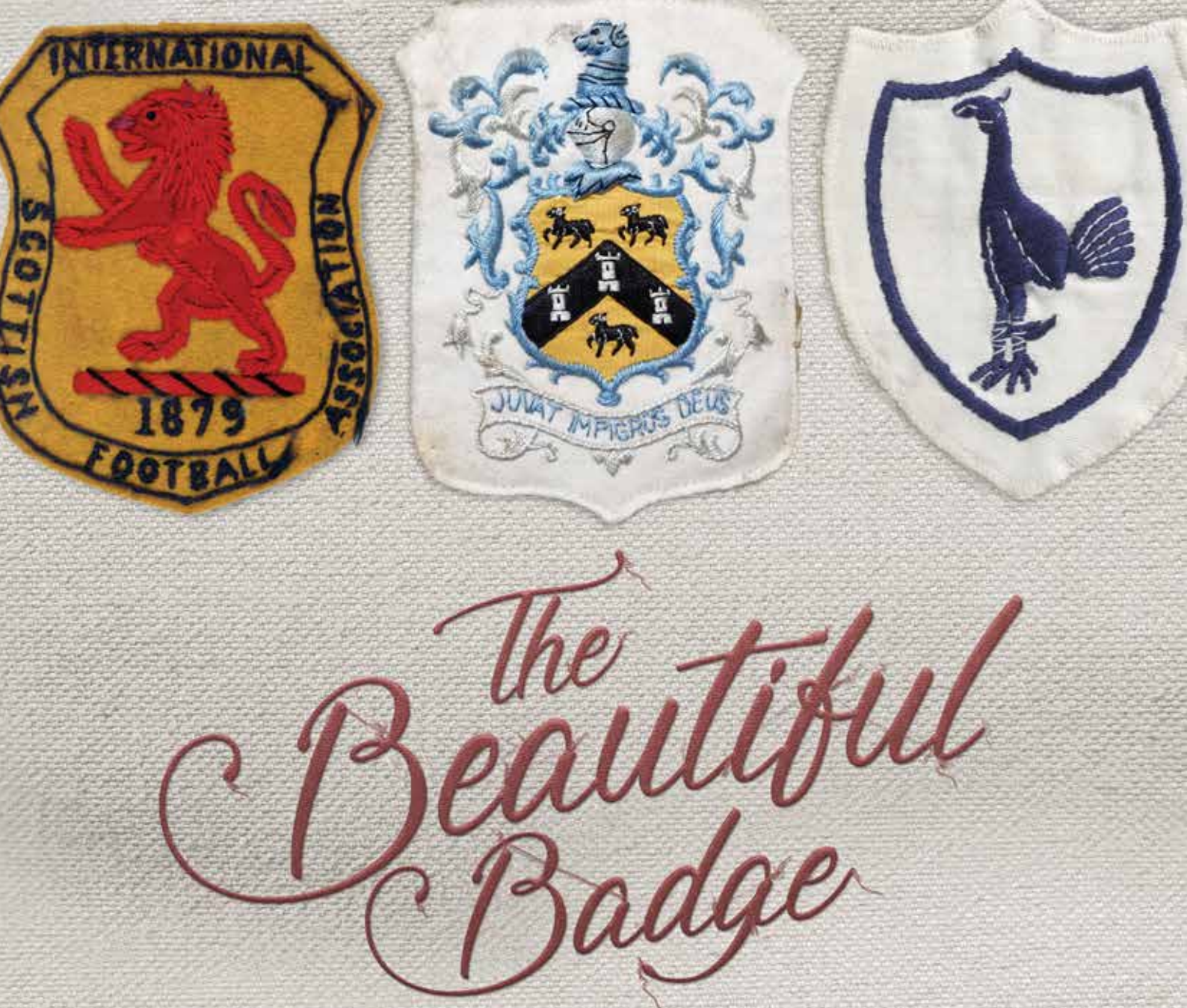


The Beautiful Badge

THE STORIES BEHIND THE FOOTBALL CLUB BADGE

MARTYN ROUTLEDGE
& ELSPETH WILLS

Pitch Publishing Ltd
A2 Yeoman Gate
Yeoman Way
Durrington
BN13 3QZ

Email: info@pitchpublishing.co.uk
Web: www.pitchpublishing.co.uk

First published by Pitch Publishing 2018

1

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

13-digit ISBN: 9781785313929
Design by mrcreativestudio.co.uk / Olner Pro Sport Media
Typesetting by Olner Pro Sport Media.
Printed in the UK by CPI Group (UK), Croydon CR0 4YY

The Beautiful Badge

THE STORIES BEHIND THE
FOOTBALL CLUB BADGE

MARTYN ROUTLEDGE
& ELSPETH WILLS

pitch

www.thebeautifulbadge.com

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

'It's about the badge.' That is how Spurs manager, Mauricio Pochettino, summed up the importance of the cockerel on his players' shirts after his team converted a one goal deficit to a 3-1 win in the last two minutes of a game against Swansea City in April 2017.

The badge is the very essence of a football club. It motivates players and provides something tangible with which fans can identify. Its history, its colours, the town or city it represents, its stadia are all components that help define a club's identity. What brings these elements together in an area no bigger than a red card is the badge. Applied, seen, protected and exploited more than ever, from humble beginnings the badge has become the face of the modern club and a valuable and valued asset. A player kissing the badge may spark vitriol from opposing fans, and mockery from commentators, but tattooing it on your forearm creates a lifelong bond with your team for all to see.

When Manchester United make the headlines the legendary red devil pops up, thanks to Salford City Reds Rugby Club and a creative French rugby journalist. You may know the story of 'Les Diables Rouges' and how the moniker travelled from France to Old Trafford but were Manchester United the first red devils in football? Brighton & Hove Albion is now synonymous with seagulls but do fans know why the bird is associated with Crystal Palace? One member of the Spurs Supporters Forum commented: 'I'm sure that if you asked most supporters of any club, they wouldn't be able to tell you things like the history of the badge.'

The Beautiful Badge aims to put this right by rummaging through the kitbag of history to discover forgotten stories and badges whose meaning has been lost. We sit in the changing room of time and share team talks and tactics with one-time legends of the game. We spoke to a Bradford City supporter who, after seeing a competition for a new badge in the opposing team's programme, scribbled down an idea on the coach home after the game, and sent it in. To his amazement it became the new badge. Did he spend his prize of a £10 voucher in the club shop? We spoke to the 17-year-old who was so dismayed with the 'rebranding' of his team's badge and the way that it threw out a century of history that he started an online petition. We spoke to the former Spurs, Southend United and Bournemouth striker who modelled for his team's badge which is still on shirts today, heading his team to glory in the Premier League forty years on. We interviewed one of the very few footballers brave or daft enough to have his team's badge tattooed on his leg. Does he have any regrets? No.

Nearly 150 years after they met we bring together the lions who represented England and Scotland for the world's first ever international match in 1872. We discover the team that had 'London' emblazoned on their shirts decades before West Ham Unitedtried to take ownership of the capital. We unveil how the liver bird was once 'a blue'.

The Beautiful Badge peels back the layers behind the highly polished and crafted modern designs to find the real meanings, the history and surprising connections. As David Goldblatt, author of *The Game of Our Lives* wrote: 'What in the end is a football club but a name and a complex set of stories, memories, traditions and histories.'

"Soccer clubs having their own crests thus carry on a tradition which has served royalty, city councils, merchant gilds, and various organizations. The soccer club crest shows an idea basic to the club – of location, origin, nickname, etc".

SOCCER CRESTS
F.C. AVIS, 1969

"Bolton Wanderers are the Trotters because pigs' trotters are a favourite meals with Bolton fans. St. Mirren are the Saints. So are Southampton – because their first title was St. Mary's!"

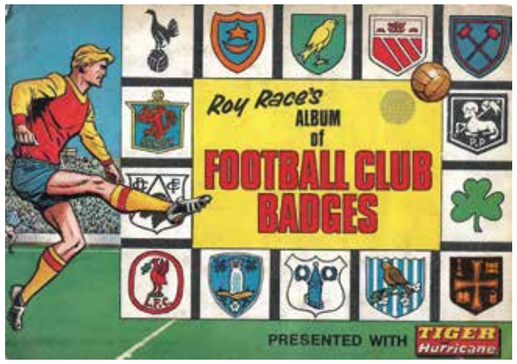
ROY RACE'S ALBUM OF FOOTBALL CLUB BADGES, 1967

Everything starts with the badge but when and why did the badge begin? What inspired it in the first place? Many clubs opted for their town or city's coat of arms to reinforce their sense of belonging. Some like Luton Town have remained largely faithful to the arms while others have played around with more than one element or dropped it as being too cluttered for modern applications. Local industry and landmarks have provided another source of inspiration from Chesterfield's crooked spire to Lincoln's famous imp. Originally featuring on coats of arms, animals, real and mythical, have developed a character of their own from Berwick Rangers' bear to Shrewsbury Town's loggerheads.

The book traces the journey of the badge from an embroidered symbol on the home-knitted jerseys of Aston Villa or Queen's Park to today's multi-million pound brands. For many clubs there have been twists and turns en route as they face the challenges of copyright and counterfeit, chairmen's fancies and fan resistance to change. While a few clubs like Rochdale have remained largely faithful to their original badge, others like Barnsley have launched ten or more designs on the way. As well as individual stories, broad trends emerge: the first badges and their associations with public school sports clubs, stars and Maltese crosses; the badgeless inter-war years except for special occasions like FA Cup finals: the upsurge in town coats of arms in the 1950s; the trendy monograms of the 1960s to the current move towards reviving older badges, decluttering and celebrating any match or anniversary that the club can think of.

Books about badges have a long pedigree from Routledge's *Boy's Annual* of 1869 to the Bartholomew *Football History Map* of 1971 which let fans plan their route to away games while discovering the badge and colours of the opposition. In 1969 F.C. Avis produced a pocket-sized book of badges without any descriptions. It is a real mishmash of what clubs made available to the author. Falkirk, Finchley and Froome Town are included alongside Liverpool and Everton but Manchester City and Spurs are nowhere to be seen. The mix of badges is what makes the book so intriguing.

When we sat in the boot room planning our tactics, we set out to create a mix of the famous and unknown, old and young. The badges provide a fascinating insight into clubs long since vanished as well as current Premier League players. In today's highly protected world, clubs may be coy to the point of paranoia about featuring the badge even in a book. Sadly the days of guides to football badges may be in the past. As clubs look to be relevant and real to supporters, they need to understand the history of the badge they are selling. A few clubs have excellent histories of their badges on their official website, but many leave it to fans to delve into the history and share their findings.




"TIGERS" and "TROTTERS",
"SPIDERS" and "POTTERS"!

Every famous football club has a badge, as you know, and most of the teams are known to their fans by their nicknames.

Arsenal are the Gunners, because the original club was formed by workers in the gun-making shops at Woolwich Arsenal. Grimsby Town are the Fishermen for obvious reasons. Perhaps you'll guess why Plymouth Argyle are known as the Pilgrims.

The Valiants, nickname of Charlton Athletic, comes from the name of their ground, the Valley. For the same reason Fulham are the Cottagers, because they play at Craven Cottage.

Quite a number of clubs have "bird" nicknames. West Bromwich Albion are the Throstles; Norwich City the Canaries; Newcastle United the Magpies; Cardiff City the Bluebirds; Swindon Town the Robins; and Sheffield Wednesday the Owls.

There are the Tigers (Hull City); Lions (Millwall); Lambs (Notts County); Rams (Derby County); Bees (Brentford); Wasps (Aldos Athletic), and Spiders (Queen's Park).

Other clubs take their nicknames from the chief industry in their district—Sheffield United (Blades); Crewe Alexandra (Railwaymen); Mocherwell (Steelmen); Northampton (Cobblers); Walsall (Saddlers); Stoke City (Potters); Reading (Biscuitmen), and Everton (Toffees).

Mansfield Town are the Stags, and wear a stag's head as their badge. Bolton Wanderers are the Trotters because pigs' trotters are a favourite meal with Bolton fans. St. Mirren are the Saints. So are Southampton—because their first title was St. Mary's!

© Fleetway Publications Ltd., 1967

CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

Badges featured in *Soccer Crests*, by F.C. Avis, 1969.

CHAPTER 1

Kick-Off

There goes a crescent, there an arrow, there a scarlet Maltese cross, there – ghastly sign – a death's head and cross-bones worked in gloomy black.

Routledge's *Boys' Own Annual*, 1868

Ever since the Romans branded their buildings and communications SPQR, standing for The Senate and People of Rome, badges have been used as marks of identity and shared interest. Medieval pilgrims wore them to show that they had visited a sacred site like St Thomas's shrine at Canterbury and members of medieval craft guilds displayed them to indicate their trade. Over time towns and cities adopted coats of arms and schools, regiments and sports clubs increasingly found a unique way to express their identity through a crest.

Although 'mob football' has probably been played on village greens and town streets since people first discovered the competitive fun of kicking a ball – King Edward II banned 'husting over large balls' in 1314 – it was only from the 1860s that association football started to be organised with rules, competitions and cups.

After the first match played to the new Football Association (FA) rules in 1864, the toast was 'Success to football, irrespective of class or creed'. The FA initially saw its role as protecting the game from commercial greed, to keep it 'uninfluenced by mercenary or other unworthy motive'. What would those stern Victorian custodians have made of the game today?

Copy of Roman SPQR in Milan's 19th century Galleria shopping mall

The 'H' of Headington United gives a nod to Oxford United's original name. It is also an early example from 1960 of a club running a competition to design a badge. Mr S.E.V. Clarke was the winner.

WHY START A FOOTBALL CLUB?

The number of clubs mushroomed from the 1870s. Many are now long forgotten. Who can remember Cudworth Village or Gnome Athletic? The reasons for setting up clubs were as varied as the individuals who formed them.

Many people in late Victorian Britain believed in muscular Christianity, an approach that stressed manliness and fitness, both physical and moral, and which appealed to teachers and businessmen as well as the clergy. They saw football as a suitable outlet for encouraging such virtues.

By now most of the great public schools had added football to the curriculum. In the south clubs like Plymouth Argyle and Old Etonians were formed by ex-public schoolboys whereas in the industrial north teams were more likely to come from working-class roots, often organised as a philanthropic gesture by the middle classes to keep young lads off the streets or out of the pub. The one exception is Hamilton Academical, the only professional club to start life as a school team.

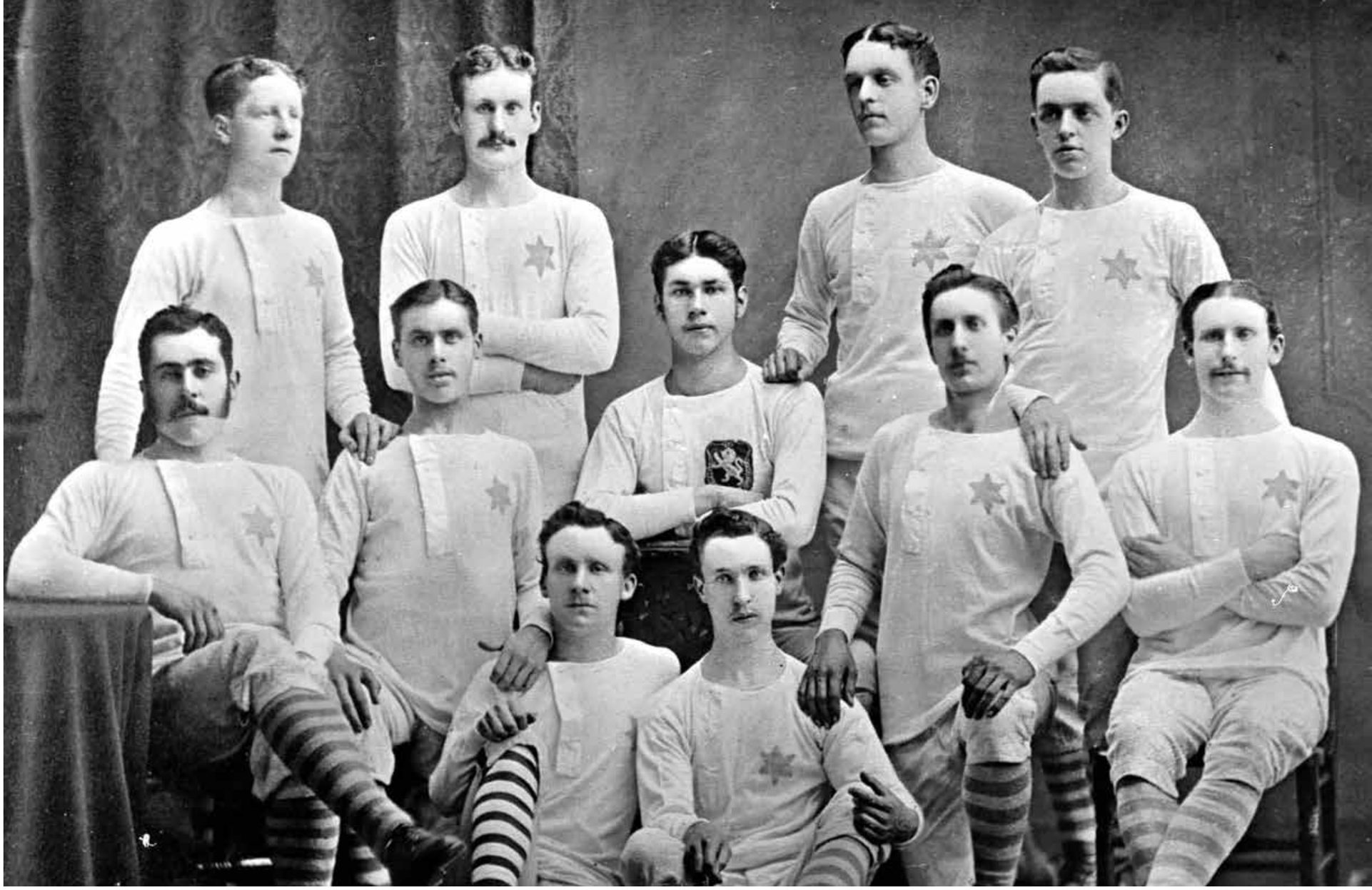
Fulham's origins combine several strands – a teacher and a churchwarden founded the club for local boys in 1879 and in the early years played more cricket than football.

Clubs often played a range of sports before settling on the beautiful game. Football appealed to young sportsmen looking for something to play in the winter months to stay fit. Clubs formed by cricketers include Leyton Orient, St Johnstone, Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday which takes its name from the day of the week when players had a half day off from work.

Formed by a team of cricketers, Kilmarnock played rugby for four years from 1869 before settling on football: its ground is still Rugby Park. Bangor City was set up in 1876 as a rugby club but a year later it was decided to switch to association football because of the number of players injured in the first season.

Glasgow Rangers went a step further, rugby influencing its name, kit and early badge. One of the founders, Moses McNeil, read the name in a book about English rugby, Charles Alcock's *English Football Annual*. The team in question may have been rugby team, Swindon Rangers. Glasgow Rangers also copied Swindon's colours for the 1876/77 Scottish Cup Final – white socks, white shorts and white shirts with a blue star on the breast. It was later said that Moses loved the name Rangers because it rhymed with strangers, symbolising the bringing together of men from all over the city who fancied a game of football. Cynics added 'provided they were Protestant'.

A Scotland international badge, from a match the year after Tom Vallance wore a very similar one seen on the team photo of 1877, above.



Glasgow Rangers Scottish Cup Final team of 1876/77 with the captain replacing his star with the lion to show that he had played in a Scottish international. W. Dunlop, G. Gillespie, D. Hill, W.B. McNeil, J. Watson, T. Vallance (captain), J. Watt, A. Marshall, P. Campbell, S. Ricketts, M. McNeil.

Football was also good for business. Publicans not only offered meeting rooms but helped to start clubs: the landlord of the Blue Boar kicked off Southend United. The game also appealed to larger employers keen to keep their workforce fit and sober. Such employers included the Dental Manufacturing Co Ltd of Barnet and Spencer's corset factory of Banbury. Workers at Singer's Bicycle Works changed the club's name from Singer to Coventry City in 1898 in the hope of taking on bigger sides.

Clubs with more unusual roots include Nottingham Forest, set up by a group of bandy (shinty) players in 1865 and Chesterfield who were relaunched by the Sports Committee of the local council in 1919 as the powers-that-be wanted an increased focus on sport and a club which was directly accountable to them.

Despite the current emphasis on heritage, surprisingly few clubs feature their origins on their badges today. Brentford originally had a river as a reminder of its roots as a rowing club. On changing their name from Headington United in 1960, Oxford United included a partially concealed letter 'H' as a reminder of their original name. Of the few references that survive on today's badges Southampton's halo is a reminder that the club was originally called St Mary's.


INTERNATIONAL
FOOT-BALL MATCH,
(ASSOCIATION RULES.)
ENGLAND v. SCOTLAND,
WEST OF SCOTLAND CRICKET GROUND,
HAMILTON CRESCENT, PARTICK,
SATURDAY, 30th November, 1872, at 2 p.m.
ADMISSION—ONE SHILLING.
No. 806

A crowd of 4,000 watched the world's first official football international.

Woollen England jersey worn by Oxford University's Arnold Kirke-Smith at the match.

The origin of wearing a badge on football shirts dates back to the first official international in 1872 when England adopted the now-famous three lions, and Scotland took on the lion rampant.

LIONS FOR ONE'S COUNTRY

The origin of wearing a badge on football shirts dates back to the first official international in 1872 when England adopted the now-famous three lions, and Scotland took on the lion rampant. The latter was embroidered on the shirts by Marion Wotherspoon, sister of one of the players. Hosted in Glasgow, the match resulted in a goalless draw.

It was common for individuals chosen to play for their country to sew the badge on to their tops to mark them out from other players. Badges are also likely to have been worn for FA Cup finals. Aston Villa may have been the first team to do so as they introduced the city of Birmingham's crest on their shirts in the 1886/87 season when they won the cup. A photo of the Blackburn Rovers team, which won the cup in 1891, shows some players wearing a badge.

For decades many clubs like Manchester United only wore a shirt badge for special occasions like cup finals. In 1909 they had a red rose to symbolise Lancashire whereas in post-Second World War finals they used a variation of Manchester's coat of arms.

There has been little change to the badges of the two national teams. In 1890 a thistle, also the emblem of Scotland's rugby team, replaced the lion but 12 years later the rampant beast was back and has been on the

The Scottish lion was displayed back to front, *The Graphic* magazine, 1872.

By 1879 the red Lion Rampant on a gold background had set the style that is still in place today.

Woollen England jersey worn by Oxford University's Arnold Kirke-Smith in the 1872 international. The English lion dates back to the time of King Richard 1, the Lionheart, who used three lions in his Great Seal of 1198.

Blackburn Rovers, 1884 with FA Cup, East Lancs Charity Cup and Lancashire FA Cup

Badge from an England shirt worn by Sheffield Wednesday stalwart, Tommy Crawshaw, who made ten appearances for the national side between 1895 and 1904, only scoring a single goal.

shirts ever since. The England badge has only been radically changed once, to a design by the College of Heralds in 1949. The crown on top of the lions was removed to distinguish the badge from that of the English cricket team. The lions were redrawn with red claws and ten Tudor roses were added, probably to represent the FA's ten regional divisions. An 11th rose was added three years later, possibly to make up a full team, and a scroll was introduced to include the name of England's opponent for each match and the date.

Over the decades, shirt manufacturers have tinkered with the badge but it remains essentially the same.

Partick Thistle is one team which has remained faithful to the national flower since its foundation in 1876, also

The crown on top of the lions was removed to distinguish the badge from that of the English cricket team.

Believed to be the oldest Wales badge in existence, it was awarded to Joseph Harry Williams of Oswestry Town for his only international appearance. The game on 17th March, 1884 ended with a 4-0 defeat at Wrexham's Racecourse Ground to England.

This, possibly pre-1900, badge, comes from a Wales international shirt worn by outside-right Billy Meredith. Winner of 48 caps in his career, he liked to chew a toothpick during the game.

Close-up of an early blazer.

Thomas Adams joined Partick Thistle in the 1912/13 season and made 227 appearances at full-back.

Barney Battles of Celtic wore the thistle of Scotland in all three home internationals of 1901.

giving the club its nickname of the Jags. A badge did not appear consistently on players' jerseys until the early 1900s although a team photograph from the 1880s shows that a badge was sometimes worn. The famous white thistle badge lasted for three quarters of a century until 1974/75. Few badges appeared on the red-and-yellow-striped jerseys between 1975 and 1978 and after the adoption of some modernistic thistles, the current more traditional badge was introduced in 2008/09.

England international Cap awarded to the Blackburn Rovers player William Townley, on 15th March 1890, when he played in a 9-1 British Championship win over Ireland at Ballynafeigh Park, Belfast. Townley scored twice.

The cap of J.J. Thomson who played for Scotland against England in the 1870s. He also captained Queen's Park to victory in the first Scottish Cup in 1874.

‘All players taking part for England in future International matches be presented with a white silk cap with red rose embroidered on the front.’

CAPPING IT ALL

Picking up on the sporting tradition of Rugby School, football caps seem to have evolved from the motley headgear that players wore in the first internationals and as an honour for individual performances.

In 1886 the English Football Association awarded its first caps to players selected for international games after a committee decided, ‘All players taking part for England in future International matches be presented with a white silk cap with red rose embroidered on the front.’

The white silk never happened and the rose was later replaced by the lions as roses were strongly associated with rugby. The cap was meant to be worn on the field to indicate who played for which team, but in practice it was treated as a memento. By the 1920s separate velvet caps were awarded for each match, the colour varying according to the country played against. Scotland was purple, Ireland was white and Wales was red.

The League Champions cap awarded to Dennis Hodgetts of Aston Villa at the end of the 1893/94 season. By now the lion is facing left as it does today.

Hodgetts scored the first goal in the 1887 FA Cup Final and made 178 appearances scoring 62 goals playing as a forward for the club, before moving to local rivals Small Heath.

The house caps of Rugby School in the 1870s. Several symbols like the lion, the crescent and the Maltese cross are still familiar football badge icons.

“The house badges go back to the 1840s and, I believe, were designed by a pupil named Henry Crealock.”

“The House badges or crests go back to the 1840s and, I believe, were designed by a pupil named Henry Crealock. Staff involvement in those days was virtually non-existent. There were nine badges but the only house names to survive today are School and Town. I heard that the senior boys in each house submitted patterns and emblems for the images on the caps. The caps even pre-date William Webb Ellis.

In a team photograph of the first Rugby Football International played between Scotland and England in 1871 one can see the England players with most of the ten Rugbeians wearing their house caps with crests.”

DR JONATHAN SMITH, ARCHIVIST
RUGBY SCHOOL

KNOTS AND ROSES

In the days before leagues, each region was governed by a county football association. Teams from that area had to wear a symbol to show to which county players were affiliated. In the 1890s West Bromwich Albion featured the Stafford knot, a three-looped knot that was both a traditional symbol of the county and easy to embroider. Although the club crest was the monogram M-F-C, players in the Manningham team, the predecessor of Bradford City, who represented their county wore the white rose of Yorkshire.

When Notts County entered the English FA Cup in 1877/78 they wore plain shirts emblazoned with the coat of arms of the City of Nottingham against a black field. It is possible that this was the badge of the Nottinghamshire FA.

Manningham players displaying the white rose of York, 1894.

Main image: Captain Charlie Roberts leads the Manchester United team on to the pitch at Crystal Palace for the 1909 FA Cup Final against Bristol City.

Right: A winning shirt worn at final.