



Wesleyan chapel cricket team in the misty cold of a winter's evening sometime early in 1874. The meeting was between keen cricketers who wanted to keep their Villa Cross team together during the winter months. Indeed researchers in the distant future who might never have seen the game could be forgiven for thinking that football was some form of winter cricket since several other football clubs were formed in similar circumstances.

Middlesbrough FC was formed by members of Middlesbrough Cricket Club in 1876 and Derby County, who were among the 12 founder members of the Football League when it was initiated in 1888 were a similar offshoot. Newcastle United's origins meanwhile are to be found with two minor football clubs on the east of the city, Stanley and Rosewood. Stanley itself had originated from a cricket team in 1881. The Sheffield Wednesday we know today came into being in 1867 as the football section of the Wednesday Cricket Club, which had been in existence since 1820. The cricket club had been the creation of a group of Sheffield craftsmen who gave it the name 'Wednesday' for the simple reason that was the day when they took regular afternoons off to pursue their sporting enthusiasms. Henry Percy, the first Earl of Northumberland had a son Sir Henry Percy, whose deeds on the battlefields gave him the nickname 'Harry Hotspur'. According to the history books he was slain at Shrewsbury in 1403. The schoolboys, who first created the Hotspur Cricket Club in 1880, from which the Tottenham Hotspur football club, no doubt looked upon his character as their hero and named the club after him.

Coventry was founded in 1883 by employees of Singers, the cycle firm, and was known as Singers until 1898 when the name was changed to Coventry City. In the spring of 1884 a group of Old Wyggestonians and members of the Bible class at the old Emanuel Church formed Leicester Fosse Football Club. A few years earlier Sunderland Football Club had begun its life in 1879 at a meeting of schoolteachers. At first the club was called Sunderland and District Teachers' Association Football Club but after the first year, non-teachers were allowed to join and the name was changed to Sunderland AFC. One unsupported suggestion was that the teachers found the £10.00 a year for rent for their field too expensive



Sir Geoff Hurst & Sir Andrew Green at the Opening ceremony for The Football Nation exhibition

and needed assistance from players with better paid jobs. Everton's first official match was played in the same year, when a team called St. Peter's was beaten 6-0. When the attendances went up to nearly two thousand, the officials decided that Everton needed a better-suited pitch and in 1882, a generous gentleman named Mr Cruitt donated land on which basic dressing rooms were built and entrance fees collected. The need for a new pitch loomed again about a year later, this time because Mr Cruitt didn't like the club's vociferous and over-exuberant supporters! Everton became a professional team in 1885 like many other leading clubs in the country.

Today's Elland Road stadium is a far cry from the open grass field of Victorian times. It was known as the Old Peacock Ground, named after a local pub standing opposite the playing field. It was from the pub that the club took its nickname of the Peacocks, after being known as the Citizens during the days of Leeds City. The Old Peacock Ground was bought by Holbeck Rugby Club, for £1,100 in 1897. On 23 April 1898, local soccer administrators were delighted when 3,400 people turned up to see Hunslet, forerunners of Leeds City, beat Harrogate 1-0 in the West Yorkshire Cup Final at Elland Road. Soccer became a regular attraction at the ground during the 1902-03 season when Leeds League soccer side, Leeds Woodville, shared the ground with Holbeck. But it was not until Leeds City was formed that soccer really took root at Elland Road. As soccer grabbed the imagination of the local footballing public, Elland Road pulled in some big early crowds - a 22,000 plus gate, bringing in receipts of £487, was recorded for the local derby with Bradford City on 30 Dec 1905

Newcastle Rangers were formed in 1878 and first played on a field in Gateshead because they couldn't find a pitch in their native town. They eventually moved across the Tyne taking over an enclosed ground close to Leazes Terrace in September 1880. The pitch was immediately referred to as St James' Park. The local press concluded, "The new ground is very nicely situated and is close to the centre of town. It is 120 yards x 60 yards broad and is completely level." In