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Cricket and the Celtic Nations¹

The paradox of two widely-held ideas lies at the heart of this chapter. Cricket is universally accepted as the quintessential *English* game, a game which encapsulates and generates Englishness. But cricket, as exemplified in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, is also the game par excellence of the *British* Empire. This chapter seeks to address this apparent contradiction for while cricket is so closely associated with England, it is generally perceived to have had little popular appeal in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Indeed, ‘the temperament of the Welsh, Scots, Irish and French were (sic) often used to explain the limited impact of cricket there’ (Bradley 1995: 37). Pycroft, it will be remembered referred to the limitations of the ‘volatile spirits’ of the Irish and the ‘phlegmatic caution’ of the Scots. The co-existence of these contradictory beliefs therefore seems to rest on one of two rationales. Either cricket was played throughout the British Isles and therefore its distinctively English character has been exaggerated, or cricket reflects and continues to be subject to the traditional elision of English and British identities, the perception that Great Britain is simply ‘Greater England’ (Haselar 1996: 30). An analysis of cricket in the Celtic nations therefore expands our understanding of the role of cricket in the process of colonization and in contemporary relations between British national identities.

Colonization and the Celtic nations

One way to approach relations between England and Ireland, Scotland and Wales is to conceive of a process of ‘internal colonialism’ (Hechter 1975). The conquest and colonization of the ‘Celtic fringe’, it has been argued, acted as a kind of trial run of English, later British, imperialism. There are a number of parallels between the internal and external phases of colonialism which provide empirical support for this view. The various Celtic peoples were stereotyped and stigmatized in ways which bolstered English self-images of superiority. At times a civilizing mission was evoked to legitimize English expansion. In Wales and Ireland in particular, English communities existed in parallel with ‘native’ communities and dominated the main cities, occupied the best land, etc. The language and culture of English communities and their laws and administrative systems became pre-eminent. As in North America and Australia, the attitudes English emigrants expressed toward the ‘mother country’ fluctuated between

anglophilia and angry resentment at their 'unfair' treatment. Forms of colonial resistance were evident throughout, and in Ireland particularly violent.

While Kumar describes the British Isles as 'England's first Empire', he argues that there are limits to the parallels that can be drawn between this and the later imperial phase. He describes the English conquest of the Isles as 'slow, piecemeal, largely unplanned and often the result of local initiative and local invitation' (Kumar 2003a: 84). At times the English were more concerned with their continental neighbours than their Celtic cousins. At times their continental neighbours, particularly France, were involved in the 'internal' affairs of Britain by supporting Celtic resistance. Most significantly the degree of political, cultural and economic integration between the nations meant that 'British society became a blurred patchwork of ethnic groups' (Kumar 2003a: 85).

As with the British Empire more generally, it is important to recognize variations within the process of internal colonialization. For instance, while Ireland's borders were more-or-less defined by the sea, and Offa's Dyke gave Wales a physical basis for separation, the Scottish-English border was relatively permeable and only settled in the thirteenth century. Each of the Celtic nations was internally divided, and only Scotland was able to form a (relatively) unified nation prior to English settlement. Kumar uses the term 'conquest and colonization' (2003a: 71) to describe the Welsh and Irish experiences, but chooses 'Anglicization by stealth' (2003: 77) to portray the Scottish case. Latterly the Welsh would share Protestantism with England while Catholicism would dominate in Ireland and wield considerable influence within Scotland.

More specifically, under the 1284 Statute of Rhuddlan Wales acquired English laws, courts and a county-based administration. Resistance led by Owain Glyn Dwr was briefly followed by a Welsh parliament between 1400 and 1405 but the 1536 and 1543 Acts of Union 'completed the "anglicization" of Wales' (Kumar 2003a: 73). While significant cultural differences remained – particularly in terms of language and literature – via the ascension of the Tudor dynasty in 1485, the Welsh became embedded in the 'English' monarchy. The Welsh gentry, benefiting under these structural arrangements, were at the forefront of assimilation. They became closely integrated with both English settlers in Wales, and with the political and economic powers in England.

In Ireland internal struggles provided the opportunity for Henry II's 1171 invasion. Anglo-Norman knights subsequently came to own significant quantities of Irish land, adopted a range of Irish customs and manners and, in the process, became distanced from the interests of the English. Ultimately, however, this group were never fully integrated, and formed the core of what subsequently became known as the Anglo-Irish. The military and political domination of Ireland would only take a more complete form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but throughout 'the English were in Ireland but Ireland was not English' (Kumar 2003a: 76).

Scotland, developed its own cultural and political autonomy after internal conflicts saw the English-speaking Lowlanders overcome the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. Subsequently the Scottish and English monarchies merged under King James (VI of Scotland in 1581, I of England in 1603). In contrast to Wales and Ireland, Scotland was never conquered in the sense of military occupation, but Scotland only escaped this colonization experience by culturally capitulating to the English to a far greater degree than did the Welsh and Irish. For Kumar, 'The Scots were not conquered by the English; they "Englished" themselves' (2003a: 78). For the Scots and Welsh participation in Great Britain was more a partnership (albeit as weaker partners) than a takeover, and even for the Irish the process of colonization was no straightforward case of dominance and acquisition.

The development of cricket in Celtic nations

What impact did these processes of colonization and political and cultural integration have upon sport, and cricket in particular? Despite the high degree of integration, distinct national identities continue to exist and be expressed through sport. As Holt notes, 'within Great Britain and the island of Ireland national difference is the very stuff of sport' (1989: 237). Reflecting their different histories, the sporting cultures of each of the three Celtic nations varies considerably. In Wales, rugby union became the most significant sport in the definition and construction of national identity. Popular initially in the Southern valleys and latterly in the developing industrial areas, rugby union was played by and popular amongst the working classes in Wales and therefore contrasted with the middle-class image of the game in England (Williams 1985). For the Scottish, football would become the primary sporting expression of national identity. Beating the 'auld enemy' in the annual football fixture became something of an 'obsession' (Holt 1989: 257), entangled with the evocation of a history of relatively successful military resistance, but characterized also by the conjoining of Scotland's sectarian communities which otherwise deeply divided the nation and its football clubs in particular. Within late nineteenth-century Ireland we see the coalescence of political and cultural nationalism, with the rejection of British sports by Irish nationalists, the ostracism of those who practised such 'foreign' sports, and the championing of Gaelic games as an expression of Irishness (Mandle 1977).

Cricket is often conspicuous by its absence in discussions of sport and British national identities; once again testament to the uncritical acceptance of the ideological link between cricket and Englishness. Holt's (1989) discussion of Celtic nationalism in *Sport and the British* contains no discussion of cricket, merely a single reference to the first football international which was held at the West of Scotland Cricket Club in 1872. Jarvie's (1999) anthology,

Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures contains just three brief references to cricket. Was cricket never played in these Celtic nations? If not, why didn't the English implant the game into their 'first Empire'? If cricket was once played, what accounts for its subsequent apparent lack of popularity? To answer these questions we first need to briefly examine the development of cricket in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. An understanding of cricket in Celtic nations add to our understanding of the place of cricket in the process of colonization and is necessary for an analysis of the social significance of cricket in contemporary Britain.

Wales

Johnes argues that 'the whole chronology and character of sport in Wales has closely followed its equivalent in England' (2005: 115). He cites the demise of traditional Welsh rural culture and the importation and incorporation of rugby from England as supporting evidence. At first glance cricket appears to represent something of a disruption to this schema although unfortunately the 'almost total absence of Welsh cricket literature' (Lewis 1980: 513) means that the history of the game in Wales is largely unrecorded. However, according to the *Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales* (Davies and Jenkins 2008) the first recorded match was played in Llanegwad in Pembrokeshire and the first club was formed in Swansea in 1785 (implied also by Lewis 1980). Johnes (2005) argues that the first recorded match was played in 1783 in Camarthenshire. Despite these early beginnings it is clear that the Welsh did not follow the English and embrace cricket as a totem of national character or a vehicle for its expression.

What little we do know about the establishment and subsequent development of cricket in Wales largely conforms to the conventional pattern of the cricket and colonization process discussed in Chapter 3. As in India and the Caribbean, Welsh cricket was championed by the landed classes. Cricket was used as a vehicle for the Welsh gentry's anglophile aspirations, as an adjunct to social, business and political contacts. By means of a county-based administrative structure the Welsh were able to mirror the way the game was organized in England. Monmouthshire, Breconshire and Pembrokeshire had fielded teams by 1830. The Rebecca Riots and the Chartist movement led to an increase in the number of English troops in Wales in the first half of the nineteenth century which, Johnes (2005) argues, further stimulated the game. During the 1840s the Grammar School Act enabled the spread of the English educational model within Wales and the game became diffused to a broader social demographic including the urban working classes. Indeed, so common was the game that in the romanticized social history *How Green was my Valley*, Kate Olwen Pritchard referred to three co-existing cricket clubs in close proximity (Evans *et al.* 1999). Thus cricket in Wales developed on a number of fronts, stimulated by the usual combination of social elites, military and education.

These developments were largely a consequence of integration, for parallel to developments in political and economic circles Welsh cricket sought to become part of the English cultural infrastructure. The South Wales Club was formed in 1859 and conducted an annual London tour including games against the MCC and Surrey. In 1864 a young W.G. Grace followed the example of his elder brothers and played for Neath because the club was thought to play at a higher standard than Grace's local Gloucestershire club. Cricket had such a significant presence in Wales at this time that the sport provided the organizational basis for the development of what would become the Welsh national sport. Swansea and Cardiff rugby clubs were both formed out of cricket clubs, in 1873 and 1876 respectively (Johnes 2005). While Neath Cricket Club would fold in 1888, in the same year Glamorgan CCC was founded. In 1921 Glamorgan became the first and only non-English representative in the County Championship.

Integration with the English game had both enabling and constraining effects for Welsh cricket. The existence of a County Championship side enabled Welsh cricketers to be continually exposed to relatively skilful levels of play and thus ensured that they remained competitive. Llanelli-born all-rounder Emyr Davies played for 'England' in the 1920s, as did public school educated batsman Maurice Turnbull in the 1930s. In 1972 probably the most notable Welsh cricketer, the Swansea born, Cambridge University educated Tony Lewis, captained England on his test match debut (Lewis later became MCC President). Integration also ensured that a significant level of funding flowed into Welsh cricket (all counties are heavily reliant on central funding generated by the England men's team). However, integration also led to the suppression of a separate national identity voiced through the sport. A national structure for Welsh cricket – in the shape of the Welsh Schools Cricket Association, the Welsh Cricket Association, and an amateur Welsh national side – did not arise until the late 1960s/early 1970s (Lewis 1980). The curiously anonymous history of Welsh cricket is thus probably a consequence of a failure to either passionately embrace the game (as evident in the Caribbean) or to reject it outright (as in America). Rather, for much of the game's history the Welsh have appeared to be content for their game to quietly become subsumed by its English big brother.

Scotland

Scottish cricket appears to have even earlier origins. As noted in the Introduction, there are claims that the game was played by Scots c. 500 AD. More concretely Penman (1992) claims that records of cricket played at Perth date back to 1750, but a match played at Schaw Park, Alloa in 1785 is generally identified as Scotland's first cricket match (for example Mair 1980). The ground was owned by the Earl of Cathcart and both teams are believed to have been

made up of aristocrats. The Scottish lowland aristocracy seem to have been particularly significant in the early playing of the game (Penman 1992). For instance, during the 1780s the Duke of Hamilton was said to have limited his business affairs due to playing cricket every afternoon (Burnett 2000). Mair argues that the aristocracy's motivation for playing the game was 'rather as a means of gambling than as a source of exercise' (1980: 510). Thus there is reason to suggest that the Scottish aristocracy took to cricket because they perceived themselves to be similar to, rather than because they were trying to assimilate with, their English counterparts.

In the early 1800s the game was popularized through a number of channels. The first two of these are familiar: education and military. Cricket became popular in educational establishments modelled on the English public school system, with evidence of the game being played at the Old High School, Edinburgh in 1817. Cricket teams were established at both Edinburgh and Glasgow universities in the 1830s and former pupil's clubs were established in the third quarter of the nineteenth century (Penman 1992). The military also played a significant role with some of the earliest clubs such as Kelso and Perth formed in garrison towns. But interest in the game was also stimulated by the commercial ventures of English travelling cricketers. In 1849 William Clarke's All-England XI began the more-or-less annual visits of professional touring teams. Just as it could be argued of W.G. Grace's place in English culture, so he became Scotland's first sporting celebrity following his tour to the country in 1872 (Burnett 2000). As in America the game is thought to have been spread by English workers who migrated to exploit various industrial opportunities.

The scale of the adoption of cricket in Scotland is consistent with the idea that to a considerable degree the Scots 'Englished themselves' (Kumar 2003a). Burnett claims that 'it seems as though every village had a team, in mining as well as in country districts' (2000: 58). Such games had more in common with cricket played in the Lancashire and Yorkshire leagues than the stereotype of village green cricket in England's rural south, reflecting Colls' contention that the North East of England had more in common with Glasgow or Cardiff than the South of England at this time (cited in British Council 2000). Nonetheless, Burnett (2000) estimates that there were 200 cricket clubs in Scotland in 1873. Cricket was particularly popular in central Scotland where public-school educated males dominated the game. In the Borders matches drew local and passionate crowds which some thought posed a danger to players and umpires. In Glasgow a number of works-based teams were formed. In Argyllshire the game blossomed under the patronage of the gentry (Jackson 1999). Teams in the North and the East of Scotland were marked by their relatively outspoken defence of amateurism in cricket. What was remarkable about the Scottish game therefore was its sheer diversity. As in England there were elements of class division and exclusion. As in England the game 'crossed the boundaries of ... class and locality' (Williams 1999: 183).

Such was its popularity that until the mid 1870s cricket drew ‘as large a crowd as any sport, excepting horse racing’ (Burnett 2000: 61). Tranter’s (1987) data indicate that in the early 1880s one in twelve 15 to 29 year-old males were members of cricket clubs with only football more popular than cricket. As in Wales, cricket provided the organizational structure from which other sports developed. Hawick rugby club and Kilmarnock football club were formed when groups of cricketers bought balls as a means to keep fit in the winter. As noted above, the first football international was held at the West of Scotland Cricket Ground, Partick in 1872.

The relative independence of Scottish cricket can be seen in a number of ways. The first ‘Scottish XI’ played in 1865. In 1871 a crowd of between 3,000 and 4,000 watched Scotland play against an All England XI. In 1882 a Scottish team defeated Australia by 45 runs in a single innings exhibition match (Mair 1980). Organizationally Scottish cricket demonstrated considerable progress around the turn of the century. The Western Union and the North of Scotland League were formed in 1893, the Border League in 1895 and the Scottish Counties in 1903. In 1909 the Scottish Cricket Union (SCU) was founded.

Relative independence was to have distinct enabling and constraining consequences. While the formation of the SCU formalized the independence of Scottish cricket from its English counterpart, separation probably also retarded the development of the game. The absence of a counterpart to Glamorgan meant that Scottish cricket remained semi-detached from the mainstream first class game. Fixtures with English counties seem rarer for Scottish than for Welsh clubs until 1980 when Scotland was admitted into the Benson and Hedges Cup, a one-day competition for English county sides. Although Scotland beat an English county for the first time in 1959, and had their maiden victory over the MCC in 1961, the MCC withdrew first-class status from its annual fixture with Scotland in 1969. Scottish cricket was to decline in popularity – the 10,000 who saw Bradman in Aberdeen in 1948 being the last large cricket crowd in Scotland – at the same time (not necessarily because) football and rugby established stronger popular bases. There have been, however, a number of notable Scottish born cricketers who have played for England. In particular, Gregor MacGregor played for both the England cricket team and the Scottish rugby union team during the 1890s, the Oxford educated Ian Peebles played test matches for England in the 1920s and 1930s and Mike Denness captained England in the 1970s. Mention should also be made of the South African born Tony Grieg and the Indian born Douglas Jardine who both captained England by virtue of their Scottish born parents (Bairner and Malcolm 2010). Yet as Mair (1980: 512) argues, ‘the fact that no team from Scotland competed in the English County Championship gave to the cricket world an image of Scotland as a non-cricketing country even though club cricket flourished in Scotland for over a hundred years’.

Ireland

Given that political conflict between Ireland and England has been more pronounced than between England and the other Celtic nations, and given the centrality of Gaelic games in Irish nationalist resistance, one would expect cricket to have been more vigorously resisted here than elsewhere in the British Isles. Not only is this *not* the case, for, 'Irish cricket boasts a lengthy heritage that compares favourably with any national side outside of England' (Gemmell 2010: 17), in marked contrast to historians' neglect of the Welsh game, Irish cricket has attracted a detailed and diverse body of research.

As in Scotland and Wales, cricket in Ireland has a long history marked by periods in which the game showed remarkable popularity. Cromwell's commissioners did ban a game called 'Krickett' in 1656 but Siggins (2005) suggests that they probably mistook it for a version of hurling due to the similarity of the 'bats' each employed at this time. Whilst right to question whether the banned game was what we now understand to be cricket (see Chapter 1) it is equally likely that this was not hurling in the modern sense either, but a folk game which combined elements of what would become separate modern sport forms. A similar logic should be applied to Rowland Bowen's (1970) claim that cricket may have originated in Ireland. Rather, it is most likely that folk forms of cricket were played in Ireland as they were across England prior to the game's codification by the London-based English aristocracy (see also Gemmell 2010). Indeed, as we saw earlier, in 1727 an Anglo-Irishman – Matthew Brodrick – was a central party to the oldest surviving set of cricket laws.

It is more widely held that the first cricket match played in Ireland took place in 1792 at Pheonix Park, Dublin, adjacent to the home of the Viceroy, Lord Westmoreland. The teams consisted of members of the British army garrison playing against 'All Ireland' for 1,000 guineas. The garrison side was captained by Lt-Colonel Lennox, a founding member of the MCC, while the All Ireland side included gentlemen such as Arthur Wesley, the future Duke of Wellington, Edward Cooke, under-secretary at Dublin Castle, Major Hobart, Secretary at War and a member of both the Irish and English Houses of Commons, and five further members of the Irish parliament (Gemmell 2010: 19). As in England, therefore, Ireland's parliamentarians were prominent in the development of Irish cricket. Evidence for the staging of this match comes from a scorecard and description published in the *Freeman's Journal*. The journal, which Hone (1955: 1) describes as 'the organ of the Catholic and popular party', stated that 'the game of Cricket is in England what that of Hurling is in Ireland'. Similar to the American case, therefore, there were people keen to define cricket as an English game. As in America, this did not make cricket 'foreign', more the province of a distinct, and hyphenated, group within the nation.

Again the themes of military, gentry and education are prominent in the development of cricket in Ireland. The 1798 rebellion increased the number

of English troops in Ireland leading, for instance, to a Coldstream Guard recording the first century in Irish cricket (Siggins 2005; Bergin and Scott 1980). The gentry took a central organizing role. The first cricket club is thought to have been founded by Lord Dunlo in Ballinasloe, County Galway, in 1825. The Dublin Club (later the Pheonix Club) was founded in 1830 and also had aristocratic origins. The Lord Lieutenant, the 7th Earl of Carlisle, established the Viceregal Cricket Club in 1856 and built a cricket field on the grounds of his lodge. The gentry 'saw themselves not as colonists, but as Irishmen who enjoyed English civil rights, and partook in civil life' (Gemmell 2010: 19) and thus adopted the game as a way of demonstrating their identity and status. The game facilitated the commingling of English, Anglo-Irish and Irish political leaders. The most prestigious educational institutions also embraced the game. Cricket was played at Trinity College from 1820 (Gemmell 2010), while the Jesuit college, Conglowes Wood in County Kildare, played from the 1820s, albeit according to local rule variations (Siggins 2005). Dublin University played its first match in 1827, and a cricket club was formed there in 1842 (Sugden and Bairner 1993).

The impact of cricket on early nineteenth-century Irish society was thus substantial. Cricket was 'all the rage' in Dublin in 1830 (Siggins 2005: 14) and in 1835 the Irish press announced proposals to build a cricket ground in Dublin equivalent to Lord's in London (Garnham 2003). The game spread north with the establishment of the Belfast Cricket Club in 1830 and Lisburn Cricket Club in 1836. Some spoke of the 'civilizing' potential of cricket for the Irish populace (Garnham 2003), others recommended cricket as a vehicle for the gentry to mollify potential political resistance (Davis 1994). Cricket was even popular in the latter-day strongholds of Gaelic games such as Kilkenny (Bergin and Scott 1980).

In an interesting parallel to cricket in America, the *Oxford Companion to Irish History* states that by 1860 the game had probably become the most popular sport in Ireland (cited in Gemmell 2010). Garnham (2003) argues that cricket's popularity peaked around 1870. At this time the game was played across all 32 counties of Ireland (Gemmell 2010). Cricket could not have been so popular had it not been played amongst all social classes and different religious communities (Davis 1994, Hunt 2007). The enthusiasm for cricket amongst leading figures in the Irish nationalist movement such as John Redmond and Charles Stewart Parnell can be taken as one example of the depth with which the game penetrated Irish society. Quirkily, Dublin-born Samuel Beckett is the only Nobel laureate to appear in Wisden. Bateman refers to James Joyce's blurring of colonial binaries through his Anglicization of Irishness and Celticization of Englishness and cites the presence and use of cricket in the writings of James Joyce as an example of 'the power of a colonising culture to penetrate the consciousness and sub-consciousness of the colonised' (2009: 88). The blurred patchwork of relations in 'England's

first Empire' (Kumar 2003a) is particularly evident in the relationship the Irish have with cricket.

Irish cricket had similarities with its counterparts in both Wales and Scotland. In a parallel to the Welsh experience, Irish cricket integrated with English cricket. As early as 1839 the Pheonix club travelled to Liverpool for a fixture and in 1851 I Zingari, the peripatetic touring team of Old Harrovians, played its first fixture in Dublin. The MCC played its first game in Ireland in 1853, the same year that the first English professional touring XI visited the country. In 1855 a fixture between 'Ireland' and the Gentlemen of England was played which the Irish Cricket Union would subsequently identify as Ireland's first representative game (Siggins 2005). A notable participant for the Gentlemen of England was R.A. Fitzgerald who, though English born, later played cricket for Ireland. He also became the MCC's first paid secretary. An Ireland team beat the MCC at Lord's in 1858 and again in 1862. Davis (1994) states that by the 1860s and 1870s Irish cricket was on the verge of being on equal playing terms with the English. Crucially, however, the English do not appear to have defined the Irish as a 'foreign' team as they did both Aboriginal and 'white' Australian teams.

Ireland's cricketers also imitated the English game in much the same way as their counterparts in Scotland did. The Pheonix club employed its first professional in 1835 and by 1881 Ireland's census identified 161 individuals as making a living from 'billiards, cricket and other games' (cited in Garnham 2003: 34). An Ireland touring XI was established in 1853, though in contrast to its English counterpart it was entirely amateur. An Irish equivalent of I Zingari, Na Shuler, was formed in 1863 and continued to play until 1914. In 1865, just one year after John Wisden founded what would become the 'bible' of cricket, the *Handbook of Cricket in Ireland* was established and would subsequently be published on an annual basis for fifteen years. In 1879 an Irish team travelled to America at the invitation of the St George's Cricket Club in New York and so successful was this trip that additional tours were arranged (Bergin and Scott 1980). This curious juxtaposition of partnership and parallel structure resonates with Kumar's (2003a: 76) view that 'the English were in Ireland, but Ireland was not English'. But in cricket the Irish were not *un*-English either. Ireland's defeats of the MCC were not defined as international losses because Ireland was not defined as a separate nation.

The 'failure' of cricket in the Celtic nations

A comparison of the development of cricket in these three regions adds an interesting dimension to the cricket and colonization literature, and in particular perceptions in the success or failure of cultural diffusion. While there is little empirical evidence to suggest that cricket 'failed' more significantly in

Ireland and Scotland than in Wales, only the analysts of the game in the former two nations have sought to explain its relative decline. This perhaps says more about the subsequent relative independence of Ireland and Scotland in cricketing terms at least than the popularity of cricket in Wales. Moreover, each account of 'failure' is also somewhat unconvincing. Each falls short, as parallel accounts of American cricket do (see Chapter 4), because they confine themselves to issues internal to the respective nations and eschew an account based on a wider set of interdependencies.

With respect to Scottish cricket, Mair (1980) and Burnett (2000) both suggest that climate and environment may have played a part in the game's demise. Penman (1992) rightly identifies this as fallacious, noting that the differences between the East and West coasts of Scotland are more significant than between the North and South of Britain. Penman also rejects explanations based on the decline of aristocratic patronage, cost of the game and the links between the game's format and Scottish national psyche. He therefore concludes that, 'the comparative failure of cricket in Scotland was caused primarily by competition from other sports, mainly, but not exclusively, football' (1992: 313). As we have seen (Chapter 4), this kind of 'sports space' argument, where one sport 'replaces' another because two are deemed unable to co-exist, is generally problematic. Football is also more popular than cricket in England but the two have been able to co-exist.

In the case of Ireland both Garnham (2003) and Davis (1994) give some credibility to the argument that cricket was adversely affected by the weather. Both also compare cricket to the popularity of other sports in Ireland, though neither accept a 'sport space' argument as convincing. Garnham, for instance, rejects the idea that the Irish preferred golf to cricket noting that golf was initially a winter sport in Ireland (and therefore did not directly compete with cricket) and that golf's rise in the 1890s came some time after the decline of cricket began. Davis considers why rugby union – like cricket, historically organized on a non-partition basis in Ireland – should become a more important vehicle for nationalist competition and suggests that there may be a connection between the relative violence of Irish resistance to British rule and the popularity of the relatively violent sport of rugby. Conversely, he argues, the relative absence of violence in Australian and Indian independence movements explains the popularity of cricket in these nations. This argument is, however, undermined by rugby's popularity in Australia, and indeed its status as the national sport of one of the more anglophile post-colonial nations, New Zealand.

Finally both Davis and Garnham, like Penman in relation to Scotland, challenge the importance of a 'national psyche' or character in the rejection of the game. Davis (1994) notes that the enthusiasm for the game amongst Irish-Australians suggests that there was nothing inherently problematic for Irish people about playing cricket. Garnham's (2003) position is more

sophisticated for it places greater emphasis on *perceptions* of national character. Garnham suggests, therefore, that it was the *idea* that cricket was fundamentally English, an idea widely propagated by the English, which led to Irish disillusionment with the game. Indeed, it is counter-intuitive that the Irish rejected cricket because it did not fit with their 'national psyche' because it seems more likely that 'psyches' would converge in a context of more frequent Anglo-Irish interaction.

More compelling, but ultimately still flawed, are arguments which locate cricket's demise to the broadening of class and religious differences in Ireland. Garnham notes that 'the most recurrent theme' (2003: 32) in accounts of the failure of cricket in Ireland is that it was a casualty of the Land War which saw the propertied classes previously active in sponsoring the game in rural communities withdraw from social interaction with agrarian workers. Garnham points out that a problem with this thesis is that such patronage of cricket was being withdrawn some time before the game's popularity peaked in Ireland. Garnham also critiques the assumption that the GAA played a significant role in cricket's demise on similar grounds, noting again that the popularity of cricket had begun to wane prior to the GAA's proclamation about 'foreign' sports. To this we can add the evidence from studies which have revealed that cricket was as popular in GAA strongholds as anywhere else in the thirty-two counties. For instance, Bracken (2004) has charted the popularity of cricket clubs in Tipperary, and O'Dwyer (2006) argues that the popularity of cricket in Kilkenny peaked in 1896, at which point there were fifty teams in the county. For Hunt (2005), the steady growth of cricket in Westmeath throughout the 1880s and 1890s challenges the traditional perception of Irish cricket as an elitist activity.

Rather, our understanding of the 'failure' of cricket in the Celtic nations can be advanced via three key considerations. First, and akin to the arguments relating to cricket and American national character, it may be that the relative equality in social status – what Kaufman and Patterson (2005) would describe as a homophilious relationship – meant that the Irish both resented and were able to reject conceptions of English moral superiority. The point here rests on a subtle distinction. An interesting characteristic of Irish sport more generally was that although the motivation for the establishment of the GAA was the rejection of English cultural forms, the organization stridently defended the underpinning ethos of English sport, amateurism. In other words, the Irish were close enough to the English to wholeheartedly accept the *principles*, but not the belief that the English held a monopoly over such 'virtuous' behaviour. In contrast to rugby union where the zero-tolerance of professionalism was clear cut, cricket operated a complex and in many ways less consistent accommodation and subordination of professionals (Dunning and Sheard 1976). This may explain why the Irish did not continue such a strong engagement with cricket, but also why cricket continued to flourish as a recreational game in rural areas

where the issue of professionalism simply did not arise. Second, though this remains a matter of conjecture, one has to think that the unstandardized nature of cricket in England, and in particular debates over legitimate bowling, had an impact on the game in Celtic nations. As the American example shows, it would be wrong to simply assume that the game being played in these Celtic nations was uniformly that codified and advocated by the MCC. All existing accounts of the demise of cricket in Ireland and Scotland are based on this flawed premise. Third, these accounts also fail to reflect the fluidity of relations between different nationalities. Cricket's popularity waned in these nations because the permeability of English cricket structures, the 'blurred patchwork' of social relations (Kumar 2003a), enabled some aspects of the game in each of the Celtic nations to be subsumed. Be it in terms of Glamorgan CCC or individuals of Celtic origin such as R.A. Fitzgerald and Gregor MacGregor, the English incorporated aspects of British and Irish cricket. Indeed, amongst the ten paid MCC secretaries since Fitzgerald there is Irish born Rowen Rait Kerr, as well as an 'Aird', a 'Findlay' and a 'Griffiths'. Cricket may not have been the 'superglue' of Britain as it was of the Empire, but neither has it ever been the irrelevance that its absence from work on sport and British national identities suggests it to be. In the Empire cricket diffused most effectively where its Englishness was most explicit and its character building properties most celebrated. In Britain it became most well-established where its nationalism was most anonymous.

Celtic cricket and colonization

What does the development of cricket in the Celtic nations tell us about cricket and processes of colonization? In each of these accounts we can identify certain commonalities with the broader pattern as well as locally specific variations. A common theme is that in each nation there is evidence to suggest that the game was played so early that it would not subsequently be 'diffused' in the conventional sense of that term. Particularly in Ireland and Scotland, we see cricket-like folk games which had similar antecedents to, but emerged independently of, the game codified by aristocrats in London. Second, while the social elite were prominent in the organization of cricket in each of the three nations, there are interesting and subtle differences to be observed. For example, both the Irish and Welsh gentry took to the game as a way of assimilating with the English and thus fostering closer and more cooperative relations, but the Scottish aristocracy appear to have *modelled* their behaviour on their English counterparts, rather than sought assimilation through the sport. In some respects the links between the English aristocracy and their Irish counterparts seem to have been stronger than with the aristocracy in Wales or in Scotland. A third common theme is the role of educational institutions in developing

the game, though again this includes some notable local variation. In both Ireland and Scotland it was the elite schools which were prominent in the early organization of the game, whereas the Grammar Schools were more significant in Wales. Similarly the universities in Ireland and Scotland were notable early founders of cricket clubs, whereas in Wales they were not. Fourthly there is the role of the military. While cricket playing English troops are identified in each of the nations, their role is more significant in Scotland and Ireland reflecting the greater (or later) militarization of these particular 'colonies'. Finally only in relation to Ireland was a discourse of the civilizing mission employed, and thus the potential of cricket for reforming the behavioural norms to be more in line with English expectations voiced.

But perhaps the most striking finding from this comparison is that the cricket in each nation should take its own distinctive route. Whereas in Wales the process was essentially one of *integration* into the English mainstream, in Scotland we see the greater assertion of *independence*. In 1909 Scotland became the first Celtic nation to have a national cricket association, coincidentally (or not) the same year as the ICC was founded. The Irish had proposed their own national association in 1890 but the move only came to fruition in 1923 shortly after the establishment of the Irish Free State. The Welsh waited until 1969. The Irish case is the most complex of all, but primarily reveals an attempt at *replication*. A model of cricket developed that was, for a brief time, as close a replica of the English model as cricket anywhere else in the British Empire.

This level of replication extended to Ireland not simply being a recipient, but also an instigator of the cricket and colonization process. Ironically, given the nation's subsequent independence from Britain, Ireland would have a greater impact than any other Celtic nation on shaping the imperial game. Initially it was the entrepreneurship of the Pheonix cricket professional, Charles Lawrence, which was fundamental to this. Lawrence epitomizes the fluidity of movement and identity which cricket enabled within both Britain and the Empire. One of Lawrence's early cricketing achievements was to take all ten wickets for Scotland against an England XI in 1849. On leaving Dublin's Pheonix club he travelled to Australia with the 1861 English touring side. He stayed in Australia and played for New South Wales until returning as manager of the touring Aboriginal team in 1868. While Ashley Mallet has argued that Lawrence could be described as the Father of Australian cricket, Siggins (2005: 25) adds, 'and more than any other, he was probably the Father of Irish cricket too'.

The impact of Irish migrants was also more significant on the global development of cricket than any other non-English group. Siggins (2005: 20) claims that more than 120 Irishmen have played first class cricket around the world (see also Bairner 2009). Their qualitative impact is perhaps even more remarkable than their sheer number. Tom Horan and John Blackham, who played for Australia in the first ever test against England in 1877 and the historic Ashes

match at the Oval in 1882, both hailed from Ireland (Gemmell 2010). Leland Hone, who kept wicket for England against Australia in 1879 was born in Dublin. As Kibberd observes, ‘only a rudimentary thinker would deny that the Irish experience is at once postcolonial and post-Imperial’ (1997: 97).

Conclusion: Cricket and contemporary identities in the Celtic nations

This chapter began by identifying the paradox in cricket’s status as both the quintessential English game and the game, par excellence, of the British Empire. We can also now see that far from being an irrelevance to the broader diffusion of the game, cricket in the Celtic nations played a fundamental though far from predictable role in the wider process of British imperialism. Therefore the resolution of this issue rests in the traditional elision of Britishness and Englishness. For while cricket is, on the one hand, the sport most closely associated with Englishness, ironically it is also the game in which the separate British and Irish nations are most effectively forged into one (Bairner and Malcolm 2010). While it seems that there were moves to establish international fixtures between England and Scotland and Ireland (though tellingly not Wales) the failure to recognize the separate national status of the Celtic cricketers deprived the peoples of these countries of the opportunity to forge a separate national identity through such sporting contests. In some ways the Irish cricketers preceded their Australian counterparts in defeating England at Lord’s by some thirty years, but that victory occurred in a particular social context in which it simply was not defined as an international fixture. We return to this issue in the book’s Conclusion.

Cricket in the Celtic nations has experienced something of a renaissance in recent years and this provides a convenient segue to *Globalizing Cricket’s* final chapters. In large part Celtic cricket has been stimulated by the ICC’s explicit globalization agenda. One consequence of attempts to incorporate Associate and Affiliate members of the ICC within the playing programmes of full member states has been to provide greater publicity for the exploits of countries where the game has traditionally been assumed to have a marginal cultural significance. The 2007 ICC Cricket World Cup in the Caribbean was unique in that the event included representative teams from England (and therefore Wales), Ireland and Scotland. Ireland’s defeat of England in the 2011 ICC World Cup provided the former with perhaps the nation’s most significant cricketing victory to date.

The renaissance of Celtic cricket is also a rather more unintended consequence of the reformation of the administration of the ‘English’ game. On 1 January 1997 the ECB was established as the single ‘national’ governing body for all cricket in England and Wales (ECB 1997). The board, located at

Lord's, assumed the responsibilities that had previously been carried out by the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB), the National Cricket Association and the Cricket Council (which themselves had acquired control from the MCC as the English/British national governing body for cricket in 1968). The launch document for the ECB made no reference to cricket in Wales or of relations between the ECB and its Scottish or Irish counterparts. The move to an overtly national organization – the first governing body of cricket to have 'England' in the title – became a source of tension. Those in Welsh cricket circles spoke of the reinstatement of the silent 'W' (Harris 2006), but in truth the silence of the 'W' had only become apparent through the vocalization of the 'E'.

The fluidity of cricket migrants between Ireland and England has also stimulated awareness of national identity issues. In 2007 Ed Joyce became the first cricketer to play for two nations in the same competition, helping Ireland qualify before achieving residential qualification to play for England in the World Cup in the Caribbean. The Irish public were reported to have 'jammed radio phone-ins to voice their disapproval' on Joyce's selection for England (*Scotsman* 30 March 2007), and it was reported that Joyce's father supported Ireland against an England team which included his son (*Sun* 29 March 2007). Joyce himself seemed more sanguine, though he recalled how strange it was to put on an England shirt because he had been used to 'the green and blue of Ireland' (*Independent on Sunday*, 11 March 2007). Since this time not only has Joyce returned to play for Ireland, but Dublin-born Eoin Morgan has been selected as captain of an England Twenty20 side playing Ireland in Dublin. The selection was met with a pragmatic response from Irish cricket administrators and in post-match interviews Morgan thanked the Dublin public for their warm welcome and support.

Cricket in the Celtic nations has also been stimulated by the growth of Celtic nationalism, but it is important not to over-emphasize this. While there is some validity in Johnes' argument that Glamorgan has come to be seen 'as much representatives of Wales as they were of a county that was actually abolished in 1974' (Johnes 2005: 115) due to a more general growth of an anti-Englishness in Welsh sport, it is contentious whether this nationalist rivalry has ever been requited, and therefore fully consummated. It is also the case that Scottish and Welsh (and perhaps Irish) hostility to the England cricket team is qualitatively different to that expressed towards the England football or rugby team (see also Potter 1999). For instance, while a campaign to establish Wales as an associate member of the ICC has been ongoing since 2002 and has attracted cross-party political support, the integration of Welsh cricket has also advanced with the first 'England' home test match staged in Cardiff in 2009. As Bairner and Malcolm (2010: 198) note, 'this raised interesting questions. Why would a national team play its home games in another country except in unusual circumstances such as civil unrest or as a result of being

penalised for unacceptable behaviour by fans?'. Indeed in the early years of the twenty-first century the Welsh were particularly active within the ECB. From 2002 to 2007, Tredegar-born David Morgan was Chair of the ECB and in 2005 Cardiff-born Hugh Morris was appointed Deputy Chief Executive and later Managing Director of the England (men's) cricket team. The Glamorgan captain and England off-spinner Robert Croft has publicly talked about the potential identity conflict of being Welsh and playing cricket for England but reconciled the issue by perceiving 'England' as representative of a supra-national team, the equivalent of playing rugby union for the British Lions or for Europe in golf's Ryder Cup.²

That said, we see that contemporary developments have clearly altered the relationship between cricket and national identities in the Celtic nations. What this brief discussion illustrates is that the globalizing of cricket impacts upon the relationship between the English and other nationals, between the English and emigrants who have taken the opportunities open post-colonialism and subsequently settled in England, and ultimately on the way in which the English view themselves and others. These issues will be developed in the next three chapters.