disease patients and Magdalene Asylums that dealt with ‘females who have strayed from the paths of virtue’ (Aird 1894, *passim*; Checkland 1980, 180). In times of economic crisis or local tragedy the choice of beneficiaries may have been more straightforward. Although the London FA Council selected the teams to play in its charity cup, the subcommittee comprising three LFA delegates and three co-opted members determined the grounds and dates, took all the receipts, paid all the expenses and had ‘absolute control’ over the distribution of funds (*London Football Association Annual*, 1905–06, 62–63).

With benevolent societies each application was considered on its merits. After the death of George Smith the secretary of AFPU was instructed that ‘if the case is a deserving one, to consider what grant shall be given to the wife at the next meeting’ (Minutes of AFPU, August 27, 1908). After a satisfactory report she was granted £10 as was Norwich City’s F. Thompson who was in destitute circumstances’. However W. Hall of Bolton Wanderers was to get only up to £5 ‘if married and in absolute need’ but nothing if unmarried ‘unless it is a very exceptional case’ (Minutes of AFPU, November 16, 1908). By the end of 1910 the standard assistance given was £5 but it was always checked that the case was a ‘deserving one’ (Minutes of AFPU, December 5, 1910).

Did charity begin at home?

Football was a physical contact sport with socially-sanctioned violence which produced its share of injuries, some of them serious enough to affect the amateur player’s ability to

follow his everyday job or even career-threatening for the professional player. Although some clubs – Aston Villa as early as 1879 – gave gratuities to injured amateur players and others took out insurance policies on their professionals, for most of the period to 1914 many distressed players relied on charity for assistance (Minutes of Sheffield FC, July 23, 1907; Carter 2007, 57).⁹ It was thus in the players collective interest to participate in charity matches as charity associations used some of the money raised to endow hospital beds and pay subscription lines which allowed them to nominate patients to receive treatment or undergo convalescence which, of course, could include footballers (Letters to Sir John Primrose, June 12, 1913 and to Mr Anderson, June 12, 1913. Letter Book of J.K. McDowall). In 1882 the GCCC sent a letter to the Western Infirmary asking what they intended to do in the future as several persons sent by the SFA had not been admitted. Whether these were players is not stated, but, thirty years later, the GCCC lambasted the Victoria Infirmary after two players had to wait several weeks for admission despite their injuries (Minutes of SFA, May 5, 1882; Minutes of GCCC, May 29, 1913). The incident led to a letter being sent to all three major infirmaries asking ‘if you are prepared to facilitate the entrance of an injured football player to your institution’ (Letter Book of J.K. McDowell, March 12, 1913).

Many matches were authorised to assist players who had to give up the game because of broken legs and other severe injuries as well as those who retired through ill health. Such matches were dependent upon the goodwill of both the relevant clubs and football authorities. More certain help could come from benevolent funds set up specifically to assist distressed players and their families. These were either subscription-based, as was the major one run by the AFPU, or, as with the Sheffield Football Players Accident Society in the 1870s, relied on donations, collections at football grounds and a variety of charity fundraisers such as smoking concerts or theatrical performances (Anon. 1983, 42). The GCCC considered establishing a separate benefit fund for football players but instead decided to deal with each case on its merits at the time of allocating its funds: in 1900 two ex-players received £10 and £2, respectively and another £10 went to a player’s widow (Minutes of GCCC, April 18, 1900).

In 1899, however, the FA set up its own benevolent fund with an annual transfer of funds from its accounts of £400 ‘for distribution among necessitous players and others who have rendered service to the game’ (Green 1953, 167). In 1913, in celebration of the Jubilee of the FA, a Charity Fund was established using £5000 from the Association’s investment fund with the ‘income to be devoted to the benefit of members who have worked for the good of the sport’ (Minutes of FA Council, April 4, 1913). In 1918 the football authorities established the Football National War Fund ‘to aid players and others who have rendered assistance to the game, and their dependents, who are in need of assistance arising from the War and other causes’ (*Gamage’s Association Football Annual*, 1919–1920, 20).

As these clauses suggest it was not just players who could benefit from inhouse charity. In 1907 the widow of Charles Alcock, long-serving secretary of the FA, received £100 from the Association’s benevolent fund and continued to get an annual £24 (Minutes of Benevolent Fund Committee, July 6, 1907). Earlier when the committee of the Glasgow Football Association noted that the treasurer of the Cowlares club had been advised by his doctor to go abroad for reasons of ill-health but could not afford to do so, it helped arrange a match between two clubs from the Association to raise enough money to send him to Australia (*SFA Annual*, 1887/88, 73). Even earlier the premature death of the SFA secretary

led that association to hold a match between the holders of the SFA and FA cups to aid his widowed mother (*Athletic News*, May 12, 1880).

Some players were indirect beneficiaries of football's charitable work during the First World War. These were female players, particularly those drafted into war work in the munitions factories, who organised teams partly for their own entertainment but also to raise funds for war charities (Newsham 1997; Jacobs 2004; Brennan 2007). Previously the FA had declared football unsuitable for women, even warning member clubs in 1902 not to involve themselves in charitable matches with 'ladies teams' (MacBeth 2002, 152). Now women's football teams received grudging official blessing and were allowed to play on Football League grounds.

Fingers in the pie?

There was often concern that not enough of charity match proceeds went for charitable purposes. Although the competition was intended to raise money for charity, the ornate East Lancashire Charity Cup was part purchased from the gate-money of the first tournament (Baron 1906, 23). In 1883 a Scottish newspaper criticised various charity match organisers for 'allowing large numbers to sit down for tea, sometimes as many as 70. They were reminded that 'charity funds are not association funds' (*Scottish Athletic Journal*, April 27, 1883, 6). Three years later there were press allegations of financial irregularity when the Victoria Hospital in Burnley received only £62 from gate receipts of £215 from the final of the Hospital Cup and in 1892 a writer in *Scottish Sport* deplored the fact that 'expenses in charitable undertakings too often reach a high figure and run away with too big a proportion of the drawings' (*Scottish Sport*, April 15, 1892, 8; Wiseman 1973, 22).

An official eyebrow was occasionally raised in the late 1880s but increasingly over the next decade various charity football associations and charity match owners receiving warnings. Coalville Charity FA was made subject to an investigation by the Leicestershire FA as 'the amount given to charity was very small and the expenses very high'; Ashton-under-Lyne Charity Competition Committee was asked for an explanation as to 'certain items on the balance sheet' and informed that 'the amount given to charitable institutions was small by comparison with the amount paid to the competing clubs, and that it was contrary to the ruling of the FA that a payment should be given to a secretary of a charity competition' (Minutes of FA Emergency Committee, September 7–14, 1896, May 29–July 10, 1896).

Finally at the end of the 1890s the FA set up a commission to formulate a set of regulations under which to sanction charity competitions and matches. These were formally adopted in April 1898, just prior to the annual surge in requests for end-of-season charity fixtures. In those competitions conducted on a league principle not less than 10% of the gross gate of each fixture had to be given to charity and the ground expenses specifically excluded the expenses of the teams involved. Where competitions were conducted as a challenge cup, at least one-tenth of the gross receipts had to go to charity in the preliminary rounds and at least one-third in the semi-finals and finals. One-off matches would be dealt with on their merits but, after the deduction of reasonable expenses, the whole of the net gate had to go to charity. No salary or honorarium was to be given to any official of any charity competition. It was stressed that the recommended level of donations was a minimum and it was hoped that more would be given where possible and that existing competitions already giving more would continue to do so (Minutes of FA Council, April 1898). Not all secretaries appeared to have read the rules and in early 1899 the Apsley and District Charity

Competition were told that net gate receipts of just £4:18s were ‘not sufficient justification for the existence of a competition described as a Football Charity Competition’. Further investigation revealed that actually less than a pound was passed on to charity mainly because the two clubs involved, Burton Swifts and Luton Town had been guaranteed £40 to play (Minutes of FA Emergency Committee, January 4–27, 1899, February 9–24, 1899). A decade later the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital Charity Cup Committee was informed that, as it had already expended £76 of the £194 raised, permission would not be granted for more to be spent on medals. It was reminded that ‘the money was raised in the name of charity’ (Minutes of FA Leagues Sanctions Committee, July 30, 1909).

Little is known about actual donations by clubs to charity. The *Athletic News* in 1880 was ‘well aware that many clubs both in Lancashire and Yorkshire lay part of their earnings on the altar of charity’, though it is not clear whether this refers to actual donations or revenue from charity matches (*Athletic News*, April 14, 1880, 4). Given the precarious state of early football finance, particular for lesser amateur clubs many of which went under, it may be that donating their time and ground for charity matches was an easier and more convenient way for clubs to give to charity. They were able to combine playing football, doing their civic duty, and raising money for local good causes. Moreover if expenses could be claimed then, depending on how flexible a definition they were given, a contribution could be obtained towards the running costs of the club. Rangers, for one, had received adverse publicity following a charity match where its opponent had provided its services free, but the Rangers’ president took £10 for his club’s expenses (Goldblatt 2006, 70).

In Scotland actual donations from the clubs to Glasgow Charity Cup funds were rare till the twentieth century. In 1899 Celtic donated £15 from its match expenses though no other professional club followed suit till 1906 when most rebated part of their expenses. In 1909 the clubs agreed only to take expenses for games played on Saturdays [when attendances were larger] and by 1910 giving back at least 10% of the expenses had become standard practice (Minutes of GCCC, May 26, 1909). Two years later the Secretary of the Charity Cup Committee wrote to all participating clubs requesting them ‘to consider a reduction in your expenses for this season’s competition’. Whether this embarrassed the clubs is a matter of conjecture but in 1914, when unfavourable weather affected the money raised, neither Rangers nor Celtic charged expenses and the other professional clubs reduced their charges.

One other development in football that had an impact on the fund-raising activities of charity competitions was the authorisation of professionalism in 1885 in England and eight years later in Scotland. Although in 1891 the FA resolved that no player could be paid in charity matches held in May, it specifically excluded ‘old-established charity competitions’ and specifically included May, a month outside the conventional season (Minutes of FA Council, April 27, May 3, 1891). When the Sheriff of London Shield was established in 1898 the FA agreed that the professional club involved could receive travel and hotel expenses plus a share of the net gate receipts not exceeding £100 (Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, February 2, 1898). Unless it was offset by larger gates once teams incurred extra costs there would be less surplus available for charity. Sheffield Wednesday offered their players an extra ten shillings should they win the 1888 Wharnccliffe Charity Cup ‘as some compensation for loss of time in preparing for the match’ (Minutes of Sheffield Wednesday FC, February 27, 1888). In Scotland all the competing clubs in the Glasgow Charity Cup – except for Queen’s Park who remained staunchly amateur – immediately began to claim for their players’ wages. Initially the Charity Cup Committee insisted that it only pay ‘an allowance

towards expenses', so Rangers' claim for £49 was reduced to £34, Celtic's £38–£25 though Third Lanark was granted its full £15. However by 1896 contributions towards wages were clearly acknowledged. At times they were a significant proportion of the gate-money as in 1903 when wages of £242 took 29% of the £840 gate (Cashbook of GCCC). In 1914 Alex Wylie, a long-standing trustee of the GCCC, complained that players were absorbing too much money from charity gamemoney (Minutes of GCCC, June 10, 1914). This was in marked contrast to 1879 when a local councillor purchased gold medals for the winning team and was forcibly told that this would 'be not paid out of the funds collected for the unemployed' (Minutes of SFA, June 3, 1879).

Whether any of the money taken by the clubs actually reached the players is unclear. There was no maximum wage legislation in Scotland so players there could be paid, but, in England, from 1901 there was a stipulated maximum wage of £4 a week. However, it is quite conceivable that, at a time when employers and players colluded to circumvent the maximum wage for league matches, players were given some monetary consideration rather than have compulsory 'voluntary' work forced upon them (Taylor 2005, 111–112).

One group of players who took advantage of charity matches to earn money was the 'Zulus', established in Sheffield in 1879, ostensibly, at least initially, to raise funds for the dependents of soldiers killed in the Zulu Wars. However, they soon began to charge fees for their appearances, eventually leading the Sheffield Association in 1882 debaring from any Association contest players taking part in a Zulu match or in any way receiving remuneration for playing (Sparling 1926, 45; Curry 2004, 345–346). Others who apparently gained from playing in charity games were the women of Dick, Kerr's Ladies who during the war received ten shillings for each match, supposedly in lieu of lost wages and expenses though many matches were on Saturday afternoons when they were free of work and at local grounds which involved little travel. In its first season the club's revenue from charity matches was around £800 of which £554 went to charity, on a par with the least generous of the Glasgow Cup seasons. Indeed in 1921 allegations of misappropriation of charity funds were used by the FA as a pretext to ban women's football from all grounds under its jurisdiction (MacBeth 2002, 155–6; Jacobs 2004, 47–48). Those amateurs who turned out from theatrical companies and the music halls also gained by obtaining free publicity which helped drum up business for their shows (Huggins 2004, 138).

Then there are the Corinthians. In 1882, while Honorary Assistant Secretary of the FA, N.L. Jackson had founded the Corinthians, ostensibly to improve the standard of the English international team, and, under his management for 22 years, they played all over Britain and indeed throughout the football world often raising money for charity (Jackson 1932, 66). They featured in two of the first three London Football Festivals, played in all the Sheriff of London Shield matches except that of 1899 when the amateurs were represented by Queen's Park from Glasgow, and in the 1912 Charity Shield. In the early 1890s they had offered to meet 'any other Association club at football, cricket and athletic sports, the proceeds to be given to charity' and in 1915 those members who had volunteered for the forces played charity matches as a Corinthians-under-Arms XI (Creek 1933, 25, 43). However, the club also played 'friendlies' for a share of the gate 'which enabled them to pay all expenses without profit' (Robinson 1920, 236). Of course middle-class expenses could be high, justified in some quarters as simply the maintenance of an accustomed life style (Creston 1894, 30). Jackson maintained that the players in his scratch sides that played for charity paid all their own expenses but it is not so clear where the Corinthians were concerned

(Jackson 1932, 174). There is a suspicion that not everything was above board. Jackson promoted the interests of amateur football but arguably was a professional entrepreneur. At the AGM of the Lancashire RFU, A.N. Hornby, the Lancashire cricket captain, stated that ‘the Corinthians went on tour, received big gates which more than covered their expenses, and nobody ever heard of the rest’ (*Yorkshire Post*, October 4, 1893). Although an ensuing Commission of Enquiry instigated by Jackson himself found ‘no payment has been made to members of the club, except for travelling and out of pocket expenses’ (*Yorkshire Post*, December 13, 1893), it has to be queried why a nomadic club with no ground to maintain needed to raise its demand for the regular fixture with Queen’s Park from half the net gate with a guarantee of £50 in 1887 to a £75 guarantee and half of all net gate money over £150 in 1897. A historian of Queen’s Park summed up Jackson as being ‘too good a financier’ (Robinson 1920, 238–239).

Charity football – who benefited?

Those involved in running the game boasted of the sport’s charitable work. On the inauguration of the Glasgow Charity Cup, the SFA thought it ‘a matter of great congratulation’ that it was the first Association of the kind that has linked itself with important public and benevolent purposes’ (*SFA Annual*, 1878/79, 22). By 1880/81, when 129 clubs were listed as members of the SFA, it was announced that ‘there is not a club in ‘the Annual’ that is not ready to play a ‘Charity Match’ and far more has been given to the funds of charitable institutions by the actions of Association football clubs than all the other games put together’ (*SFA Annual*, 1880/81, 16). Four decades later, an ex-president of the Football League declared that ‘no sport subscribes more to charity than does football’ and at the outbreak of the First World War, the Chairman of the Football Association noted that ‘the support which the FA in the past has given to the relief of suffering gives good guarantee that it will not now fail in its duty’ (Bentley 1912, 390; Minutes of FA Consultative Committee, August 31, 1914).

Yet it can be queried whether this self congratulation was fully justified. Even at the end of the 1880s, a decade when ‘football had seized upon charity’, one critic complained that clubs did ‘good only occasionally’ (Guthrie 1889, 33–37). There are indications that in some parts of Scotland the universal support for charity matches, alluded to in the *SFA Annual* for 1880/81, could no longer be relied upon. Kilmarnock won that town’s charity cup in 1886 but did not enter the Ayr competition, the other local tournament, leading the Ayrshire Football Association to ‘hope that all clubs invited to take part in charity matches during the present season will be able to do so at once, and not in the half-hearted way that is so detrimental to the interests at stake’ (*SFA Annual*, 1876–77, 90). Cambuslang were willing to participate in the Airdrie Charity Cup but only ‘under conditions which the committee considered unreasonable’ (*SFA Annual*, 1886–87, 84).

A combination of over expansion of charity tournaments and the establishment of leagues with their regular fixtures forced clubs into rethinking their participation in charity events. As charity tournaments proliferated, a hierarchy amongst the competitions developed and clubs began to select which competitions to enter. Having won the Wharnccliffe Charity Cup for the fourth time in 1888, Sheffield Wednesday opted henceforth to enter its reserve team. More useful to the club were the early season matches against city rivals Sheffield United which began in 1903 and served as tests for the coming campaign, offered fans a derby competition for local bragging rights, while also raising money for charity (Sparling 1926, 266). Six years later the directors of Barnsley FC decided that, in fairness to other teams, they

would do the same, leaving the senior side to compete in the more prestigious Wharnccliffe Charity League (Firth 1978, 17). Similarly, although it had initially been regarded as a major tournament in the 1880s, by the 1890s the participating clubs in the East Lancashire Charity Cup often put in their reserve teams (Baron 1906, 73). In Birmingham it became increasingly difficult to get the Football League clubs to play in the knockout stages of the Mayor's Charity Cup and from 1906 it became a match between two invited teams (Clives 1975, 45). In fact in the Birmingham area generally by 1900 the growth of league competitions was adversely affecting the old charity associations (Clives 1975, 45). In Scotland the results noted in the *Scottish Football Annual* suggest that there may have been a decline in charity competitions as early as the 1890s.

For some clubs, as commercial considerations came to the fore, charity ambitions may have fallen away. Celtic is the prime example. Although founded in 1888 to support local Catholic charities, within a decade it had become a limited company, was declaring dividends of 10%, and had virtually ceased to donate to charity. In fact the decline in the club's charitable donations dates from 1893 to 1894, coincident with the formal adoption of professionalism in Scottish football (Handley 1960, *passim*; Vamplew 1988, 86). Nevertheless Celtic did continue to play in the Glasgow Charity Cup and used its influence to ensure that Catholic charities received their fair share of the proceeds. Of 37 profit and loss accounts that have been found covering twelve clubs in Scotland, only six clubs made charitable donations with contributions averaging less than 1% of net profits (Vamplew 1982, 558).

More generally clubs donated time and access rather than money. On several occasions Sheffield Wednesday declined to donate to particular charities though it was willing for them to make a collection at a match (Minutes of Sheffield Wednesday FC, April 16, 1902 (Ibrox), December 10, 1902 (Poor Children's Fund) and September 16, 1903 (Lifeboat Saturday Fund)). Hence the fans contributed but not the club itself. It did give over £180 to various local hospitals in both 1904 and 1905 but this was from practice matches the proceeds of which the FA had ruled must go to charity (Minutes of Sheffield Wednesday FC, August 18, 1904; August 10, 1905). That said, not all clubs were reluctant to use their funds to give a helping hand. During the 1894/95 football season Everton set up soup kitchens that provided at least 12,000 meals to the poor of the neighbourhood (Young 1964, 56).

Ultimately it was the fans who made the charitable donations with their payments at the turnstiles and their coins in the collecting cans and blankets. Many of those who paid to watch the games may have belonged to that half of working-class and artisan families who gave regularly to charity in the 1890s but, as well as helping others, they were also consumers purchasing the football product (Prochaska 1993, 358). For their money they received not just the feel good factor from helping others, but also entertainment and a reinforcement of social identity at the local level.

As football developed from an entertaining pastime to a commercial pursuit, initial benevolence towards charity was tempered by issues of control and rivalry. The charity football match was still employed in the service of the local community and the public good but the burgeoning sport was too important for the principal stakeholders to sanction its unregulated growth. Furthermore, they soon recognized its business potential; from the 1890s the football cash cow was increasingly milked for commercial gain as well as contributing to charitable coffers. The level of expenses or financial guarantees to clubs to persuade them to take part in charity contests appears to indicate that the era of unconditional

philanthropy was a thing of the past: yet authorities and patrons continued to congratulate themselves on football's charitable achievements.

Although the FA subjected it to increasing scrutiny and regulation, the extent of charity football can only be estimated. Beyond a list of 275 FA-sanctioned charity competitions in 1913–14, all that can be quantified is the revenue generated by a few major charity competitions. In the 1880s the Wharnccliffe Cup of 1880 produced £140; the first Football Festival of 1885/86 raised £405; the East Lancashire Charity Cup generated an average of £170 for charity in the six seasons for which data is available; and the Glasgow Charity tournament averaged £752 a year in donations. The largesse of 'Generous Glasgow' continued through the 1890s with average donations of £999; these had increased to £1540 by the First World War. The Sheriff of London Shield produced £300 a year from 1898–99 to 1907–08 and the Southern Combination Charity Cup averaged £242 a year in the nine seasons from 1901 to 1902. After the novelty of the first match the FA Charity Shield gate receipts fell away markedly and the aggregate donation to charity in the next five seasons was only £14 more than was raised in its inaugural year, an average of £427 over the period.¹⁰

Clearly the Glasgow Charity Cup stands out, thanks partly to the concentration of elite clubs within the Scottish conurbation which made many games local derbies. The Glasgow figures can be put into a football perspective by comparing the gross receipts with those of the Scottish FA Cup final, and crowd sizes with average league attendances and, specifically, with the home gates of Rangers and Celtic, the two major crowd-drawing Scottish teams. These are shown in Table 1 and suggest that this charity tournament was a serious attraction to football fans. In contrast attendances at Charity Shield matches fared less well in relation to Football League games. Average crowds at the Charity Shield were around 14,650 but for the two seasons for which data is readily available (1908–09 and 1913–14) the Football League was attracting 19,450 per match (Minutes of Football Association; Vamplew 1988, 63). As shown in Table 2, the receipts generated fell far short of the FA Cup Final and were on a par with those of the Amateur Cup Final, a much less prestigious competition.

How much money in aggregate football raised for charity is conjectural. Writing in 1912, Bentley maintained that in England 'donations and subscriptions exceed £10,000 per year (Bentley 1912, 390). How he obtained this estimate is unknown but it is implicit in Bentley's article that it came from FA figures. Included in his figures must have been the pre-season matches that once they were once legalised as vehicles for charity brought in an average of £4122 between 1909/10 and 1913/14.¹¹

Table 1. Comparative crowd receipts and match attendances in Scottish Football.

| Period | Receipts £ | | Period | Average match attendance | | |
|-----------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------|--------------------|
| | Glasgow GC | Scottish Cup final | | Glasgow CC | SFL | SFL Rangers Celtic |
| 1892/93–1898/99 | 1010 | 769 | 1892/93–1893/94 | 8168 | 3823 | 7078 |
| 1899/00–1906/07 | 1035 | 978 | 1905/06–1913/14 | 12,615 | 6957 | 14,814 |
| 1907/08–1913/14 | 1764 | 1701 | 1914/15–1917/18 | 14,950 | 6096 | 13,398 |

Note: Cup final figures omit replays.

Sources: (a) and (c) Minutes of GCCC.

(b) Minutes of SFA.

(e) and (f) Ross (2005).

Table 2. Comparative crowd receipts in English Football (£).

| Season | Charity shield | FA Cup final | FA Amateur Cup final |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1908/09 | 1035 | 3889 | 315 |
| 1909/10 | 240 (replay) 226 | 4465 4149 replay | 225 |
| 1910/11 | 354 | 4205 4478 replay | 96 |
| 1911/12 | 230 | 3768 2612 replay | 705 403 replay |
| 1912/13 | 266 | 6134 | 177 235 replay |
| 1913/14 | 391 | 4324 | 157 |

Source: Balance Sheets of FA.

Even less clear is the extent to which this money benefited charity. Certainly the amounts collected for disaster funds represented a tiny fraction of the totals. A total of £2235 was raised by the FA for the Titanic Relief Fund, but this amounted to less than 1% of the £250,000 donated overall (Bryceson 1997, 219). Calculations based on donations from the Glasgow Charity Cup, the major British fund-raising football tournament, and the annual incomes of several local charities – the Central Dispensary, the Glasgow Medical Mission and the Samaritan Hospital for Women – also suggest that football contributed only 1–2% of their total revenues.¹² Donations from the Glasgow Charity Cup to the Victoria Infirmary averaged £100 per annum in the period 1892–96: total income of that institution from legacies, subscriptions and gifts was £35,000 in 1889 (Slater and Dow 1990, 21).

Conclusion

Football changed extensively in the period under review. The early charity fixtures could be viewed as a stage in the growth of football, overlapping the era of friendly games and the coming of competitive leagues. However by the twentieth century, and possibly earlier, clubs were less keen to play for charity as league systems began to dominate and determine fixture lists, professionalism became accepted, and elite clubs invested heavily in grounds and facilities. Yet throughout there was a thread of charitable activity at all levels of the sport. The popularity of football made it an ideal vehicle for charity fund-raising and at the elite level it could bring together large masses of people, far more than could be accommodated in a theatre or music hall.

Football probably raised more money for charity than any other sport but no charity, except the benevolent funds of the football players and associations themselves, was dependent upon the game for more than a small proportion of its income. Football provided regular, but relatively minor, revenue to some hospitals and homes, and one-off contributions, again relatively small, to victims of tragedies and economic depression. Yet this overt giving of assistance was sufficient to gain associations, clubs and patrons psychic income, often at little direct cost to themselves: ultimately football was a vehicle for charity in which fans funded the donations.

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Notes

1. See, for example, Walters and Chadwick (2009); Sheth and Babiak (2010); Paramio-Salcines, Babiak and Walters (2013).
2. For more detailed information on the Glasgow competition see Vamplew (2008) and Kay (2009).
3. Calculated from *SFA Annuals* and list of FA-approved competitions in Minutes of FA. These figures are not comprehensive as in case of Scotland they were dependent on relevant secretaries forwarding the information to the SFA for publication in the journal and there were obvious gaps in the English data such as apparently no approved charity tournaments in Lancashire.
4. The SFA stated that £200 was handed over to charity and this appears in the [retrospective] official records of the Charity Cup. Where the other £100 came from is unknown.
5. Whether attractive gates against chosen opponents at charity fixtures encouraged the development of leagues is a moot point.
6. Based on a count of those associations cited in *Gamage's Association Football Annual* 1912/13.
7. At a smoking concert held in connection with the Mayor of London trophy he was also presented with 'a very handsome testimonial, including a valuable diamond ring and a cheque' (Jackson 1932, 107).
8. Nicholas 'Pa' Jackson, sports journalist and publisher, had a significant position in the history of charity football. He claims to have persuaded both Reginald Hanson and Thomas Dewar respectively to donate the Mayor of London Charity Cup (run by the London FA which he founded) and the Sheriff of London Charity Shield. He was involved in the development of the London Football Festivals in the late 1880s and for many years raised money for charity, especially the Poplar Hospital, by arranging scratch matches, the issue that brought trouble with the FA (Jackson 1900, 65, 153–154, 1932, 61).
9. In 1907, following the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1906, representatives of the Football League, the Southern League and the Scottish Football League established the Football Mutual Insurance Federation, but this comprehensive, self-funded scheme was voluntary and a minority of clubs did not join. In 1912, after national insurance legislation in 1911, a new compulsory scheme was set up but it applied only to Football League clubs (Taylor 2005, 148–150).
10. Figures calculated from data in FA Balance Sheets; Baron (1906); Wilson (1981, 11); *Gamage's Association Football Annual* (1910/11); Minutes of GCCC; *Athletic News*, September 22, 1880.
11. Calculated from data in Minutes of FA Benevolent Committee.
12. Calculated from figures in Checkland (1980).

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