

## 6. Pleasure In Abundance

### Beyond The Drawing Room

In 1901 there were 260 provincial theatres in Britain. This included eight in Liverpool, seven in Manchester and Glasgow and six in Birmingham. A good seat in the stalls for a popular production, cost 2/4, far less if perched in the gallery on a wooden bench. Saturday night admission cost sixpence "in the gods, "with patrons compressed along packed rows. More imaginative and creative stage-sets gradually replaced stereotype drawing-room scenes with scores of new plays each year.

In serious theatre, Shakespeare dominated to the detriment of plays of high quality such as Chekov's masterpiece, *The Cherry Orchard*, poorly acted according to J. B. Priestley. He was unimpressed by wealthy theatregoers who regarded theatre merely as a night out in a party atmosphere, preceded by enjoyable daytime activities and a slap-up dinner in the West End.

Critics savaged J. M. Barrie's *The Admiral Crichton* in giving parts to six maids with a servant as the leading figure. Well constructed, for critics it lacked sophistication, a criticism levelled at Somerset Maugham's inclusion of servants in his play, *Smith*. Often set in drawing rooms, early century plays depicted class and elegance such as *The Return of the Prodigal*, *Lady Epping's Lawsuit* and *Captain Drew*. Popular too was Arthur Wing Pinero's *Mid-Channel*, with the main cast marooned in a drawing room with merely a glimpse of lower classes. Pinero's justification was refined, elevated, cultured tastes and pleasures as "wealth and leisure are more productive of dramatic complication than poverty and hard work. You must take into account the inarticulateness, the inexpressiveness of the English lower-middle classes." King Edward VII, impressed by the acting ability of Lillie Langtry, greatly enjoyed "modern society pieces, ideally "containing plenty of caustic and subtle psychology."

Australian theatre impresario, Oswald Stoll, offered mass audience appeal after acquiring the Coliseum and Empire theatres at Hackney, Holloway, New Cross, Stratford and Bow. A rival, Edward Moss, owned the Hippodrome and a chain of provincial theatres. Productions were brief and dramatic, interspersed with romantic songs and acceptable jokes. Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry appeared at the Coliseum in one-act plays and ballerina Tamara Karsavina too, whilst Pavlova appeared at the Palace Theatre. Respectable entertainment, but not too highbrow, appealed to the lower-middle and upper working classes.

Musical comedy flourished after the Gaiety Theatre opened in 1903 in the presence of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. So did popular theatre. Leading the way was Frank Curzon. A former tailor, he owned the Piccadilly Hotel and rebuilt Strand, Prince of Wales, Comedy and Criterion theatres, offering a choice of venues for music and operetta. At the upper end of the cultural scale was *Merrie England* and *Tom Jones* for audiences of superior tastes. This contrasted with the popular and romantic escapism of *The Arcadians* and *The Quaker Girl*, whilst the sentimental and patriotic boosted the box office revenues. In 1907 Franz Lehar's *The Merry Widow* was performed and ran for two years. An impressed King saw it four times. The sheet music was an instant hit. Audiences were totally spellbound by flowing and melodic waltzes with almost a quarter of a million copies sold. Productions such as *The Count of Luxembourg* and *Gypsy Love* could not compete on this scale.

In *Lady Epping's Lawsuit* the hero complains, "Nobody seems to think a play serious, unless it is about unpleasant people." Perhaps he had in mind the dishevelled, ghostly appearance of *Lady Frederick*, the title of a Somerset Maugham play in which she appears in a kimono.

George Bernard Shaw wouldn't care about opinions of those in high office, having had a run-in with the Lord Chamberlain over *Mrs Warren's Profession*. This is about a successful young lady who, tut-tut, learned that her mother had paid for her education from earnings as a prostitute. Shaw's licence was withdrawn, but not in America, Germany and Austria, a point stressed by Gaiety theatres seeking to have the ruling overturned. They reminded the Lord Chancellor that both Dumas and Tolstoy suffered the same fate but to no avail. Also banned was *Press Cuttings*, a one-act sketch about votes for women as were plays that examined social issues of a sensitive nature, whilst permitting vulgar farces, at times sexually charged. This led to 72 theatrical and literary directors writing protest letters to prominent national newspapers with support too from Algernon Swinburne, H. G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, George Meredith and J. M. Barrie. Their claim was the ban was not only contrary to common justice but to commonsense.

The Prime Minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman agreed to set up a joint committee of both Houses to inquire into the censorship of stage plays. George Bernard Shaw produced his own evidence amounting to 11,000 words, adamant "that writers must fight censorship in every form." Amongst others providing evidence were Arthur Wing Pinero, W. S. Gilbert and Harley Granville-Barker. The Times, reporting the proceedings, judged much of the evidence interesting, witty and outstanding. The paper questioned the absurdity, not only of imposing moral standards in the late Edwardian era, but of double-standards. Opinions varied about a need for censorship and the type of content applicable. A reticent W. S. Gilbert felt that "the stage was not a proper platform to discuss questions of adultery and free love before mixed audiences," containing persons of all ages. Distinctions were drawn between serious and entertaining plays, and types of audience, such as Hull attempting to ban *The Merry Widow*, described by a local paper as "the most improper and immoral play ever produced."

Artistic freedom was weighed against the public being protected from corrupting ideas but this was countered by Harley Granville-Barker saying an audience should not be treated as children. Close to home for politicians was the play *Waste*, about a rising politician who had indulged in an extra-marital affair. The tipping point was mention of abortion, whereupon a certificate was refused. The Committee opted for the status quo but pointed out there was no legal obligation to submit a play for a licence before it was performed in public. There was a sting in the tail. In so doing it might be open to legal objections on the grounds of indecency. The Director of Public Prosecutions could take legal action against the playwright and manager of the theatre in which a play was performed, if the Examiner of Plays deemed this to be indecent.

The transition in moral standards and censorship was both slow and incremental. Attitudes continued to adapt in a changing society, exploring social issues of the time. Examples were John Galsworthy's tin-plate workers on strike in *Strife*, and *Justice* about a clerk convicted of fraud. Plays were not only about good versus evil, and vice versus virtue. They aimed to create real understanding of what work and home life was like for those of lesser means, as well as tragedy, exemplified by J. M. Synge in *Riders to the Sea*. Theatre was now tinged with realism that for some still proved too earthy.

Audiences where Marie Lloyd performed were down to earth, as were her performances with plenty of double entendres. Her career began in 1880, aged 10, singing temperance songs in the East End of London. Marie Lloyd turned professional at 15 but became an alcoholic, and died aged 52. Amongst her songs were: *Oh Mr Porter* and *Come into the Garden Maud*

with a few suggestive gestures added. Far closer to the knuckle was: *She Never Had Her Ticket Punched Before*.

Perhaps the transition in late Edwardian society is best captured by the lampooning of class in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* featuring Eliza Doolittle, a Cockney flower girl trained by Professor Henry Higgins to pass off as a duchess, and her dustman father Alfred, "I don't need less than a deserving man: I need more. I don't eat less hearty than him: and I drink a lot more. I want a bit of amusement, cause I'm a thinking man."

The music hall thrived, not least the Alhambra, Palace, London Pavilion, Tivoli and other West End theatres. For every one there were provincial theatres with dancers, spectacular scenes, sketches and half hour plays, complementing well established Victorian variety. All classes were catered for from those reclining in comfort in the fauteuils to the 3d gallery and 4d balcony in rather less refined theatres. Dry, sardonic humour, coarse wit, an assortment of acrobats, jugglers, singers and conjurers made for an entertaining evening. Large Empire and better provincial theatres offered a degree of luxury and cosiness with velvet curtains, brassy orchestra and, not least, hazy coloured lights distorted slightly by a smoke haze in the auditorium. First-house performances were sedate, contrasting with packed, noisy second houses. Soubrettes, naughty but nice, were popular. So was Little Tich and a bewildered Grock as if from another planet.

Charlie Chaplin, Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy and Fred Karno became famous through films that had mass appeal such as *The Keystone Cops* with Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle a favourite also. By 1914 between seven and eight million people went to a picture palace each week. They had plenty of choice with over 1,000 cinemas in Britain. Tickets started at 3p with audiences drawn mainly from lower middle and working classes. In 1914 Neptune Films opened their studio in Elstree, the first in Britain whilst in the USA film companies started to proliferate.

More cultured foreign entertainment for those with refined tastes was provided by Russian Ballet. Thomas Beecham brought over the astonishing Diaghilev and his troupe of dancers in 1911, "bursting on London like a bomb filled with silks and coloured lights." With a flair for the original in music, design and choreography he was the supreme impresario in providing spectacular theatre. Bewitching ballerinas Tamara Karsavina, Anna Pavlova and incredible Nijinsky enthralled audiences. Diaghilev's opera included Mussorgsky's *Khovantchina* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Ivan the Terrible* and *Scheherazade*. Lady Diana Cooper, spoke of stars and whizzing comets, "a blast to waken the dead, a blaze of blinding gold" with the clash and clang of "Kremlin bells."

The night before Christmas Eve 1912 saw another spell-binding performance, a revue called *Rag-Time*. It starred "brassy-voiced" star, Ethel Levey, belting out tuneful melodies whilst Shirley Kellogg, beating a drum, marched a group of chorus girls along a plank set at right-angles to the stage. The American secret was colossal zest and unbridled enthusiasm, far removed from the staid and genteel. J. B. Priestley saw a ragtime show in Leeds, awestruck by the syncopated frenzy. Young middle and upper classes were enraptured, sensing that the Edwardian era was "being blasted and bulldozed" into a different, vibrant and exciting future. The shackles of the Victorian century were being dismantled, if not removed.

### **Literary Profiles & Portraits**

Several established writers, such as Thomas Hardy turned to poetry full-time having written their major works by the turn of the century. Cambridge classics scholar and Professor of

Latin, A. E. Houseman, wrote *A Shropshire Lad*. The poem was slow in achieving popularity until after Boer War, illustrating that cultural tastes only gradually change.

Celebration of the Relief of Mafeking in 1900 was as much about the dawn of a new century, "Out in the crowd against the railings, with his arm hooked in Annette's, Soames waited. Yes! The age was passing! What with this Trade Unionism, and Labour fellows in the House of Commons, with continental fiction, and something in the general feel of everything, not to be expressed in words, this were very different" (John Galsworthy, In *Chancery*, 1920).

John Galsworthy's *The Four Winds*, was published in 1897 though under the pen name John Sinjohn. Reverting to Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees* (1904) impressed and was followed by his first play *Silver Box* (1906) and a novel *Man of Property* (1908), the first in the Forsyte trilogy. Many works dealt with upper-middle class lives, providing insight into class snobbery, fragile moral codes, acquisitive lifestyles and unhappy marriages. Less successful, was lower class lives, campaigning for women's rights, prison reform and animal welfare but Galsworthy did contribute to the social agenda in observing how people actually lived.

Henry James straddled the centuries. His *The Ambassadors* is much about pragmatism in a new world whilst reflecting back. Like several authors his homosexuality was largely hidden, in his case behind a façade of grace and good manners, and extravagant social life of fancy-dress balls and formal dinners in London, Florence, Rome and Paris.

Modest, sensitive and timid might describe E. M. Forster, whose first four works were written early in the century: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908) and *Howards End* (1910). The depiction of places, if not people, are all biographical. Forster was introduced to The Apostles, the most exclusive and erudite society in Cambridge, that later formed the nucleus of the Bloomsbury Group. Here he mixed with the philosopher Bertrand Russell, economist John Maynard Keynes, the biographer and critic Lytton Strachey, artist, art critic and teacher Roger Fry and Leonard Woolf, a political theorist, author, publisher, civil servant and husband of Virginia.

There was an increasing and almost insatiable demand for children's literature, a void soon filled by Beatrix Potter's illustrated *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* published in 1901. The original tale was written for the son of her former governess and was privately printed after a series of rejections. Edith Nesbit's *The Railway Children*, first serialised in *The London Magazine*, was published in 1905 and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* published in 1911 in book form, after being serialised in an American magazine. *The Magnet* was launched in 1909 by Charles Hamilton, under a pseudonym, Frank Richards. It serialised the adventures of the lower fourth at Greyfriars, a minor public school, and antics of one William Bunter in particular. Deemed to be "idle, stupid, dishonest and vulgar and a shirker, slacker, coward, braggart, glutton and sponger" - no wonder Billy Bunter appealed to Edwardian youth, and boys especially.

"I tell you I've written a great book." In 1912 D. H. Lawrence sent publisher Edward Garnett the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*. It had taken two years, and the book had been through four drafts. In between he ended a long relationship, became engaged to and broke off with another girlfriend, lost his mother to cancer, was seriously ill with pneumonia and fell in love with Frieda Weekley, the wife of one of his professors. All these crises fed into the novel. Indignant scholars felt Garnett had lopped away a tenth of the novel, prudishly censoring its erotic passages, but Lawrence trusted his judgement.

In a review of Arnold Bennett's *Grim Smile of the Five Towns*, Garnett insisted modern fiction had more to reveal "about the life of the Kaffirs, the Malays and Hindus, than about the life of Yorkshire miners, the Lancashire mill-hands, or the Staffordshire Black Country." Garnett later spoke of *Sons and Lovers*, as the only novel "of any breadth of vision in contemporary English fiction that lifts working-class life out its middle-class hands, and restores it to its native atmosphere of hard reality." He was hardly alone in his views. Philip Larkin described D. H. Lawrence as "England's greatest novelist," and this book as his finest achievement.

Arnold Bennett had his admirers in depicting realism and representation of real life in often gloomy settings. *Anna of the Five Towns* describes misery inflicted at every turn, in a novel possibly as bleak as any in the history of fiction. In contrast, Bennett's *The Card* is the story of an enthusiastic solicitor's clerk who becomes a town mayor, seeing his role in life as "the great mission of cheering us all up."

H. G. Wells greatly admired his *The Old Wives Tale* and wrote to Bennett in November 1908. "It is all such a high level that one does not know where to begin commending, but I think the highlight for me is the bakehouse glimpse of Sam Povey. But the knowledge, the details the spirit! From first to last it never fails. I wish it could have gone into the English Review." H. G. Wells, friend and contemporary of Arnold Bennett, played to the same audiences. In 1897 H. G. Wells became editor of *Woman* magazine and began writing his first novel, *A Man From The North*. In that same year Bram Stoker's *Dracula* appeared. The character and setting was inspired by a visit to Whitby.

Several of Wells most famous books concerning science and space were written in the late Victorian period. When he became a Fabian, and a radical, he wrote *Veronica* in which the heroine runs off with the man she loves. In *Tono-Bungay*, a patent medicine containing nothing but advertisements, he takes a swipe at advertising and corrupt commerce seeping into society and the power of greed and use of quackery in making extravagant claims. It is part autobiographical for in earlier years Wells read avidly and became familiar with Hogarth, Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* and his *Common Sense too*.

An acute political observer, Wells gave vent to his Fabian ideas, expressed in lower middle class life and humour in *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910). Wells attended night school and studied at London University, achieving a first class honours degree in zoology. Far less impressive was his being a serial philander, a weakness he dismissively passed off in expressing support for free love. In time, much of his espousal of sexual freedom and avarice of commercialism was old hat, now overtaken by novels dwelling on the frailties and foibles of human nature and a new-fangled subject called psychology.

*The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) by Erskine Childers enjoyed immense popularity. The story of espionage owes much to the novels of Rider Haggard with a plot that could be replicated by John Buchan, Ian Fleming, John Le Carré amongst others. Set in the Friesian Islands in the Baltic, the shady goings-on lent special significance. Biographer Andrew Boyle said, "For the next ten years Childers' book remained the most powerful contribution of any English writer to the debate on England's military unpreparedness."

Childers predicted eventual war with Germany. When writing the book he was contributing to *The Times*, warning of outdated army tactics as well as lack of preparation. Inspired by the book, two yachtsmen, both with the Royal Navy, went on what was reported as a sailing holiday along the same section of the Friesian coast, collecting information about German

naval installations. Both were arrested and each was sentenced to four years custody by a military court in Leipzig. In 1913 they were pardoned by the Emperor.

## Artistic Impressions

In the wake of the French Impressionists, an art explosion took place in Britain towards the end of the nineteenth century. This led directly to even more expressive forms of art from James Abbot McNeil Whistler's nocturnes to Walter Richard Sickert and the Camden Town Group, famed for works by Charles Ginner, Harold Gilman, Spencer Gore and Robert Bevan amongst many others.

Sickert inspired its founding in 1911 over a series of dinners, in and around Regent Street and Piccadilly. Others were invited to join and the group moved to 19 Fitzroy Street in two rented rooms on the first floor. "There was an appetising smell of tea and pigment as you ascended to a glorious afternoon of pictures and talk. Easels and chairs faced the fireplace, with a serried stack of canvases against the wall. Six works or more of an individual painter were extricated in turn, each Fitzroyalist displaying his quota, or having it displayed for him by the untiring Gore," who was president.

The name Camden Town Group was coined by Sickert, echoing Charles Booth's description around this period, comprising lower middle-class: "Shopkeepers and small employers, clerks and subordinate professional men. A hardworking, sober, energetic class." Sickert depicted, not so much the spirit of the age, but reality of dark, shadowy interiors, bawdy theatres, ladies of dubious virtue and bland façade of small shops, enticing the eager and unwary.

Works included: the rowdy perched in the balcony in "*The Gallery of the Old Bedford* (1894), enigmatic *Dawn-Camden Town* (1909), faintly provocative *Sunday Afternoon* (1913), earthy *Off to the Pub*, depicting a nightly escape for a few pints at the local pub (1912), and utter boredom, with life and each other, epitomised by *Ennui* (1914). The march of the modern working and lower middle classes was on display for the public to savour, or recoil from in equal measure, finding this form of voyeurism at times somewhat distasteful.

Walter Sickert captured a raffish and seedy urban society, portraying real life in the raw that contrasted with the vibrant and modern metropolitan scenes of Charles Ginner's *Café Royal* (1911) and the frenzy of motor vehicles in Piccadilly Circus (1912). A bright red open-top bus, displaying gaudy advertising and a black taxi whirl round Eros, as an impervious 'coster' woman, with a large shawl and straw boater, sells flowers in the midst of urban mayhem.

Harold Gilman turned to the theme of domestic interiors, gasping for daylight and life itself, with his *Meditation* (1911), the daily chores of *The Shopping List* (1912) and loneliness of the city in the bustle of this new century. His sombre and enigmatic *Girl with a Teacup* (1914), perhaps seated in a newly opened Lyons Corner House, captures uncertainty, if not doubt in friendships and a raucous and frenetic life. This showed how urban society had changed as they were all consumers now with billboard advertising and slogans to the fore. Whether for better, or worse, depended on your station in climbing the greasy pole of class. For most the cup was half-full compared to earlier decades. Besides there was now hope.

Spencer Gore's depiction of modern aesthetic culture is illustrated in his expressive *Gauguins and Connoisseurs* (1911), *The Fig Tree* (1912) and *Letchworth Station* (1912), and his post-impressionist *The Cinder Path* (1912) and vivid simplicity of Brighton Pier (1913). In contrast Robert Bevan's *Horse Sale at the Barbican* (1912), colourful *Haze over the Valley* (1913) and *Maples at Cuckfield* (1914) were restrained. Spencer Gore was an innovator, belonging more

to a burgeoning Expressionist movement, full of creativity, verve and experimentation. He envisaged such a future for British society, far removed from a distant staid Victorian image.

All these works of art told a story that reflected modernity. Malcolm Drummond's elegant *In the Park* (1911) captures the essence. Languishing in archive vaults of Southampton City Art Gallery, the picture is an iconic image of time stood still in this modern metropolitan age. Promenading, yet somehow static figures, enjoy the delights and ambience of St James Park with a backdrop of important offices of state. Ahead of its time, the picture drew criticism with the acid comment, "The painting has no refinement of colour or grace of drawing." Creativity and expressionism in modern life, and simplicity of style, was too much for some art critics of traditional schools. Art had to be explained, rather than be interpreted.

Sickert's rich artistic talent inspired others including Philip Wilson Steer, William Orpen and Bohemian Augustus John, a product of the Slade School of Art under severe and sarcastic Henry Tonks. He much admired John, paying him the ultimate compliment as "the greatest draughtsman since Michelangelo," a view shared by John Singer Sargeant whose era was passing. John's *Merikli* was of his bejeweled wife, a painting exhibited at the New English Art Club in 1902, receiving rapturous praise. W. B. Yeats, recognised his prodigious talent in "drawing like an old master" but there his adulation ended. John's portraits, including that of Yates in 1907, "makes everyone look perfectly hideous," adding "he exaggerates every hill and hollow of the face till one looks like a gypsy, grown old in wickedness and hardship."

### **Sport Comes Of Age**

The 1908 Olympic Games were to be held in Rome but were relocated to London on financial grounds, following an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1906 that caused devastation in Naples. The Games, held at the White City, were opened by the King who took pride in a quarter of the athletes being British. Other countries comprised the USA, dominions of Canada, South Africa and Australia and countries from Europe. Events included tug-of-war and duelling. In the marathon, Dorando Pietri from Italy had a clear lead entering the stadium. Dazed and dehydrated he staggered towards the finishing line, then collapsed. Alarmed officials helped Pietri across the line, whereupon he was disqualified. A sympathetic Queen Alexandra kindly presented him with an inscribed silver cup the next day. Britain easily topped the Olympic medals table with 146, followed by the USA on 47 and France with 25.

The cricketing career of W. G. Grace spanned an incredible 44 seasons from 1865 to 1908. He played as a gentleman, otherwise perceived as an amateur, but his testimonial benefit was almost £10,000. The doctor was a legend in his time. The admission of sixpence was doubled if 'the doctor' was playing. Fixated by keeping up a fine batting average, so the story goes, W. G. Grace missed a fairly straight ball. It just touched a bail that fell to the ground. An oblivious, W. G. Grace said, "windy day umpire." The reply was direct, terse and instant "Make sure it doesn't blow your cap off on the way back to the pavilion!"

Cricket's old guard was typified by Lord Hawke who, despite little talent, captained Yorkshire for 27 years. He told the Manchester Guardian, "I am no advocate of wholly professional sides." It was the game that counted, not the gate proceeds, or the result even. The issue for Hawke was not match payments but whether a player depended on cricket for a living. By this time there was a county championship with pressure on winning, if only because paying spectators expected it.

The distinction between amateur and professional was evident in the final Test Match of the England versus Australia Test Series. With the Ashes already won by Australia, the game was about self-respect. On the last day England required 263 to win but plummeted to 48 for 5. In came Gilbert Jessop, a gentleman batsman who proved his status and cricketing passion by not only playing four seasons for Cambridge, but failing to take his final exams. He scored 104 off 75 balls, the fastest 100 in Test Match cricket. Yorkshire professionals George Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes had a mid-pitch chat on tactics with many runs still needed. Rhodes said, "we'll get 'em in singles." England won by one wicket. Livelihoods depended on winning. As Rhodes said to a young team member, "we don't play for fun you know."

For many, this was a golden era for cricket with names that still resonate today. C. B. Fry had the distinction of being a Test Match player, holder of the world long jump record at one point, an international footballer and amateur member of Southampton who lost to Sheffield United in the 1902 Cup Final. His cricketing record was remarkable with 94 centuries and a first-class average of over fifty. He also achieved a first from Wadham College, Oxford.

The name of Archie MacLaren evokes memories of his captaincy of Lancashire and England. He scored a century on his debut one month after leaving Harrow and five years later made 424 in 470 minutes for Lancashire against Somerset. He treated professionals in much the same way he treated his under-gardeners. He had a similar disdain for the governing body of the MCC, often disagreeing over team selection. MacLaren even organised a private tour of Australia in 1902, managing to fall out with his hosts and Sydney Barnes too, an up-and-coming player. In his private life several of MacLaren's business ventures failed so he was reliant on expenses as a gentleman.

Edwardian cricket accepted professionals such as George Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes as being great exponents of the game. Rhodes achieved a remarkable distinction in taking 4,000 first-class wickets and worked his way up the batting order from number eleven to number one. Hirst, a genuine all-rounder, took 2,800 wickets and scored over 1,000 runs in 19 consecutive seasons. The greatest bowler of the age was considered to be Sid Barnes who mesmerised the Australians on the 1901-2 tour but, whilst in admiration, The Times feared the intrusion of professionals. Cricket didn't seem like sport anymore. "Any step that can bring sentiment into the game was to be welcomed. For too long, hard utilitarianism and commercialisation have controlled it."

Association football was largely a professional game and by 1914 there were 158 such clubs in England and Wales with 30 more in Scotland. Many were subsidised in part by directors, with the lions share of revenue coming through turnstiles. The average attendance at a first division match was over 15,000. In 1901 the English league introduced a minimum wage of £4 per week with players often receiving a signing-on fee, limited to £10, on joining a club. In the late Victorian era, teams comprised those from the north of England and midlands only as soccer associations in the south fiercely resisted the professional game. A Southern League was formed and only admitted into the football league in Division 3 in 1920.

The first £1,000 transfer fee was in 1905. This heralded domination of football by the big clubs that included Aston Villa, winners of the F.A. Cup in 1904-5 for the fourth time with six League titles by 1909. Soccer was part of the national identity and gradually expanded post World War 1 from two divisions to four, with tiers below. Admission prices were usually set low at around 6p, rising to one shilling for major cup-ties. For many, Saturday afternoons



couldn't come quickly enough or better still a week's holiday to indulge a three days County Championship cricket match; utter boredom for some and pure bliss for others.

## **A Revolution in Transport**

At the end of the Victorian era, passenger transport came in several forms, notably the train, horse drawn omnibus and carriage, and steam carriage too. The new century heralded an explosion of motor car manufacturers in Britain to rival Gottlieb Daimler, Carl Benz and soon Henry Ford.

Henry Austin started to build Wolseley bespoke cars in 1895 but his fellow directors foresaw little demand. With the backing of steel magnate, Frank Kayser, he formed the Austin Motor Company in 1906, based in the village of Longbridge. He also parted from Vickers Brothers over engine design and instead teamed up with Dunlop patent holder, Harvey Du Cros. Like Wolseley his were luxury cars. Customers included Russian grand-dukes and princesses, the Spanish Government and British nobility. In 1906 just 31 cars were made. By 1913 this had risen fiftyfold to 1500 with nearly a tenfold increase in employees to 2,300.

William Morris began car manufacture in 1912, opening a factory the next year at the former Cowley military college where he made his 2-seater Morris Oxford 'Bullnose.' But Austin and Morris were not the first pioneers. In 1899 Sunbeam developed a prototype car, having built a reputation for highly quality, relatively inexpensive bicycles to rival the Beeston Humber. Earliest cars appeared in 1899 and 1900 but it was Maxwell Maberley-Smith who offered an unusual vehicle design for Sunbeam to mass produce. The Sunbeam Maberley was born. By this time other fledgling companies had entered the market such as Vauxhall, producing about 70 cars in 1903, and Lanchester with their Brougham from 1904.

The same year Charles Rolls met Henry Royce in Manchester. Rolls was one of Britain's first car dealers whilst Royce ran an electrical and mechanical business and had developed the two-cylinder Royce 10. Rolls preferred three-and four-cylinder cars but was so impressed that he promised to take as many of Royce's cars as he could make.

All four car models would be named Rolls-Royce, for exclusive sale by Rolls. In 1906 Rolls-Royce Limited was formed. The next year, the Silver Ghost was declared 'The Best Car in the World,' having travelled from London to Glasgow 27 times - 14,371 consecutive miles. The car broke the world non-stop record, demonstrating unrivalled reliability and comfort. That feat, a distinctive car design and prices to match, ensured the future of Rolls Royce.

Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Company in 1902 in Detroit and the next year produced the Model A. The famed T model, "car of the century," was made from 1908 at a purpose-built factory, still within Detroit. Components were manufactured by suppliers and the cars assembled on site. In 1909, in the first full year of production, nearly 70,000 were made but demand was outstripping supply. Production was moved again in 1910 to the Highland Park complex that gradually refined assembly-line techniques.

Over 170,000 cars were manufactured in 1912 and by the near year Ford had developed all the basic techniques required for the assembly line and mass production. Chassis assembly time was reduced from 12.5 hours to 2.7 hours and later a little over 90 minutes. Output in 1913 rose to 227,000 cars. In 1914, in a bid to reduce employee turnover, pay was doubled to \$5 a day with shifts reduced from nine hours a day to eight hours. Turnover decreased, productivity soared and vehicle costs plunged. A Ford car was within reach of its workers.