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# CHASING THE 'BIG~TIME'

Football Apprenticeship in the 1990s

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## Declaration

A selection of the material contained within this thesis has appeared elsewhere in published form (see Parker, 1995, 1996a).

## Abstract

This qualitative study of Youth Training (YT) is centred specifically around the experiences of trainee professional footballers.

Presenting a case-study analysis of one professional English Football League club, it utilizes those methods of sociological enquiry traditionally associated with ethnography (i.e. participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentary analysis) in order to explore the day-to-day lives of the individuals concerned.

The study depicts the way in which YT recruits are socialized into professional football club culture and how their career expectations and aspirations are subsequently shaped by the detailed complexities of institutional experience. In turn, it looks at how trainees learn to adapt to their chosen occupational position, and uncovers their attitudes towards such diverse topics as educational attendance, inter-personal relations and masculine construction.

Set against the historical development of football apprenticeship within England, the work examines the impact of new vocational policy upon the football industry as a whole and portrays the role of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) - and its subsidiary body The Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society (FFE & VTS) - in relation to the implementation of YT provision. To this end, it attempts to determine the extent to which modern-day forms of football traineeship differ from those methods of indenture employed in previous years.

At the same time, the study provides insight into the personal and social lives of the trainees in question. Notably issues of class, sexuality and gender are raised in terms of individual experience and interpretation. Furthermore, the influence of club officials is also considered in relation to the pressures, pitfalls and constraints of trainee development.

## Abbreviations

BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
C&G	City and Guilds of London Institute
CIR	Commission on Industrial Relations
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
ESFA	English Schools Football Association
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FA	Football Association
FE	Further Education
FFE & VTS	Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society
FL	Football League
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
ISRM	Institute of Sports and Recreation Management
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PEP	Political and Economic Planning
PFA	Professional Footballers' Association
ROSLA	Raising of the School Leaving Age
RSA	Royal Society of Arts Examination Board
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme
YT	Youth Training
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

**Key to ethnographic quotations:**

~	Pause in conversation
...	Material edited out
[ ]	Explanatory information or actions inserted
AP	Andrew Parker

## INTRODUCTION

Football is an accepted and celebrated element of popular culture. Its stars have become contemporary heroes. At its simplest it represents a game watched and played by millions. Exactly where its popularity lies is open to debate. What is certain is that whilst a vast literature now surrounds the football industry, insightful and substantive revelations regarding the inner-workings of the 'People's Game' are few and far between (Walvin, 1975).

As far as English professional football is concerned, 'insider' accounts of working life have been hindered largely by the insular atmosphere created and perpetuated by those living and working in and around the game (see Walvin, 1975; Tomlinson, 1983; Ward, 1983; Wagg, 1984). Though on occasion the inner sanctums of professional clubs have been breached, the extent to which resulting works have captured the 'realities' of the football world is hard to say [1]. Nevertheless, what these sources do confirm is that, apart from the physical rigours of training and playing, this distinctively working-class occupational domain revolves primarily around a strict diet of authoritarianism, ruthlessness and hyper-masculine work-place practice.

This ethnographic study transcends popular portrayals of club life and presents a critical and detailed analysis of Youth Training (YT) within professional football. It sets out to add to existing knowledge of how young people behave and react in relation to issues of training and work by presenting the sub-cultural experiences and verbalized accounts of a group of first and second year football Youth Trainees at one specific English league club. Key questions are addressed. What are trainee experiences of

YT in football like? What impact does YT have on their career chances, aspirations, destinations? How are individual identities shaped, structured, influenced, negotiated within the confines of working-class transition? My concern is not just to describe these training experiences, but to apply aspects of sociological theory to them ~ to everyday circumstance, action and language ~ to establish some kind of analytical framework through which insight might be gained into what it means to be a professional football Youth Trainee in the 1990s.

Empirically based investigations into young people's industrial experiences of new vocational life are nothing new (see for example Cockburn, 1987; Hollands, 1990; Lee, Marsden, Rickman and Duncombe, 1990; Banks et al 1992; Mizen, 1995). Likewise, a number of studies concerning football apprentice/trainee-ship have already been carried out (see Wilshaw, 1970; Laycock, 1979; Hughes, 1990; Roderick 1991; Garland, 1993) [2]. What makes this project unique is that it is the first in-depth, qualitative analysis of sport and youth labour to date and, in this sense, these research findings broaden the grounds upon which debates surrounding Youth Training and its vocational consequences have thus far taken place.

### Context and Method.

Colby Town is a prosperous English professional Football League club, which, over recent years, has built up a formidable reputation for its nurturing and development of young players [3]. During the 1993/94 season it supported a youth team squad of twenty players and a professional playing staff of approximately thirty-five. Of the young players at the club

eight were first year Youth Trainees, eleven were second year Youth Trainees, and one individual, although officially recognised as a full-time professional player, was eligible for youth team selection on account of his birth-date [4]. All first year trainees were between the ages of sixteen and seventeen and had arrived at Colby straight from school. Accordingly second year's were embarking on their second full year of paid work after leaving compulsory education, and were all between the ages of seventeen and nineteen.

Trainees were interviewed at least twice over the course of the research period which lasted the full duration of the 1993/4 season - from early July 1993 until May 1994. For the most part I attended the club for three days each week as a participant observer, spending two days training, working and socializing with trainees, and one day at a local college of Further Education as a fellow student.

After the initial three months of participant observation I began to conduct interviews with trainees in the privacy of Colby Town's residential youth hostel. The vast majority of these interviews were carried out on a personal one-to-one basis. On only one occasion, towards the end of the fieldwork period, did a group interview take place in accordance with the collective requests of seven second year boys. Interviews were also conducted with various members of club staff (ie. youth team coach, Education Officer, youth hostel proprietors) and the college tutors directly involved with Colby trainees on day-release courses. All interviews were tape-recorded. To supplement this data a detailed fieldwork diary was kept throughout the research period, which, in an attempt to limit institutional suspicion, was



written-up each evening on return from club, college and/or social settings [5].

### Thesis Structure.

The resultant findings of these fieldwork experiences are set here within the context of contemporary debates surrounding education and training. In Chapter One I adopt a historical perspective in order to examine how traditional notions of football apprenticeship have changed over time, and how, in more recent years, traineeship within the game has ultimately been re-structured to accommodate and comply with new vocational policy. I analyse the way in which YT(S) has been administered and applied within the bounds of the professional football industry, and what impact this has had on ‘professional player’ recruitment and subsequent rates of labour wastage.

Chapter Two maps out the theoretical and conceptual framework around which the remainder of the study is structured. It presents a detailed analysis of trainee life at Colby Town and highlights the ‘total institutional’ character of daily club routine. Drawing on examples of military practice, it considers the extent to which sociological research concerning ‘total institutions’ provides insight into issues of occupational socialization within professional football, and how notions of institutional constraint and inferiority may also be used to explain traditional features of working-class culture within this, and other, work-place settings.

Frequently apparent amidst military structures of hierarchical work-force bureaucracy and control are examples of authoritarian managerial practice. Constituting the first of six empirical chapters, Chapter Three explores the way in which authoritarianism was employed at Colby and how this pervasive and historically prevalent feature of club culture served to re-structure trainee perceptions of, and attitudes towards, being a professional footballer.

Taking this military analogy one step further, Chapter Four examines the extent to which notions of group cohesion and trainee collectivity permeated the enactment of official routine at Colby Town. It goes on to stress how, because competition for professional contracts between trainees was so strong, intra-group tension and conflict inevitably developed (particularly between trainee year groups), thereby serving to contradict and fragment institutional ideals towards 'squad' cohesiveness.

Moving away temporarily from the working confines of club life Chapter Five takes an in-depth look at trainee experiences of educational provision and centres in particular on first year college attendance. It investigates trainee perceptions of 'day-release' courses and proceeds to map out the contradictions evident between governing body educational/vocational rhetoric and the idiosyncrasies of professional club culture as regards the dismissal of academic values.

Taking place out of club bounds, 'day-release' represented just one in a whole series of wider social experiences which Colby Town youth team members readily pursued in order to escape the restrictive limits of daily existence. Chapter Six scrutinizes more closely the details of trainee social

lives, the complexities of residential constraint and the politics of YT monetary allowance. It identifies also a number of specific social pursuits, the most prominent of which are examined further in Chapter Seven by way of an in-depth analysis of how certain aspects of leisure-time activity contributed to the development and construction of various trainee masculinities.

Chapter Eight provides insight into methods of trainee assessment at Colby, indicating the 'official' criteria upon which professional contracts were granted at the end of the YT period. It takes a retrospective view of schoolboy/trainee experience and, in recounting the fortunes of certain individuals, looks at issues of differing career outcome with regard to managerial decision over trainee futures.

In Conclusion I pull together the key themes and issues raised within the previous eight chapters and offer some thoughts towards the overall impact of the new vocationalism on professional football. I argue here that whilst in recent years the industry as a whole has been keen to embrace the financial benefits of YT(S) policy, on the evidence of this study, little has changed by way of club adherence to modified notions of footballing indenture. I argue, in turn, that whilst governing body monitoring and supervision of educational attendance appears adequate, a closer scrutiny of institutional practice may prove beneficial.

Though separate from the main thesis the appendices should be seen as an integral part of its overall construction. To this end Appendix A contains an account of how the research was carried out. It looks at some of the trials and dilemmas of participant observation and portrays, in particular, how

issues of researcher biography and gender identity significantly informed the research process as a whole. Appendix B provides information concerning the structured format upon which residential living was based at Colby Town, whilst Appendix C constitutes a copy of the employment contract conventionally offered professional football Youth Trainees. In presenting follow-up data regarding the more recent fortunes of Colby Town trainees, Appendix D traces the post-YT destinations of the research respondents.

## Notes

- [1] See for example the autobiographical contributions of Dunphy (1976), Woodcock (1985) and Nelson (1995), and the broader institutional insights of Davies (1972) and Davies (1990). See also the 1990 BBC2 series United, and Channel 4's one-off 1994 documentary That's Football. For less substantive portrayals of life within the professional game see Channel 4's 1995 production Eleven Men Against Eleven, and Central Television's 1993 venture All In The Game.
- [2] For alternative examples of the way in which British sport has adopted contemporary methods of youth development and training see British Racing School (1995), Morris (1988), Neary (1990), O'Hagan (1995), Professional Golfers Association (Undated) and Rugby Football League (Undated).
- [3] In order to preserve anonymity pseudonyms have been used throughout this study.
- [4] Kevin Leech, the professional player who during the 1993/94 season remained eligible for youth team selection at Colby despite his full-time professional status, was not included in this research on account of the fact that his official period of Youth Traineeship had expired at the end of the 1992/93 season.
- [5] For more detailed insight into the methodological complexities of this research project see Appendix A.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Apprenticeship, Football, and The New Vocationalism

I always wanted to be a professional footballer, which is about as unusual as saying you want to breathe fresh air, live in a nice house, have lots of money, fuck every woman you fancy. So what else is new. The whole world and his groundsman wants to be a professional footballer.

(Davies, 1992:24).

If ever professional football was judged on the way it rears its young, it would be shut down. The scouting comes too early, the fall-out is devastating, the waste is criminal. Youths are recruited and sacrificed like boy soldiers.

(Hughes, 1991:3.6).

Whilst the progressive development of industrial apprenticeship within England has been well documented (see Dunlop and Denman, 1912; Webb and Webb, 1913; McLaine, 1948; Davies, 1956; Leipmann, 1960; Bray, 1980; Knox, 1986; Childs, 1992), little information exists concerning the historic emergence of indenture within English professional football. Aside from a small body of related academic research (see Wilshaw, 1970; Laycock, 1979; Hughes, 1990; Roderick, 1991; Garland, 1993), indications towards the way in which footballing apprenticeship has traditionally operated have been limited to the anecdotal memoirs of players and ex-players (see for example Dunphy, 1976; Smith, 1981; Butcher, 1987), the descriptive annals of sports journalism (see Hopcraft, 1971; Davies, 1972; Douglas, 1973), and commissioned reports concerning the inner workings of the football industry as a whole (Political and Economic Planning [PEP],

1966; Department of Education and Science [DES], 1968; Commission On Industrial Relations [CIR], 1974). Moreover, whilst these diverse and sporadic glimpses of trainee life provide definitive snap-shots of institutional practice, they lack any clear analysis of how footballing indenture has changed over time, or how broader structural factors have influenced its evolutionary pattern.

This chapter maps out the key historical phases of football apprenticeship to date. Central is the assertion that modern-day processes of recruitment and training within the professional game have not emerged within a cultural and economic vacuum, but have reflected instead the complexities of socio-economic circumstance. More specifically, my aim here is to highlight the way in which, up until recently, professional football has neglected the further educational/vocational needs of its young players, and how, only as a consequence of new vocational policy implementation have clubs begun to take these needs more seriously.

### Developments In Football Apprenticeship

It is difficult to assess exactly how and when formal training procedures began to enter the realms of professional football. English league clubs have conventionally functioned upon a rigidly autonomous and insular basis, and because of this apprenticeship within the game has differed markedly from those methods of training common to a range of other industries (Walvin 1985). Overall, periods of servitude have been shorter, rates of labour wastage higher, and in a more general sense, work-place demands have followed a distinctively unstructured format - fluctuating from club to club,

similar only in their commitment to the basic ingredients of facility maintenance, menial domesticity and personal discipline/subservience.

How then has football apprenticeship developed? Whilst references to early forms of player enrolment show little sign of standardization or formality, systematic processes of recruitment are historically evident. Mason (1980), for example, has described how in the late Nineteenth Century it was common-place for professional clubs to advertise for players in local newspapers and through the popular sporting press, demanding some kind of industrial trade from their prospective employees in addition to desired levels of sporting expertise. Wagg (1984) too has commented upon the role of 'football agents' around this time, and the way in which they were frequently associated with processes of player enlistment (see also Taylor and Ward, 1995). Education also had its part to play. From 1904 onwards 'industrial' recruitment was additionally facilitated by the English Schools Football Association (ESFA) and its contacts within the schools system. A sibling of the Football Association (FA) itself, the ESFA originally acted as the administrative structure through which suitably gifted youth made the transitional step from 'schoolboy' to 'amateur' and/or 'professional' player status.

Equally effective in terms of employee catchment were the 'scouting' activities of professional clubs, which increased from the turn of the century onwards in accordance with the growing financial and cultural importance of the game (Mason, 1980; Fishwick, 1989). Though there is evidence to suggest that the nurturing of young players did become more elaborate during the 1930s (see Fishwick, 1989), the extent of early scouting



networks is difficult to determine, as is the degree to which such activity was itself professionalized (Walvin, 1975). Suffice it to assume that in relation to programmes of amateur, semi-professional and schoolboy football, scouting was not an activity left purely to chance. Rather, in its earliest form, it probably revolved heavily around informal networks of communication with word-of-mouth 'tip-offs', family connections and personal recommendation constituting the interactive hub of player representation [1].

Of course, whilst fulfilling the basic labour needs of clubs these diverse and fragmented means of recruitment lacked any real foresight or structure - traits which would characterize footballing indenture for years to come. Even when patterns of institutional entry did show signs of regulation the extent to which these benefited the development of the game or the players concerned remained questionable. Writing retrospectively about the pitfalls and irrelevancies of football apprenticeship in the 1930s, W.R. Wall (1965:55) (the then Secretary of Arsenal Football Club) offered his own thoughts on the inadequacies of early trainee provision.

It is true that in the 1930s there was a scheme whereby a professional club could employ a small number of boys on the groundstaff after they left school, but they had to work as groundstaff during the day and did their training on two evenings a week at which time they received what coaching was available. By and large, such coaching was non-existent. In those days most managers held the view that even a youngster had to have sufficient ability before he was signed as a professional and that further coaching was unnecessary.

How then did players themselves perceive these trainee conditions?

Recalling the ad-hoc nature of his own recruitment, Tommy Lawton (1946)

(ex-Burnley, Chelsea, Everton and England forward) describes how in 1935, at the age of 15, he was taken on as an 'office boy' at Burnley, rising at 17 to the administrative heights of Assistant Club Secretary as well as full-time professional player. Likewise, Harry Johnston (1954:26) (ex-Blackpool and England centre-half) outlines how, during a similar period, he was employed at the age of 15 as a 'groundstaff boy' with Blackpool, where, in addition to trainee footballer, he was expected to act as "...a paper-picker-upper, a cleaner of boots, and a washer-up of baths and dressing rooms". Epitomizing these claims, Hunter Davies's (1972:52) career profile of Bill Nicholson (ex-Tottenham Hotspur player and Manager) provides a detailed and seemingly typical illustration of apprenticeship life during the 1930s.

After a month's trial at Spurs, he [Nicholson] was taken on officially as a groundstaff boy at 2 pounds a week. 'I suppose I was a good lad and I worked hard. And mind you, it was hard work in those days. I spent most of the summer painting the girders under the stands, from eight to five almost everyday'...He spent two years as a groundstaff boy, most of it working, very little of it playing football. The only training was on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, but even then the boy's had to fit in almost a day's work beforehand. There was no organised training. 'I remember we used to play football under the stands, using a piece of old cloth as a ball'...'Even in the close season we had to work hard. At the end of every season, us lads and the groundstaff men, about eighteen altogether, had to line up with rakes in our hands and go slowly across the pitch, putting new seeds down and then raking it. I had blisters on my hands with doing it'.

In fact such sentiment appears to constitute a familiar tale (see also Taylor and Ward, 1995). During this period it was illegal for clubs to employ boys under the age of 17 as practising professionals, thus, for these players, and others like them, the role of 'groundstaff' or 'office boy' symbolized the hallmark of occupational entry. Despite its highly glamorous connotations

footballing indenture involved little more than the fulfilment of menial tasks and a personal subservience to senior players, a trend which, according to Tommy Smith (1981:22) (ex-Liverpool full-back), continued well into the late 1950s (see also Eyre, 1981).

I'd all the visions of football clubs as illustrious places where everything is gleaming and shining and all you do all day is play football. I was so put off it was untrue...Before the season came up we'd be painting the toilets, painting the stands...We'd also paint Melwood [Liverpool F.C. training ground] and Shanks's house [Bill Shankly, ex-Liverpool Manager]. Any annual job that needed doing we'd tackle it...The only time I got to see a football was on Friday mornings when we'd play against the bin-men in the car park...

Clearly, the advent of the Second World War did have a marked impact on the way in which footballing recruitment took place, with the complexities of national conscription and allied combat adding to the temporary dissolution of regular club activity (Walvin, 1975, 1978). But in terms of the way in which footballing indenture was set to evolve it was the events of the post-war years which ultimately stimulated broader industrial change. Significant in this sense were the below-par performances of the English national team during the early 1950s, which included a disappointing display in the 1950 World Cup finals in Brazil, and an emphatic 3-6 defeat by Hungary at Wembley three years later - the first time England had been beaten on 'home' soil by a visiting team (see Wagg, 1984; Taylor and Ward, 1995).

These occurrences ignited a steady stream of criticism and debate concerning the insular nature of the English game. Comment which subsequently brought forth an in-depth evaluation of the extent to which

English managers and players had, for too long, exhibited an uninformed arrogance towards foreign styles of play and an inflexible, if not altogether dismissive, approach towards 'scientific'/academic notions of tactical awareness, advanced coaching techniques, and systematized forms of player development (see Wall, 1965; Taylor and Ward, 1995) [2].

English football's pre and post-war methods of training and recruitment were indicative of this stagnant, inflexible and highly insular aura, offering little either in terms of structured coherence or long-term player need. Granted, there were skills to be learned and aspects of tactical knowledge to be passed-on via the experience of coaches, managers and older players, but these features aside, there were few aspects of footballing indenture which presented any noteworthy signs of personal/professional development, or indeed, any real semblance to 'apprenticeship' arrangements within broader industrial spheres - save the deferential basis upon which trainee life was carried out. Particularly questionable was the transferable nature of the qualities, skills and attributes on offer and how, in future years, these might help young players negotiate and secure their place within an increasingly competitive labour market. After all, unlike the historic, and somewhat 'restrictive' practices common to manufacturing sectors, a constant influx of new talent from both amateur and semi-professional leagues meant that a period of servitude within football did not constitute the only route to 'professional' status nor did it represent a 'passport' to guaranteed work (see also DES, 1968; Lee, 1979; Cockburn, 1983; Scullion and Edwards, 1988).

Neither, it seemed, did the overall structure of the English professional game adequately accommodate the educational and vocational needs of those

players who seriously considered life after football. Though it is clear that during the post-war period some clubs (such as Fulham and West Ham United) did endeavour to encourage alternative career provision amongst their new entrants (see for example Robson 1982; Fishwick 1989; Lyall 1989) these attitudes and practices appear relatively scarce. Broadly speaking, football apprenticeship negated these needs. Success and survival was what mattered to the clubs themselves and not the futures of the players they employed. All of which confirmed that in reality the two-year 'apprenticeship' arrangements operated by most clubs to recruit and train young players during the pre and post-war periods were little more than a way round Football Association (FA) legislation prohibiting the employment of 'professionals' under the age of 17 (Football Association, 1964). A position which remained unchanged until 1960.

#### Official Apprenticeship, The 1960s and the Decline of Football

Whether or not concerns surrounding the overall stature of the English game did in fact stimulate the launch of an officially recognized football apprenticeship scheme during the 1960/61 season is unclear. What is certain is that by introducing such a scheme The Football Association and The Football League jointly legitimized existing club practice within England thereby establishing a number of significant breakthroughs for both the industry as a whole and its employees [3].

The repercussions of this move were primarily three-fold. First, because the scheme acknowledged apprentices as a new category of player, it allowed boys to join clubs at the age of 15 and to take part in training and coaching

on a daily basis without having to shroud the true nature of their employment as they had been forced to in the past (Football Association, 1964) [4]. Secondly, by authorizing individual clubs to take on a total of 15 young players as opposed to the 12 allowed previously, the scheme increased the possibilities for the professional scrutiny of more young talent. Thirdly, and relatedly, as a consequence of changing attitudes towards education in society as a whole, team officials were now required to take more seriously the personal requests of trainees (and/or their parents) as regards the fulfilment of educational and vocational training, a stipulation which, for the first time, placed some form of comprehensive obligation on each club to cater for the post-career needs of its young charges (Wall, 1965. CIR, 1974).

It was assumed that in the long-term an officially approved apprenticeship period would greatly benefit the whole of the football industry, especially in terms of 'youth development' and progress. Certainly young player enrolment did escalate during the 1960s beyond previous proportion, but the new scheme was not to be held solely responsible for this. In line with wider societal trends, the economic climate within which the professional game operated underwent dramatic change around this time creating a series of financial pressures which ultimately came to bear upon the overall format of player recruitment within this country.

Several inter-related factors were at work here. Following the spectator boom of the late 1940s and early 50s, English professional football entered a steady period of decline from the mid 1950s onwards (PEP, 1966; DES, 1968; CIR, 1974; Clarke and Madden, 1988). Falling crowds did rally with

the hosting of the World Cup in 1966, but the abolition of the maximum wage for players in 1961 (see Hill, 1963; Eastham, 1964; Wagg, 1984, Mason, 1989) coupled with expanding car ownership and booming leisure markets meant that by the 1960s football found itself languishing amidst the consequences of economic constraint (CIR, 1974; Triesman, 1981; Sloane and Jennett, 1985; Walvin, 1985).

With the industry's wage ceiling effectively shattered by the collective efforts of the players' union (PFA) (see Harding, 1991), from 1961 onwards professionals began to demand higher wages, which, in turn, meant that clubs either had to find ways of generating the financial resources to keep their prized assets or transfer them elsewhere. Inevitably, such events spawned new levels of youth investment, with some teams coming to depend more readily on the employment of cheap apprentice labour to divert economic pressure. Despite the fact that during the introductory season of the football apprenticeship scheme (1960/61) English league clubs registered only 220 apprentices against 3022 professionals (or 1 apprentice for every 14 senior players), by 1966/67 apprentice registrations had risen to 592 whilst the number of professionals had fallen by around one-fifth to 2395 (a ratio of 1 in 4) (see DES, 1968; Douglas, 1973) [5].

Nor did the impact of financial adversity stop there. Unable to maintain its self-sustaining ethos, the 1960s were also a time when professional football found itself accommodating the world of advertising and media attention to a greater degree, in the hope of increasing public appeal and levels of monetary income. One facet of this wider campaign was an attempt by

many people within the game to rid football of its 'cloth-cap' image and to present it instead as a more 'respectable' bourgeois pastime ideally suited to the leisure needs of the middle classes (Wagg, 1984). Media comment highlighted those league players who had frequented the orbits of Higher Education and who had seemingly been enticed by the high rewards of this emerging 'profession'. Names of specific individuals became synonymous with such proclamations - David Nish of Leicester City, Alan Gowling of Manchester United, Brian Hall and Steve Highway of Liverpool all gained popular recognition throughout this period as a result of their scholarly prowess (Wagg, 1984).

Whilst the predicted invasion of graduate players never really materialized, one area in which this search for 'respectability' became manifest was that of recruitment, and in particular, the way those entering football were nurtured and encouraged to develop. Increased commercialization appeared to stimulate more disciplined club attitudes towards the personal needs of trainees. Awareness levels were subsequently raised with respect to issues of dietary requirement, player sleeping patterns and the inculcation of desired morals and values (Wagg, 1984). The broader demands of an enhanced 'public image' also led clubs to upgrade residential trainee provision, with some such as Middlesbrough and Coventry City establishing collective hostel residences for their apprentices [6].

This is not to say that these measures were uniformly adopted by all league clubs. Nor for that matter, that as a result, apprenticeship as a whole changed to any significant degree within England during the sixties and seventies. It is important to acknowledge that even though efforts were



made to modify existing club practice and to safeguard the welfare of young players the traditional elements of football apprenticeship remained - the fulfilment of menial tasks, the aiding of groundstaff, the completion of sanitation duties, and the regulation and supervision of equipment (Wilshaw, 1970; Dougan and Young, 1974; Football League, 1974; Roadburg, 1978; Best, 1994).

During the mid 70s a more realistic picture emerged of the way in which official apprenticeship had in fact influenced methods of training and recruitment within football. In their commissioned report of 1974 the Committee on Industrial Relations (CIR, 1974) stated that whilst the scheme did have its advantages over previous trainee arrangements, some clubs appeared to have exploited its recruitment conditions to the detriment of those concerned.

The apprenticeship scheme does not lack critics who point to the wastage of apprentices at the end of their apprenticeships and who suggest that clubs deliberately take on more apprentices than they need at low wages...because it increases their chances of eventually producing a player who can be transferred for a lucrative fee. Concern has also been expressed about the failure of many clubs to ensure that adequate non- football education and training is provided for apprentices to prepare them for alternative employment should they not succeed in the game.

(CIR, 1974:20/1).

This suggested that besides sponsoring a more regulated pattern of occupational socialization, the official implementation of football apprenticeship had done little to alter the realities of traineeship within the game since pre-war days. High rates of labour wastage remained, as did the neglect of vocational need. Money too was important. By the mid 1960s

economic constraint had come to play an increasingly prominent role in the whole make-up and structure of English football, a factor which had subsequently altered the value placed upon the nurturing of young players. How then could this position be salvaged? How could footballing indenture be re-structured in order to eradicate the problems of exploitative club practice whilst providing a system of training within a constrained financial climate? Enter the new vocationalism.

### Economic Recession, The New Right and Football

There can be little doubt that during the late 1970s State intervention within the youth labour market in Britain sought to reconstruct the perceptions and experiences of young people with regard to the world of work. In fact, in many respects, since that time, this progressively prevalent State role has permeated beyond the provinces of working milieu, and has impinged upon a multiplicity of youth experiences, thereby actively shaping and re-shaping what it means to be young in the 1990s (Griffin, 1993).

Espousing a revitalized commitment to the waning relationship between Britain's education system and the economy, the new vocationalism emerged to dispel fears of worsening economic crisis by encompassing a broad-based concern for the general welfare of young people, particularly those entering the school-to-work transition. Initially, State intentions were explicitly directed towards a comprehensive system of 'training' to be administered by the organizational appendages of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). Amidst increasing unemployment and fears of moral panic, such idyllic notions were soon replaced, however, by a crisis management

approach to the youth labour 'problem' and its potential long-term development.

In an attempt to illustrate the social, educational, and vocational deficiencies of Britain's youth, a whole range of State induced, work-related schemes surfaced during the late 1970s. These diverse and fragmented elements of provision were then superseded, first by the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), and later Youth Training initiatives (YT/S), all of which were presented as methods to provide a seemingly 'unemployable' proportion of the population with suitable job related skills, values and attitudes (see Jones, 1988; Cassells, 1990; Mizen, 1990, 1995; Evans, 1992; King, 1993; Skilbeck et al., 1994).

In time it became apparent that Government intervention was striving towards a modernized and compulsory form of 'apprenticeship' for all school-leavers, the objective being to facilitate the production of an adaptable 'low-pay-high-quality' work-force similar to those nurtured within competing Capitalist nations (see Ainley, 1988, 1990). As a result of technological innovation and industrial recession traditional forms of servitude had suffered a steady decline since the mid 1960s and no longer constituted a major route to work. Inevitably, alternatives had to be found [7].

Of course, the new vocationalism was not without its opponents. During the 1970s and 80s a strong radical critique of State interventionist policy emerged to suggest that such manoeuvres had deeper political motives (Finn, 1982, 1983, 1987; Rees and Atkinson, 1982; Bates, 1984; Dale, 1985). Speculation surfaced, for example, as to why Government backed

financial incentives were in fact being offered towards the ‘training’ of young people. Common arguments surrounded the manipulation of employment figures, the industrial exploitation of cheap ‘trainee’ labour, the substitution of youth for adult workers, and the mass screening of potential employees.

More importantly, questions were raised about the transferable value and quality of the ‘skills’ on offer, the overall benefits of ‘life-skilling’ ideology, and the way in which vocational training was being presented to young people in schools (see Holt, 1987; Gleeson, 1989; Dale, 1990; Chitty, 1991a). Rather than accommodating a universal skills deficit, children, it seemed, were being directed along diverse pathways of class related suitability, where those displaying academic prowess were encouraged to follow traditional routes of educational achievement, whilst the less-able were trawled within the safety-net of practical skills-based training.

For professional football, the consequences of youth labour market restructuring soon became apparent. The industry had been in the grip of financial decline for some time, a position which intensified with the widening economic crisis of the 1970s. As a result certain agencies within the game began to look towards State subsidized training in order to reconstruct strategies of youth development and labour recruitment.

Throughout the late 1960s and 70s cost-cutting exercises had not only meant less frequent dealings within the transfer market for many clubs, but in addition, some had been forced to scrap their youth development policies altogether. Although the recruitment of young players had previously been regarded as a way round increased transfer activity, it became apparent

throughout this period that such problems could no longer be diverted by the availability and expansive employment of apprentice labour (Icke, 1983).

Added to these pressures were on-going concerns over the way in which football prepared its employees in terms of post-career employment. The Professional Footballers Association (PFA), for instance, had been strongly criticized in the mid 1960s for doing “...little on behalf of the welfare of ex-professional players...” and for failing to ‘initiate’ or ‘encourage’ player participation in vocational and/or educational schemes (PEP, 1966:106). In turn, the PFA itself had been publicly critical of apprenticeship arrangements under the terms and conditions of existing Football League/Football Association legislation. A long-standing issue for them was the way in which trainees and/or their parents had traditionally been expected to request and negotiate educational provision for themselves (see Wood, 1973a, 1973b; O’Grady, 1974). Given this climate of financial adversity, recruitment inadequacy, and an industry-wide lack of vocational concern, the arrival of the new vocationalism appeared to offer the conditions under which the PFA might modify its own organizational practices in relation to player welfare and occupational ‘entitlement’.

Admittedly, such measures had already been initiated as far back as 1968 when, in partial response to suggestions made within The Chester Report (DES, 1968), the PFA Education Fund had been established in order to provide financial assistance towards the educational and vocational needs of both apprentice and professional players (O’Grady, 1974). In 1971, the PFA had also created its own Education Department, and subsequently, in

1973, appointed its first full-time Education Officer (see Kerry, 1977; PFA, 1993a, 1993b).

Another significant step was taken in 1976, when a meeting of the Professional Football Negotiating Committee agreed that an independent educational and vocational training unit was needed within the game. In response, and amidst rising concerns for the plight of young players in particular, 1978 saw the launch of the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society (FFE & VTS). A joint venture between the PFA and the Football League (FL), the FFE & VTS was specifically established to oversee the educational and vocational needs of all PFA members [8]. Indeed, in constituting the administrative machinery required to monitor improved player-welfare provision, in June 1983 the FFE & VTS became the Managing Agent for the introduction of the Youth Training Scheme into professional football (see Jackson, 1983; Wainwright, 1983).

This was not the first time the professional game had witnessed the impact of new vocational policy. Prior to this some clubs, such as Luton Town and Wolverhampton Wanderers, had already experimented with recruitment arrangements incorporating the financial benefits of the Youth Opportunities Programme (see Parker, 1983b; Wainwright, 1983). Nor was the blanket implementation of the Youth Training Scheme revolutionary in its commitment to compulsory education in this sphere. There is evidence to suggest, for example, that by the mid 70s a small number of teams had taken it upon themselves to establish structured educational programmes of their own (see O'Grady, 1974; Budge, 1983; Neary, 1989).

Yet because of its nation-wide appeal the arrival of the Youth Training Scheme offered clear advantages over and above existing apprenticeship arrangements. Firstly, as a result of Government funding, it gave more individuals the chance to enter the professional game by enabling clubs to assess the capabilities of greater numbers of young players. Secondly, it provided an altogether more structured trainee programme for all those entering football, including the guarantee of a complete educational and vocational package, comprising on-the-job training, access to Further Education via day-release, and a more general work-experience element related to the sports and leisure industry (Jackson, 1983; Dabscheck, 1986; Neary, 1989; Harrison, 1994). Thirdly, it held particular benefits for lower status clubs, giving many the chance to rejuvenate previously restricted forms of youth policy provision and enabling them to lay new foundations in terms of player (and ultimately financial) investment (Campbell, 1988; Rudin and Naylor, 1990).

What the scheme meant to football as a whole was that, as a consequence of its inception, a dramatic increase occurred in the number of apprentices registering with the 92 clubs comprising the Football League. Estimated figures suggest that since 1983 this has constituted a three-fold rise in young player recruitment from approximately 200 to over 600 individuals per year (see Dabscheck, 1986; Roderick, 1991; Garland, 1993) [9]. Whilst it is important to locate these increased entry figures within the context of more recent economic recovery, both in relation to football itself and wider industrial spheres, in terms of providing youngsters with initial opportunities to enter the professional game, the affects of Youth Training Scheme(s) would seem strikingly evident.

### 'Old' Wine In 'New' Bottles?

Without doubt these initiatives point to a new-look 'apprenticeship' approach within football. On closer inspection however, it is pertinent to consider the extent to which this seemingly more structured trainee programme has in fact altered training practices within the industry. Certainly, as regards the content of everyday activity little appears to have changed, particularly in terms of the way in which the disciplined fulfilment of menial domestic chores continues to dominate trainee life (Rudin and Naylor, 1990; Morgan, 1991; Lukeman, 1993; Hill, 1995).

Neither has the overall time-span of indenture diversified to any significant degree. Although up until the early 1970s football apprenticeship was traditionally 'served' between the ages of 15 and 18, during the post-ROSLA era (Raising Of The School Leaving Age) the trainee period has been characterized by a shorter two year agreement (see DES, 1968; CIR, 1974). Thus, even though initial YTS legislation meant that financial subsidy was only available to clubs for one year, modifications to State policy have resulted in YT encompassing the whole of the football apprenticeship period, thereby replicating previous trainee patterns (see DES, 1981, 1985; PFA, 1993a) [10].

More forceful criticisms have emerged from within the game itself as to the way in which YT(S) has failed to update the practices of the industry as a whole. Whilst Government (now Training and Enterprise Councils [TEC]) subsidy has stimulated increased youth development activity, it appears also to have exacerbated previously existing trends whereby prestigious clubs take greater 'risks' in terms of national recruitment, utilizing their



successful reputations to entice more than their fair share of the initial talent on offer - a point which even the FFE & VTS concede (Neary, 1989; Bauldie, 1995; FFE & VTS, 1993a).

Of course, because age is such an important factor within the context of the footballing workforce, professional clubs have always been compelled to take a vested interest in youth development. Such levels of commitment, however, have not meant that the industry has escaped criticism regarding its overall handling of young people. As we have seen, just as many of the arguments surrounding State intervention in the youth labour market have centred around the exploitation of youth, so too has discontent conventionally been aired towards trainee working conditions within the professional game.

Rates of labour turn-over have proved particularly problematic in this respect (Wood, 1973a, 1973b; Dougan and Young, 1974; O'Grady, 1974).

A popular estimate of the success rate of those entering the game in past years has been one-in-ten. That is to say that for every ten young players recruited at the age of sixteen it is generally assumed that only one will remain in football until the age of twenty-one (Houlston, 1982, 1987).

More specifically, Barclay (1983), has argued that prior to the introduction of the Youth Training Scheme within football 50% of players failed to secure professional contracts at the end of their apprenticeships, and that of those that were successful, a further 50% found themselves discarded from the professional game within six years (see also Football League, 1974).

Has YT(S) had an impact here? Recent PFA/FFE & VTS figures suggest not. They indicate that although 60% of trainees do receive professional

contracts at the end of their YT experience, of these offers approximately half are for a further one year only (Garland, 1993). So where are the benefits of this scheme in terms of improved employment possibilities, given that Youth Training (YT/S) has traditionally espoused the construction of a 'permanent bridge to work' inferring a linear process of skill-based learning followed by increased opportunities in full-time employment (Manpower Services Commission, 1982; Finn, 1985)?

Certainly, if PFA/FFE & VTS estimates are anything to go by such benefits would appear relatively few and far between. Rather, what these findings confirm is that, as in previous years, the completion of servitude within professional football still does not provide contractual stability in the shape of occupational guarantees concerning professional acceptance. If anything, increased recruitment opportunities may prove detrimental in this respect. Needless to say, one of the primary aims of this study is to establish whether or not football 'apprenticeship' in the 1990s does in fact differ from its predecessors - whether it does constitute a more profitable pathway to occupational permanence, whether it does offer transferable skills, knowledge and experiences, or whether it simply remains something of a glorified and extended trial period of talent assessment incorporating all the occupational hallmarks of professional football's by-gone days.

### Conclusion

This chapter has sought to highlight the key phases of football apprenticeship to date. Within it I have argued that aside from the pleasures of training and playing, indenture within the professional game has

traditionally revolved around notions of trainee subservience and inferiority, central to which has been the fulfilment of menial and disciplined work-place chores. I have also argued that up until more recent times the post-career educational and vocational needs of young players have been overlooked, but that as a consequence of administrative restructuring within the game during the 1980s this position has changed.

That is not to say that the overall ingredients of football apprenticeship have altered to any significant degree. It has been noted, for example, that even with the onset of YT(S), occupational routines appear to have remained much the same as in previous years. What the introduction of YT(S) has brought, it seems, is a more general coherence to trainee provision and a more prescriptive and standardized feel to institutional practice.

In the following chapters I aim to depict how this new-look training approach manifested itself in terms of the daily working and social lives of trainees at Colby Town. Creating a theoretical backdrop against which subsequent empirical evidence will be set, I begin in chapter two by presenting a detailed analysis of club culture, looking in particular at the way in which comparisons might be drawn between the structure of occupational routine at Colby and those methods of organizational control common to a range of other institutional settings.

## Notes

- [1] For more recent insight into systems of professional club scouting and recruitment see Ward (1983) and Bauldie (1995).
- [2] For more up-to-date information on young player development in other European countries see Coman (1994), MacDonald (1995) and Blair (1996). See also BBC 2's 1995 televised documentary Dreaming of Ajax.
- [3] Following the introduction of the football apprenticeship scheme, in the 1964/65 season the Football Association, The Football League and the English Schools Football Association jointly launched the Associated Schoolboy's Scheme. Facilitating an increase in the opportunities available for the professional screening and development of youth talent, this scheme allowed boys as young as 13 to attend clubs (with parental consent) for periods of coaching and training on weekday evenings during the regular season. Correspondingly, this venture was aimed at combating instances of financial irregularity and illegal inducement on the part of club scouts by formalizing schoolboy/club relations and refining processes of occupational entry (see CIR, 1974; Anderson, 1977).
- [4] Although the 1960/61 apprenticeship scheme allowed an increase in the number of young players at any one club, Douglas (1973:30) has suggested, that these numbers may have been additionally bolstered by the continual employment of "office boys" or "programme sellers" within the professional game. See Best (1990), for a descriptive example of how clubs shrouded the true nature of young player employment.
- [5] The CIR (1974:20), gives a similar statistical account of the increases in apprentice employment, covering the period from the onset of the apprenticeship scheme to the 1973/74 season.
- [6] Residential provision of this nature and an increased concern for the welfare and control of young players had been pioneered by Major Frank Buckley at Wolverhampton Wanderers during the 1930s (see Wagg 1984). For evidence of the way in which apprenticeship hostels were also operational at a wider industrial level around this time see White (1971).
- [7] For further information concerning the demise of industrial apprenticeship within Britain, see National Youth Employment Council (1974), Manpower Services Commission (1982), Institute of Manpower Studies (1984), and Chitty (1991b).
- [8] The FFE & VTS is a registered charity which is now financed jointly by the PFA, The Football League, The Football Association and The Premier League. The Football Association joined the venture in 1990, and The Premier League in 1992 (see FFE & VTS, 1993a).

- [9] In addition to league teams, the YT scheme does operate with respect to a number of clubs outside of the immediate Football League structure. See FFE & VTS (1993a), and Harrison (1994).
- [10] It is important to point out that throughout the post-ROSLA era young players have been eligible to sign professional forms, at their club's request, from the age of 17. Because of this, terms of apprenticeship may have fluctuated on an individual basis. More recently, of course, the emergence of Modern Apprenticeships and new forms of YT have brought about changes in terms of the way in which 'indenture' is now 'served' (see for example DfEE, 1996; Centre for Study of Post-16 Developments, 1995). At the time of writing however, traineeship within professional football remains structured around a two-year YT programme.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Football Club Culture: Images of Occupational Socialization

It was a wretched environment, which I compare...to an open prison, at least as far as I was concerned. And yet my years with Wolves were the most satisfying of my career. This is no contradiction, I loved the club, but not the managerial dictates and petty forms of discipline imposed on us, the players.

(Doogan, 1980:3).

A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. Prisons serve as a clear example, providing we appreciate that what is prison-like about prisons is found in institutions whose members have broken no laws.

(Goffman, 1961:11).

Taken at face value these two statements appear poles apart. One is a personal reflection on footballing experience. The other is an extract from the opening paragraph of a sociological best-seller. Whilst both use analogies concerning 'prison-like' conditions to illustrate their descriptive aims, closer scrutiny reveals that evident here also are inferences, which, in terms of organizational procedure, suggest that just as the everyday features of 'total institutional' life constitute some form of personal 'restriction' and 'closure', so too do the 'disciplinary' and 'managerial dictates' of professional football.

Utilizing the key conceptual themes put forward by Erving Goffman in his 1961 publication Asylums, this chapter examines the daily routines of football traineeship at Colby Town within the context of 'total institutional' life. It demonstrates how professional football may be seen to exhibit aspects of 'totality' in relation to its methods of institutional entry, discipline and surveillance. In considering the specific relationship between Goffman's (1961) assertions and the processes of recruitment, initiation and occupational socialization conventionally associated with football apprenticeship (see chapter one), this chapter explores further issues of work-place subservience and meniality in an attempt to construct a theoretical analysis of what it means to be a football Youth Trainee in the 1990s.

#### Meet The Players: Colby Town Youth Trainees 1993/4

Coach: Terry Jackson

##### First Year:

Charlie Spencer	Goalkeeper
Steven Williamson	Defenders
Neil Morrissey	
Pete Mills**	
Nick Douglas	Midfield
Andy Higgins	Forwards
Davey Duke	
Adrian Thornton*	

##### Second Year:

Gary Riley  
 Jimmy Briggs\*  
 Robin Hindle  
 Colin Jones  
 Gareth Procter  
 Martin Walsh\*\*  
 Damien Blackwell  
 Ben Tattersall  
 Simon Gregory  
 Paul Turner  
 Tony Chadwick

\* denotes year group Captain, \*\* denotes year group Vice-Captain.

Embarking on an official period of Youth Training within professional football was a matter of chronological career progression for the majority of trainees at Colby Town. Many had been connected with the club for some time under the terms and conditions of the Associated Schoolboy Scheme, and had been told during their final year of schooling that graduation to YT status would be on offer to them. Only five boys had not come through the regular channels of Associate Schoolboy status. Second years Colin Jones, Martin Walsh and Jimmy Briggs, for example, had all previously attended the Football Association scholarship programme at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire, and because of this had been unable to attend the club as regularly as other Associate Schoolboys of their age. First years Charlie Spencer and Davey Duke were also exceptions in terms of their familiarity with club culture. They had joined Colby in the six months prior to the onset of the 1993/94 season after having gained experience of youth development provision at other professional clubs.

Alongside differences in length of club association, there were discrepancies also between the contractual conditions of individual trainees. Because during the 1992/93 season Colby had decided to opt out of the programmes of Youth Training offered by the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society, seven second year boys - Jimmy Briggs, Colin Jones, Robin Hindle, Gareth Procter, Martin Walsh, Damien Blackwell and Tony Chadwick - had served the first twelve months of their stay at the club as 'non-contract' players, and were thereafter (from the age of seventeen) signed as 'professionals' for a further two years. These contracts, which effectively represented an extended trainee period, were scheduled to end in June 1995. The remaining four second years - Gary Riley, Ben Tattersall,



Paul Turner and Simon Gregory - were employed under similar terms but had been granted only two years at the club inclusive of 'non-contract' time. As a consequence, their contracts were due to end a year earlier in June 1994.

As for first years, their arrival at Colby at the start of the 1993/94 season coincided with the club's decision to return to FFE & VTS Youth Training provision. They were employed on the basis of TEC subsidized YT arrangements and were subsequently guaranteed a maximum two year stay with all contracts being scheduled to terminate in June 1995. To escape FFE & VTS restriction concerning recommended levels of trainee pay, first years were allowed to remain on official YT contracts for the first twelve months of their employment only. Once seventeen (and eligible for 'professional' status), they too were transferred to professional contracts for a further one year period to legitimate increased financial income. What this meant in terms of actual earnings was that prior to their seventeenth birthday first years received £31.50 per week with no charge for food or lodgings at the club's residential hostel. Trainees aged seventeen received £160 per week with £225 per month being deducted to cover accommodation fees. Those aged eighteen and over received £200 per week with corresponding monthly deductions. In addition, all trainees received some kind of signing-on fee from the club which was paid in three equal instalments during the course of the trainee period. These fees were negotiated on an individual basis and ranged from £1,600 to £4,000 per trainee.

### A Day In The Life...

During the course of the 1993/4 season each day in and around Colby Town football club followed a relatively predictable format. First year trainees reported to the ground for 9.00am, whilst second years arrived at 9.30am. Prior to this breakfast was available at the club hostel between 8.00am and 9.30am. All trainees resided at the club hostel with the exception of second year Martin Walsh, who, because he lived within forty-five minutes drive/bus-ride of the club, was allowed to travel in each day. For other trainees the journey to work constituted a 5 minute walk, (or, more often than not, a two minute run), in that the club hostel was situated immediately adjacent to the ground itself.

From the time both first and second years entered the club each weekday morning they were expected to change ready for training and, thereafter, carry out a strict routine of pre-determined chores in anticipation of the arrival of professional players. These chores included the neat laying out of professional kit, the cleaning of professional and trainee boots, the cleaning and servicing of marker cones, training bibs and footballs, and the making of pots of tea for squad players. In addition, first years were occasionally required to distribute a number of footballs amongst first team players so that these might be autographed for donation to various charities and causes. All such duties were carried out in a relatively subdued atmosphere under the close supervision of coach Terry Jackson.

Having finished these tasks, trainees returned to their respective changing areas to await further instruction from their coach. The eight first year trainees at the club, together with an additional four second years boys,

occupied a small Youth Trainee changing area whilst the remainder were allocated changing space amongst a selection of young professionals in the club's reserve ('away') team dressing room (see Figure 2.1 and 2.2). Only first team players were allowed to inhabit the first ('home') team dressing room. All full-time professionals ('pro's') were required to arrive at the club between 9.45am and 10.30am, by which time they had to be changed and ready to commence training.

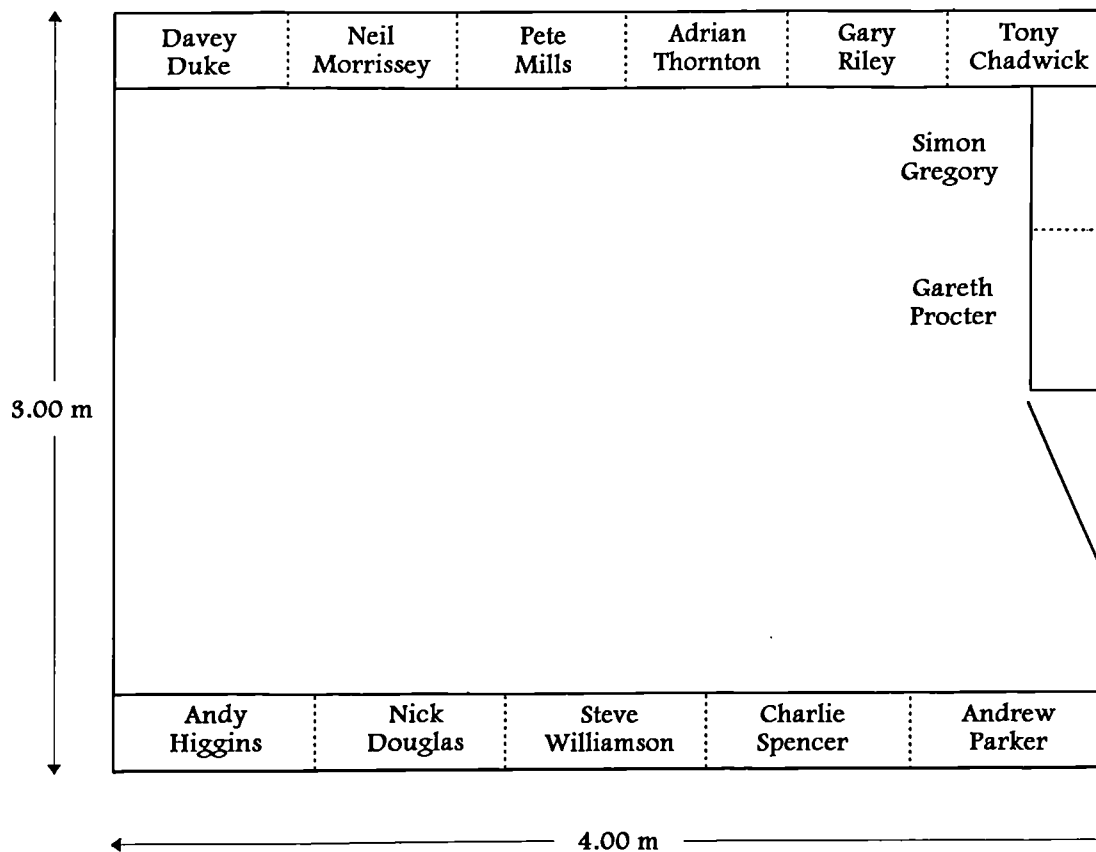


Figure 2.1 Colby Town YT dressing-room layout and typical trainee locations during 1993/94 season.

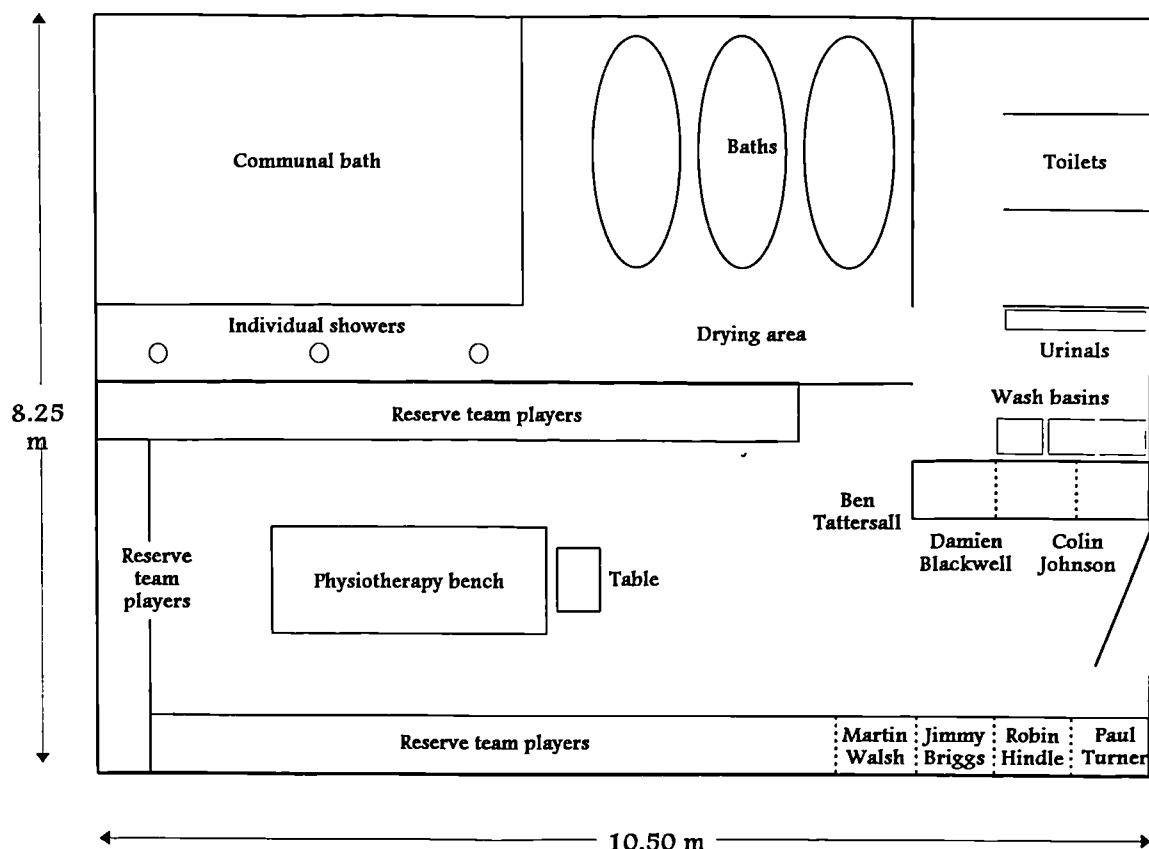


Figure 2.2 Colby Town reserve team dressing-room layout and typical trainee locations during 1993/94 season.

Trainees were allocated specific professionals to “look after” for the duration of each season, cleaning their boots, arranging their kit, towels and footwear, and generally taking care of their needs in and around the club. First years had two or even three professionals to cater for, depending on the arrival and departure of personnel. Second years were at the disposal of only one professional player. Additionally, first years were compelled to carry out the more general daily cleaning tasks within the confines of the club. Areas of domestic concern were toilets, dressing rooms, showers, the ‘bootroom’ (small room containing the training and match boots of all players and staff), weight-room, sauna room, ‘drying room’ (heated room

where all clean training and playing kit was stored), and adjoining corridors (see Figure 2.3).

Moreover, a prominent feature of daily first year duty was to collect up all items of 'kit' used by both professionals and trainees during workday tasks and to return these to the 'wash-room' (small area containing industrial washing machines and dryers) for the club's laundry staff to process. Second year trainees were excused all such sanitation duties, although at infrequent intervals they were asked to help first years tidy 'kit' storage rooms and rearrange the clothing and equipment within them.

Morning training sessions for trainees usually took place between 10.30am and 12.00 noon, at which time all youth team personnel returned to the ground to wash and freshen-up before entering the Colby Town club restaurant - The Matchroom Club - for lunch. Here a wide choice of prepared food was available to club staff on a daily self-service basis, but trainees were only allowed to eat once directors, managers, coaches and professional players had helped themselves.

In the case of professionals, morning training sessions lasted from anything between half-an-hour and an hour depending on match commitments and injuries, and afternoon training sessions between 2.00pm and 4.00pm were only the norm during the month of pre-season training. For trainees, afternoon training was compulsory during pre-season preparations, and was occasionally added to regular weekday routine if and when coach Terry Jackson saw fit (usually after poor weekend youth team performances).

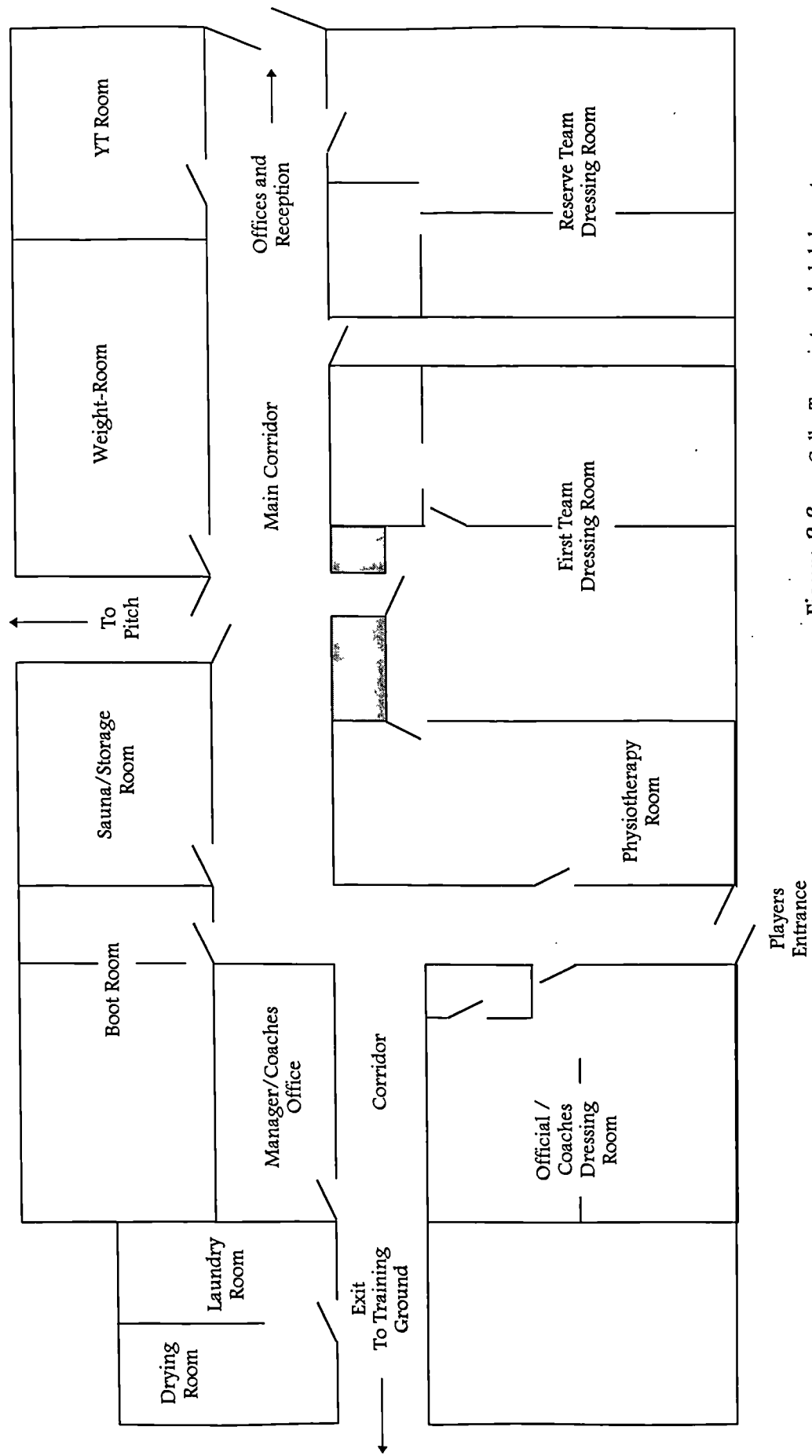


Figure 2.3 Colby Town internal club layout.

On normal weekdays second years were free to leave the club from 1.30pm onwards, after lunch and baths (or showers), whilst first years stayed behind to carry out their designated cleaning tasks. The completion of these chores meant that first year boys were usually free to leave the club by around 4.00pm. Dinner was served at the trainee hostel at 4.45pm.

Individuals were allowed to relax as they wished in the afternoons and evenings providing they did not drink alcohol, frequent public houses, or bring food, girls or members of the general public into the trainee hostel. Cups of tea and coffee were readily available at the hostel, but biscuits and fruit were rationed daily. All trainees had to return to club residence by 10.30pm (10.00pm the night before match-days) and had to be in their own rooms with lights out by 11.00pm (see Appendix B). An evening snack of biscuits and soft or hot drinks was provided at around 8.00pm.

The overall structure of lifestyle arrangements at Colby meant that trainees were socialized into a strictly routinized occupational pattern, which, in terms of official demand, compared favourably with the total institutional circumstances outlined by Goffman (1961).

#### Goffman, Total Institutions and Football

It would be naive to assume that Goffman's (1961) work on total institutions is directly relevant to modern-day professional football. For one thing, his analysis relies heavily upon establishments which revolve around involuntary membership, and for another, his findings make no specific reference to sporting contexts. But in terms of the wider inferences which

Goffman (1961) makes concerning the range of institutions within our society and the varying degrees of 'totality' which they exhibit, his work serves as a useful theoretical vehicle through which comparisons to working relations at Colby Town might be drawn.

For Goffman (1961:15) all institutions provide something of a captive "world" for their members and, as such, display what he calls "encompassing tendencies". Depending on the official aims of each institution these 'tendencies', Goffman (1961:15) continues, diversify and fluctuate in severity. Primarily, his concerns are towards those institutions which demonstrate a high degree of totality in that they construct an obvious barrier to "social intercourse" for their "inmates". What Goffman (1961:15-22) is quick to point out however, is that the institutional features which he discusses are not exclusive to total institutions nor are they shared by every one of them. Rather, for him, the hallmark of total institutional character is the "intense" presence of a number of items from within a common "family of attributes" relating to issues of closure, rationalization and bureaucracy (see also Sykes, 1958; Kesey, 1962; Wallace, 1971; Clarke, 1974; Foucault, 1979; Burns, 1992) [1].

Of course, in terms of social restriction, life in and around professional football may be considered low on 'totality' in comparison to, say, mental hospitals. Yet, in an everyday sense, football clubs, unlike railway stations, post offices and public houses, are not institutions which people can just walk in and out of at their own discretion. They do have some element of 'closure'. Very often they have perimeter walls or fences, for example, which offer protection against intrusion, and some clubs may even employ



additional security measures in order to restrict access to administrative and daily work areas. Furthermore, despite encouraging wider support on match-days, many teams choose to go about their weekday business amidst an atmosphere of relative seclusion in an attempt to keep the personal lives of players, and their training activities, away from public and media gaze (see Tomlinson 1983).

Such practices inevitably mediate an air of discreteness, as do those of social restriction and residential isolation which, over more recent years, have often accompanied notions of 'apprenticeship' within the professional game. By adopting a restrictive approach to trainee socialization some football clubs, it seems, have come to engender their own 'encompassing tendencies' which, in resembling the operational characteristics of a host of other institutional establishments, allow them to fall into one of the five 'rough groupings' within which, Goffman (1961:16) suggests, the total institutions of our society can be classified.

Whilst other elements of this broad nomenclature deal with organizations as diverse as orphanages, mental hospitals, prisoner-of-war camps and monastic retreats, Goffman's (1961:16) fourth category is concerned primarily with those institutions, "...purportedly established the better to pursue some work-like task and justifying themselves only on these instrumental grounds...". Examples cited by Goffman (1961) are army barracks, ships, boarding schools, work camps, and colonial compounds - a group which, for the purposes of this work, also accommodates the more specific residential and rule-bound confines of Youth Traineeship at Colby Town [2].

### Discipline, Authority and Rationalization.

Aside from issues of closure, for Goffman (1961), the central feature of total institutions is that they create a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating those areas of everyday life concerning sleep, work and play.

Whilst in modern society these spheres occur, Goffman (1961:17) argues, “...in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an overall rational plan”, within total institutions, such common-sense images of separation are dismantled. As Goffman (1961) proceeds to point out, such establishments ensure that not only is every aspect of life conducted in the same setting and under the same authority, but in addition, that all activities are carried out within the context of collectivity, or ‘batch’ living, where institutional members are treated alike and expected to do things together. Moreover, Goffman (1961:17) states, total institutions operate along “tightly” organized pre-arranged schedules, which, in constituting formally imposed sequences of action, serve to represent an overall rationalization of individual activity in accordance with hierarchically determined institutional objectives.

In terms of those total institutions which operate in line with a predominantly ‘work-like’ ethos, one of the most explicit examples of such behavioural co-ordination and regulation is to be found within the organizational routines of military practice - a factor clearly established by Hockey (1986). Utilizing the work of Goffman (1961), Hockey (1986) highlights the authoritarian and rationalized nature of military existence, and constructs a critical evaluation of occupational socialization within this

sphere, illustrating the pervasive impact of hierarchical surveillance, discipline, and subordination upon the lives of young recruits.

By the same token, Goffman's (1961) findings appear equally applicable to professional football. For if we take as our point of reference the fact that football 'apprenticeship' within England has been historically replete with images of physicality, discipline and subservience, the relationship between methods of recruitment and training within the professional game and those within military (and/or broader total institutional) environs takes on increased resonance (see CIR, 1974; Croall, 1976a, 1976b; Tomlinson, 1983; Wagg, 1984; Taylor and Ward, 1995).

#### Discipline, Authority, Rationalization and Colby Town

As is the case within military settings, many of the institutions to which Goffman (1961) refers operate in accordance with the general principles of bureaucracy. Insofar as professional football clubs function around structures of hierarchical command, they too sit comfortably within Max Weber's (1978) wider notion of bureaucratic organizational control, within which elements of discipline, authority and rationalization are necessarily inter-related (see Figure 2.4).

At Colby Town notions of bureaucratic order were clearly evident both in terms of hierarchical control and financial security. Authoritarianism and discipline, for example, were prominent and pervasive facets of everyday life. These dominant aspects of club culture held a number of personal implications for trainees. Although on arrival at Colby, all youth team

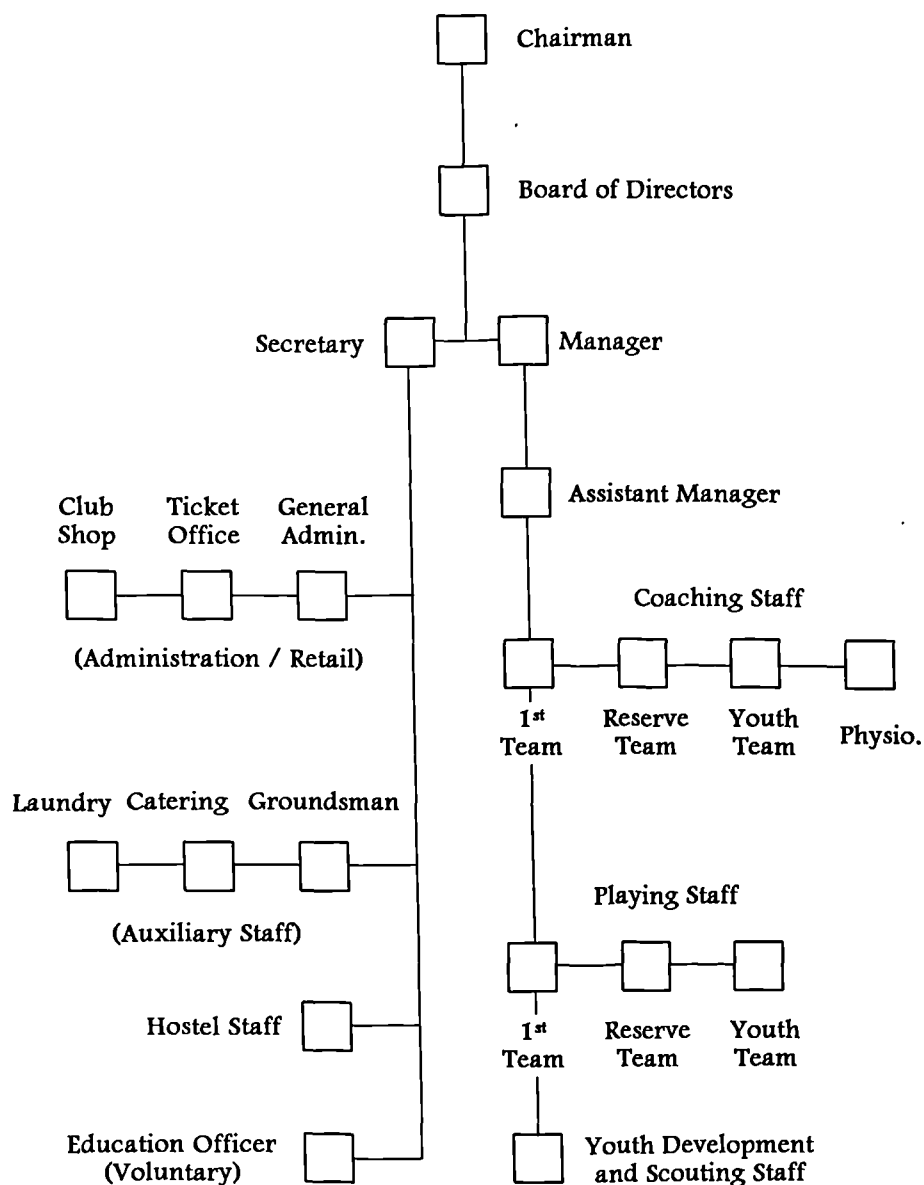


Figure 2.4 Hierarchical club structure at Colby Town during 1993/94 season.

players were familiar with the routines of training and playing, their previous experiences of club and amateur football fell far short of the tense, ruthless and pressurized atmosphere surrounding their new-found occupational role (see chapter three). The overall aim of Youth Training at

Colby was to help individuals adjust to the physical and psychological rigours of professional life. Upholding the assumption that even if trainees failed to become professionals at Colby they would 'make the grade' elsewhere, the immediate objective of club officials was to prepare the naive minds and bodies of recruits for the harsh realities of the professional game, and to promote attitudes of acceptance, obedience and collective loyalty.

These objectives were facilitated by way of a verbal and physical code of conduct designed to ensure the efficient and consistent functioning of trainees at all times. With respect to all work-place behaviours an immediate and unquestioning reaction to official instruction was expected. Staff opinion stipulated that a lack of individual conformity off the pitch would automatically translate itself into collective team failure on it.

As for the promotion of individual and team consistency, trainee life revolved around five main areas of personal responsibility. It was expected that each player would; maintain a certain standard of physical fitness, develop and retain specific levels of skill and technique, follow a healthy and dignified lifestyle, nurture a positive attitude towards individual performance, fitness and achievement, and endeavour to create and reinforce a collective sense of 'togetherness' between himself and other players.

As well as being formally expressed within player contracts, club standards in relation to physical fitness and behaviour featured strongly amidst the expectations and practices of club routine. The development of physical stamina and endurance, for example, dominated training sessions except on those mornings before match-days when less strenuous exercise was carried

out. In addition, youth team coach Terry Jackson kept a constant check on the overall fitness levels of trainees, to the extent that all squad members were weighed prior to training every Friday morning, and subsequent observations accurately recorded. At the same time, individual attainment in the areas of general playing ability, fitness and 'attitude', were strictly monitored and recorded on a monthly basis within trainee Assessment and Record of Achievement log-books [3]. During the second trainee year it was also common for Jackson to periodically invite parents to the club in order to discuss more closely the future prospects of their sons.

General levels of residential control and personal surveillance allowed club officials to severely penetrate the idiosyncrasies of trainee life. The only real element of freedom regularly granted youth team players was in the form of leisure time during weekday evenings, weekend home visits, and annual holidays. Consequently these periods represented something of a worry for coach Terry Jackson and Colby Assistant Manager Len Drinkwater, who, within the formal and informal practices of everyday life, continually emphasized issues of personal dignity, professionalism and health, and reinforced the importance of individual levels of dedication and commitment via warnings of professional ostracization and failure.

To this end, issues of club discipline and authority were seen as safeguards against complacency and deviance, both at a social and an occupational level. The brash, unruly tabloid image of professional football was clearly portrayed as an unacceptable threat to the reputation of the club, and as a direct route to personal decline and disgrace. In its place the stringent standards of Colby Town youth policy were upheld. Proffering notions of

conformity, sobriety and 'professional attitude' these were imposed and reinforced via a comprehensive system of occupational socialization.

### Occupational Socialization: Institutional Admission and Civilian Role

#### Dispossession

Speaking of the way in which individuals become socialized into the routines of organizational practice, Van Maanen (1976:67) has argued, that on entering any organization, "... a person learns the values, norms and required behaviours which permit..." their continued participation within that setting. Because individuals possess prior experiences of alternative institutional contexts however, the processes involved within organizational socialization, Van Maanen (1976) goes on, necessarily imply that a person may also be "...forced to relinquish certain [other] attitudes, values and behaviours", in order to achieve his/her institutional goals (Van Maanen, 1976:68).

In a similar vein, Berger and Luckmann (1976:158) have discussed the notion of "secondary socialization", which, in their terms, comprises a situation whereby social actors enter institutional "sub-worlds" or "partial realities" and therefore find themselves in a position which requires them to gain "role specific knowledge" in order to function accordingly in their new-found surroundings. Such processes would seem relatively straightforward. Yet, in agreement with Van Maanen (1976), what Berger and Luckmann (1976:160) point out is that issues of personal familiarity are only one part of this altogether more historic and decidedly adaptational scenario.

The formal processes of secondary socialization are determined by its fundamental problem: it always presupposes a preceding process of primary socialization; that is, that it must deal with an already formed self and an already internalized world. It cannot construct subjective reality *ex nihilo*. This presents a problem because the already internalized reality has a tendency to persist. Whatever new contents are now to be internalized must somehow be superimposed upon this already present reality. There is, therefore, a problem of consistency between the original and the new internalizations.

What for Berger and Luckmann (1976) constitutes “present reality”, for Goffman (1961:23) indicates the existence of a “presenting culture” - a taken-for-granted combination of activities derived from the familiarities of a “home-world”, and structured around the everyday occurrences of normal civilian life.

In terms of total institutions, recruits arrive at establishments, Goffman (1961:24) stipulates, with conceptions of themselves constructed around the “stable social arrangements” of their “home-worlds”. But, by the fact that such conceptions represent a well-developed civilian frame of reference, they are, Zurcher (1967) claims, often incompatible with the detailed objectives of incarceration and thus form an inhibiting obstruction to the efficient operationalization of institutional aims.

It is for this reason, Goffman (1961:24) declares, that upon total institutional entry “inmates” are subjected to rituals of initiation, degradation, and “mortification”, which, in stripping elements of previous support (i.e. those associated with the comforts and familiarity of home-life), allow recruits to become more pliant in the hands of their new masters (see also Wheeler, 1966; Wallace, 1971; Cohen and Taylor, 1973; Clarke, 1974).



It is important to stress here that these role-stripping procedures do not necessarily equate with issues of personal “mortification” and degradation in the universal sense that Goffman (1961) portrays. Alternatively, there is evidence to suggest that such practices may reinforce notions of institutional identity, loyalty and commitment for those concerned and provide some kind of positive group focus (Mouzelis, 1971). In general, however, such practices do appear to follow a particular pattern of application which, in eroding self-determination and esteem, reduce also the potential for personal and collective resistance amongst groups of inmates. This pattern, Goffman (1961:23-51) argues, constitutes an overall process of “admission”, and may include facets of personal/cosmetic modification, the instruction of rules, and the assignment of personal identity symbols and living quarters.

#### Football Socialization: Admission and Initiation

Occupational entry at Colby Town constituted a course of institutional induction which, through the instructional services of coach Terry Jackson, introduced first year trainees to the most salient aspects of club practice (i.e. daily routine, individual duties, chain of command, health and safety, etc.) (cf. FFE and VTS, 1993c). Within the initial days of occupational exposure an inculcation of values took place whereby the stringent expectancies of club culture were super-imposed onto the relatively relaxed ‘presenting’ features of individual ‘home-world’ experience.

Admission procedures played a key role throughout this period, amounting to what, in military terms, has been described as a process of de-

civilianization (Brotz and Wilson, 1946; Hollingshead, 1946; Stouffer, 1949; Zurcher, 1967; Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978; Hockey, 1986). Representing something of a 'reality shock' (Dornbusch, 1955; Wheeler, 1966; Van Maanen, 1976) in comparison to the comforts of familial existence, this overall system of institutional 'initiation' severely challenged various aspects of trainee life. Although, as we have seen, the application of admission techniques may elicit a varied 'inmate' response, the pattern of occupational socialization carried out amongst trainees at Colby followed a somewhat self-defacing and 'mortifying' ethos as a consequence of the fact that its practices were based around notions of 'image modification'. In turn, because the majority of trainees saw these characteristics of occupational entry more as an issue of social curtailment and self-degeneration than personal enhancement, they too attached negative inferences to the procedures which collectively made up their various stages.

These stages exhibited many of the total institutional features mapped out by Goffman (1961), and may be crudely defined in relation to four broad categories of civilian role dispossession which both Zurcher (1967) and Hockey (1986) have previously employed in relation to military recruitment. These categories comprise;

- (i) individual perceptions of self as a person (choice of clothing, changes in physical appearance)
- (ii) personal economy of motion (freedom of personal movement and the pace at which this is carried out)
- (iii) privacy (having opportunities for physical and mental privacy)
- (iv) autonomy of action (self-determination and feelings of freedom towards personal choice).

Although a more detailed picture of how these separate categories of role-dispossession affected trainee life will become apparent throughout the course of this thesis, my intention here is to briefly outline their individual consequences with regard to the ‘reality shock’ of institutional admission.

#### (i) Individual Perceptions of Self as a Person

Changes regarding personal demeanor were distinctly evident during first year initiation at Colby. On the first morning of attendance trainees were presented with individual squad numbers and personalized items of club ‘kit’. This collection of work-place clothing and its accompanying accessories clearly distinguished youth team players from other staff members in that whilst ‘professional training kit’ adhered to the trend of general club colours trainee attire provided a stark contrast.

Clothing comprised a tracksuit, a water-proof training suit, two pairs of shorts, one training sweat-shirt, one training tee-shirt, one pair of training tracksuit bottoms, a towel, a pair of training boots and, if required, a pair of match boots. Colour coded accordingly, training socks were provided by the club and distributed by first year trainees to all players on a daily basis.

It was made clear by Terry Jackson that certain elements of kit were to be worn at specific times. Tracksuits, for instance, were for match-days only, whilst training kit was not to be used outside the confines of club. In addition, when trainees entered the club restaurant for lunch a strict combination of training tee-shirts and track-suit bottoms was stipulated.

On a more personal level trainees were also instructed on the requirements of daily communication. Individuals were ordered to politely acknowledge professionals, coaches and directors at all times and to refer to the first team manager as 'Boss', thereby demonstrating their appreciation of his authoritative position and their deference to him. Conversely, and again in line with military practice (see Dornbusch, 1955; Zurcher, 1967; Lovell, 1969), trainees were addressed in relation to their inferiority. They were known to other members of staff as the 'kids' or the 'boot-boys' - labels which were not only an indication of their youth, but a frequent reminder of their subordinate position in relation to the hierarchical club structure in place.

There were instructions concerning appearance also. Trainees were expected to be clean shaven during working hours, and were required to keep their hair "reasonably short". As these fieldnote extracts illustrate, Terry Jackson wasted no time in pointing out individual violations towards such standards (cf. Goffman 1961).

Today some of the boys were told to have their hair cut. Damien was told by Terry, "If you don't get yours cut, I won't play you on Saturday"...

(Fieldnotes, 10.11.93).

Hair has been an issue this week. On Wednesday Terry told Robin to get his hair cut...when we were warming up. Today Damien was in the reserve team changing rooms when Terry approached him after dinner telling him to do the same. He made him pull his hair down to his eyes from his forehead. He did the same with Pete Mills and Robin. Damien had the longest in Terry's opinion, and thus had to have it cut. Damien wasn't happy, "I bet there's someone else out of us lot whose got longer hair than me". "Who?", asks Terry. "Paul Turner", replies Damien. "Right Turner", Jackson orders, "get yours cut as well - enough said".

(Fieldnotes, 03.12.93).

All a far cry from the relaxed nature of amateur participation and 'home-life'. Little wonder then that for first year Nick Douglas Colby Town appeared more like an army camp than a football club.

Nick: As soon as you come down here...its been a lot different to what I expected. Its pretty much like being in the army I think. Its really regimental...all a bit silly...I think you can do without all the rules we have to abide by...

## (ii) Personal Economy of Motion

The restrictive nature of personal movement was another striking feature of institutional life for recruits at Colby. In contrast to the relative freedoms of home-life trainees found themselves dominated by the highly rationalized pattern of daily work within the club and socially bound by the curfews and time-tabling demands of hostel occupancy. Within the confines of work trainees soon learnt that wherever they moved team-mates moved with them and that individual activity only took place under specific instruction from Terry Jackson. According to Jackson everyday 'togetherness' was the kernel of footballing success, a point which he continually reinforced by way of reference to the importance of 'group cohesion', 'team morale' and 'fighting spirit' (see chapter four). In an attempt to encourage an individual adoption of such beliefs it was made clear to trainees that they should learn all they could about the physical and psychological attributes (i.e. skills, strengths, habits, weaknesses) of their peers. It was the duty of all trainees, Jackson proclaimed, to "...live in each others back pockets..."

There were short periods of spare-time when freedom of movement was available to first years, but the panoptic sense of surveillance surrounding daily activity meant that even within these pockets of personal space feelings of intense restriction prevailed. In part such perceptions derived from the advice and experiences of second year trainees who warned of how any un-toward or misinterpreted behaviour, occurring outside the parameters of the club, may well be reported back to Colby officials by a watchful public eager to scrutinize the social intricacies of trainee life. In constituting a blatant breach of club rules, the fear amongst all trainees was that such events might lead to disciplinary action of some kind and even jeopardize their chances of gaining a professional contract [4].

### (iii) Privacy

Although facilities and resources in and around Colby Town were maintained to a high domestic standard, the fact that everyday existence was organized in terms of 'batch-living' represented an instant element of trainee discomfort. On entering the club personal privacy immediately became a thing of the past with collective living engendering a highly claustrophobic institutional atmosphere [5].

Particularly noticeable in this respect was the cramped nature of daily work-space areas which both trainee and professional players occupied (see Figure 2.1 and 2.2). Although trainees were allowed to frequent all rooms at the club (with the exception of the first team dressing room and those quarters assigned to management and coaching staff) few opportunities existed for personal 'escape' either from the collectivity of squad company

or the supervision of Terry Jackson. Even visits to the toilet failed to provide any real degree of privacy since, on occasion, Jackson would check this notoriously secluded enclave keen to identify those trying to avoid work-place duties by committing the ultimate trainee sin - reading the newspaper during working hours.

Though more opportunities for personal privacy were available within the Colby trainee hostel these remained limited in terms of personal space. Levels of comfort and general decor within this setting were particularly accommodating with trainees being placed in either individual or double bedrooms, equipped with corresponding numbers of single beds and appropriate amounts of wardrobe and drawer space. Toilet and bathroom facilities were shared between those on each of the three hostel floors and in addition, kitchen, TV and dinning-room areas provided some scope for manoeuvre despite the fact that meal-times were arranged on a collective, 'one-sitting' basis.

Such general living arrangements meant that at certain times of the day, and within the confines of specific rooms, trainees were able to exercise some choice over the company they kept. This aspect of life, however, was also open to invasion. In line with wider practices of 'privacy penetration' which, Goffman (1961:36) states, are typical of official staff behaviour within total institutions, during daily working hours all hostel rooms were checked for evidence of misuse or untidiness. Any shortfall in expectation being dealt with immediately by hostel proprietors Bill and Bev Sommerfield, or in more serious cases, by Assistant Manager Len Drinkwater and youth team coach Terry Jackson.

#### (iv) Autonomy of Action

Institutional procedures of initiation, admission and routine forced an overall reduction in the self-determination of trainees. Recruits had little choice over the way in which many aspects of their lives were conducted simply because they were denied all decision making responsibility as regards social, occupational and professional experience.

Organizational traits of this nature, Goffman (1961:23) argues, are common within a range total institutions and facilitate intentional processes of “disculturation” or social “untraining” amongst inmates which consequently render them relatively helpless in terms of wider societal autonomy, expectation and action. More specifically, such characteristics appear to generate what Hollingshead (1946) has identified as a feeling of institutional dependence, whereby recruits become psychologically reliant on the services of the organization concerned. In the case of military socialization, Hollingshead (1946:442) goes on;

The...institution becomes a substitute parent for an adult who has been reduced to infancy by the training it has given him. Moreover, the aim of the institution is to keep him in this infantile state by the use of psychological and institutional devices. Thus every effort is made by the institution to organize the soldiers life both overtly and covertly.

Similar inferences have been made in relation to the occupational experiences of professional footballers. George Best (1990:166), for instance, has discussed the way in which throughout his career at Manchester United he and many of his contemporaries were “treated like little kids” by a club keen to remove elements of personal or social



responsibility which were regarded as potentially detrimental to player career patterns and/or levels of performance (see also Chapman, 1993). Constituting a time when he and his fellow players were not expected, nor taught, to do anything for themselves, this period, Best (1990:167) continues, was "...like one long school outing except we didn't have to look at anything but the inside of a football stadium".

Youth team life at Colby Town followed a similarly dependent format. Trainees got up and went to bed when stipulated, dressed according to club rules, ate in line with catering provision, and modified their physical appearance to suit official standards. The fact that individuals were compelled to leave their hostel residence by a specific time each morning, report to the club, and thereafter follow a stringent behavioural plan of chores, served to emphasize a heavily routinized pattern of existence which strongly contradicted the varied activities which home/school-life had previously involved.

Rules, regulations, instruction and subordination dominated institutional existence. Each day represented an endless cycle of awaiting one's turn, accommodating the needs of others, and seeking the authoritative permission of Terry Jackson to carry out the next stage of daily routine [6]. Walks to and from the training ground, like the majority of activities, were always supervised and paced in accordance with desired fitness objectives. Likewise no trainee was allowed to enter the Matchroom Club for lunch until Jackson's signal of approval had been given. Once seated inside the club restaurant trainees then became subject to the close scrutiny of their

coach in relation to their eating habits and general conduct during the lunch-time period.

Afternoons followed a similar pattern. Lunch over, trainees were compelled to await Jackson's permission to take baths and showers or to use the club weight room or sauna. In the case of first years, all domestic/sanitation duties had to be fulfilled and carefully scrutinized by Jackson before showers or baths were allowed. This meant that those individuals who completed their work in good-time inevitably had to wait for their peers to fulfil designated tasks before further instruction could be given.

Of course, life was not all bad. An institutional privilege system was in operation whereby trainees could gain respite from the physical and psychological rigours of normal routine. Favourable team performances in official club fixtures, for example, occasionally earned trainees a late working start, a morning of baths and/or showers only, an early escape after lunch, or a long weekend off. Social and personal privileges also accompanied trainee status. There was a degree of fame and kudos to be enjoyed by individuals as a consequence of their occupational position as 'footballers', particularly amongst people of their own age, and the added prospect of annual trips abroad to play in international youth tournaments. Employment at Colby also secured five 'all-expenses-paid' trips home over the course of each trainee season, exclusive admission to club functions and games, private dental and health treatment courtesy of club contacts, and the residential 'luxuries' of never having to cook or wash-up after oneself.

Furthermore, despite the fact that issues of personal appearance, movement restriction, self determination and privacy characterized first year existence,

and projected an overall assault on the 'presenting culture' of recruits, individuals knew that such conditions would not last forever. Although many of these features held lasting connotations for the second trainee year, once wider processes of admission were complete a repeal of club stringency did occur.

Involving a system of status elevation, such advantages were structured around notions of second year 'maturity' and 'entitlement' in that whilst they served to reinforce the stringencies of first year life, they held beneficial implications for the overall occupational conditions of older trainees. Designed to symbolize the ensuing prospect of life in the big-time, initiation over, 'professionalization', it seemed, constituted the next step on the hierarchical ladder for Youth Trainees at Colby Town.

#### Second Year Status: Graduation, Maturation and Professionalization

Although all trainees at Colby worked on an integrated basis in relation to the wider commitments of training and playing, overall, Youth Training was organized around an explicitly arranged two-tier system whereby organizational demand and expectation differed according to year group status. As Terry Jackson proudly confessed, Colby Town liked to treat its "second year lads a bit more like grown ups". The idea being that the less second years were 'distracted' by the responsibilities of daily work, the more chance they would have of making the 'professional grade' (cf. Best, 1990; Chapman, 1993).

Nothing illustrated this differential approach more clearly than the diverse basis upon which trainee activities were carried out within the routines of the typical working day. In addition to the differences in basic daily duties between those of first and second year rank, first years were often subjected to further instances of occupational demand. They were required, for example, to act as 'ball-boys' each time the club's reserve team played at 'home', and expected also to clean dressing room areas once these games had taken place. In the case of mid-week evening fixtures, this sometimes meant that having returned to the ground after evening dinner for 6.00pm, individuals did not arrive back at the trainee hostel until 10.30pm that night.

A duty rota was also in operation whereby younger trainees were expected to help out with the club's youth development programme on a fortnightly basis. Such responsibilities constituted attendance at Thursday night 'School of Excellence' sessions where, apart from refereeing the occasional small-sided game of football, trainee time was predominantly spent making cups of tea for on-looking parents. A tedious and highly subservient chore not relished by anyone.

It is worth noting that such practices of enforced alienation and inferiority amongst young workers are not incongruous to those evident within wider industrial spheres, nor within alternative cultural or institutional contexts. In terms of sport, for example, Scott (1971) has noted how prospective jockey's have been conventionally expected to follow a comparably subordinate occupational regime particularly as regards the completion of menial tasks [7]. The modern-day lifestyle of trainee professional golfers

also appears to involve a similar working format (Professional Golfers Association, Undated). On the broader manufacturing stage, Hollands (1990) has outlined the way in which such sub-cultural practices have traditionally constituted some kind of 'rite de passage' within the confines of the all-male work-place, thereby allowing young men to confirm their masculine identity amongst skilled artisans and elevate themselves in terms of peer group acceptance (see also Geer, 1972; Cohen, 1986).

There are connections here also with anthropological writings concerning the overall structure of societal status, and in particular Turner's (1967, 1969) observations towards the concept of 'liminality'. Utilizing the work of Van Gennep (1960) as the basis upon which to structure his findings, what Turner (1967) puts forward is that the series of events which make up any 'rite de passage' necessarily revolve around processes of societal 'transition', and often condemn those involved to a liminal/marginal state of cultural identity. Ostracized from conventional work-place or lifestyle conditions, this heavily inferior and ambiguous role, Turner (1967) goes on, represents a time of youthful 'growth' and 'transformation' within some cultures where those subject to its consequences are thus considered in a state 'betwixt and between' structural significance.

Given these observations, and given also the extent to which inferiority and meniality have been historically prevalent amidst the institutional routines of football apprenticeship (see chapter one), the domestic expectations placed upon first and second year trainees at Colby Town would appear far from atypical. Nevertheless, these boys remained highly critical of their Youth Training experiences. Within the privacy of interview sessions first

years in particular repeatedly expressed anguish over their fulfilment of laborious and degrading chores and the psychological drawbacks of hierarchical insignificance. These criticisms often related to the processes of verbal humiliation which they regularly endured from a small group of unsympathetic professionals eager to capitalize on the minute details of 'boot-boy' inadequacy. All of which meant that first years eagerly looked forward to the end of their time as 'slaves' and 'skivvy's', when the afternoon's would be their own and when the priorities of professional advancement would far outweigh those of domestic efficiency.

Charlie: ...its hard 'cos you're always on your feet all the time. You finish one job and you've got to start another one, or something else crops up that you've got to do. An' a lot of the time...whereas football should be the main thing, the jobs seem to be the main thing, and the football seems to fit around the jobs you do. I know we've got a lot of jobs to do but we're primarily here to play football, not to clean peoples boots or to clean the toilets or whatever.

But officials at Colby took a different view. For them, such practices were embedded elements of the overall training period. To remove menial labour from the lives of trainees would defeat the whole disciplinary object of their inclusion. For Terry Jackson, 'jobs', (as they were commonly known), constituted the 'heart' of trainee 'upbringing'. They represented a crucial instrument of institutional regimen, organization and control, which, by way of a detailed concern for cleanliness and order, captured the essence of personal discipline. At the same time, 'jobs' were all apart of a wider (if predominantly implicit), 'test' of trainee character (see also White, 1971; Haas, 1972; PFA, 1994) - a way in which Terry Jackson could assess levels of professional suitability, loyalty, commitment and dedication amongst his

young charges. It was in Jackson's interest to make sure that trainees obeyed commands whatever their conditions or consequences. That they would suffer the indignation of subordinate duty and labour exploitation without question and continually persevere against the hardships of club culture. How else would trainees contend with the physical and psychological setbacks of professional life? How else could Jackson be sure that each individual would give his all on the field of play irrespective of personal or occupational circumstance? How else were the trainee 'boys' of today to become the professional 'men' of tomorrow?

### Masculinity, Sport and Football Culture

Perhaps not surprisingly, tightly inter-weaved amidst wider images of trainee graduation and character assessment at Colby were notions of manliness and masculine development. The higher profile attributed to second year status was intimately linked to becoming 'more of a man' within the context of the professional game. As Terry Jackson frequently pointed out, second years were, after all, one step nearer making it as "one of the big lads" - an accolade which would ultimately be reserved for the fortunate few.

Of course, the whole concept of masculinity is not alien to football culture, nor to sport in general (Haynes, 1993). Following a period of relative obscurity as regards the limits of sociological debate, the resurgence of feminism has allowed sporting spheres to be considered more fully in relation to issues of gender, and, in particular the intricacies of masculine construction (Sabo and Runfola, 1980; Messner, 1987, 1988, 1990;

Messner and Sabo, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Parker, 1996). In turn, increased recognition has been given to the way in which the implicit properties of sport and its associated all-male environs may be identified as crucial elements within the masculinizing processes of our society (Cricher, 1991; Morgan, 1992).

Work depicting the historical and contemporary features of professional football within this country has played a key role here. Arguments have been put forward, for example, as to how the early development of the professional game was affected by the masculine ethos of 19th century public school rationalization (Simon and Bradley, 1975; Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Mangan, 1981; Holt, 1989) and the broader societal aims of 'rational recreation' (Lowerson and Myerscough, 1977; Bailey, 1978; Hargreaves, 1987). Observations have also been made regarding the cultural depth of working-class interest in football throughout the 20th century, and the masculine values enmeshed therein (Taylor, 1971a, 1971b; Clarke, 1973, 1978; Cricher, 1972, 1979). In more recent years the complexities of spectator behaviour have additionally been analysed in relation to notions of manliness, especially those traditionally associated with lower working-class lifestyles (Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1989; Williams, 1984; Buford, 1991).

Whilst a significant number of these values and attitudes remained prevalent at Colby (particularly those concerning class-based notions of integrity, loyalty, dedication and commitment), masculinity was more immediately constructed around issues of work-place identity, footballing ability and the social details of everyday life. Trainees longed to be able to



experience the manly benefits of the professional game - to live-out the hyper-masculine practices of personal extravagance and superstar status, to enjoy the delights of fast cars, designer clothes, financial affluence, social indulgence and sexual promiscuity (see chapters six and seven).

In fact insofar as these images heavily infiltrated and informed most aspects of Colby youth team existence, they represented the epitome of trainee desire and expectation. Youth Traineeship was, quite simply, all about becoming a man. About graduating to professional status, about rising above the physical depression of injury, about casting aside the psychological pressures of team selection, about resisting verbal chastisement and personal humiliation, and about safely negotiating one's own masculine prowess whilst fulfilling the stringencies of club demand. Admittedly, the dual bind of trainee subordination and inferiority did have its drawbacks, but they would soon be gone. At which point the inevitability of professionalism and all its benefits could be fully embraced - or so it seemed.

## Conclusions

Within this chapter I have established a theoretical framework in accordance with which the life of professional football Youth Trainees at Colby Town may be viewed. In doing so I have proposed a series of conceptual links between sociological interpretations of 'total institutional' life and the everyday practices of Colby club culture.

Utilizing notions of 'totality' in conjunction with theoretical concepts concerning issues of rationalization, bureaucratic control and occupational socialization, I have also sought to map out a relationship between the disciplinary routines of military recruitment and those methods of organizational entry, initiation and training evident at Colby. Furthermore, issues of masculine construction have been raised in relation to the complexities of the research setting, football culture and the broader sporting sphere. As a result, masculinity has been identified as a key area of identity formation within the context of professional football traineeship.

Having outlined my general observations as regards the organizational features and procedures of life at Colby, it is my intention, during the course of the next chapter, to look more closely at issues of authoritarianism, discipline and work-place pressure within the rounds of daily club routine, and to focus on the way in which trainees coped with these specific aspects of managerial/coaching practice.

## Notes

- [1] As Burns (1992) has pointed out, a strong semblance exists between the work of Foucault (1979) and that of Goffman (1961), despite the fact that both writers appear to have been unaware of each others pursuits.
- [2] For more up-to-date accounts of total institutional (military) life see the 1995 BBC 1 series HMS Brilliant, and/or the 1995 BBC 2 series In The Company of Men.
- [3] The vocational progress of trainees was chartered every four weeks in accordance with FFE & VTS Assessment and Record of Achievement guidelines. As is common in broader industrial/educational environs, this process was carried out via negotiations between youth team coach Terry Jackson and respective trainees (see FFE & VTS, 1993c; Pole, 1993). For more on the use of log-books within the context of Further Education and Youth Training systems see Hargreaves, Baglin, Henderson, Lesson and Tossell (1988).
- [4] In order to further acclimatize young entrants to the occupational pressures of life within the professional football industry, the Professional Footballers Association has recently published a series of behavioural guidelines for players (see PFA, 1993c).
- [5] See also Sykes (1958), who discusses 'batch-living' in terms of 'physical and psychological compression'.
- [6] Gowling (1974) has talked of the way in which subservience amongst professional football apprentices may be described as a type of institutional 'fagging' system.
- [7] For further insight into notions of inferiority and subservience amongst young sporting hopefuls see Sabo and Panepinto (1990) and Joravsky (1995).

### CHAPTER THREE

#### Football for a Living: Authoritarianism, 'Seriousness' and Work-Place Pressure

I can hear the insults now. 'Butcher, you pansy! Butcher, you're like an old woman! Butcher, you're pathetic! Not chants from opposition fans, this was Bobby Ferguson, the Ipswich reserve team coach. He made my life so miserable that I came close to giving up football.

(Butcher, 1987:15).

Fun? Listen, football stopped being fun when I stepped into the 'A' Team of my first pro club...Then you find out the game is for real. Its a living. Players don't kid about and laugh so much anymore...Its an exciting, flat-out and intense way of making a living. We are in it to earn what we can, like any other employee.

(Venables, quoted in The Guardian 21.09.71:22).

In contrast to notions of work-place subservience, hierarchical inferiority and domestic meniality, popular cultural perceptions of football as an occupation often focus on the more sensational and successful images of professional life. The intense roar of the crowd, the spectacular save, the last-minute 'equalizer', the cup winning goal, are all highly glamorized features of footballing folk-lore which appear to be regarded as the typical ingredients of everyday player experience. In much the same way, sports-media coverage frequently portrays the professional game solely in terms of its social, financial and prestigious benefits, the various components of which are predominantly framed amidst idyllic and somewhat masculine conceptions of fame, affluence and glamour (see Davies, 1992).

Of course, these lifestyle features do have a part to play in the lives of some professional footballers, but a media over-emphasis towards such occupational conditions has a tendency to create a false sense of pervasiveness amongst those taking an interest in the game. Seldom, via the penetrative channels of the tabloid press, for example, is football depicted as just another day-to-day job, involving all the mundane and tedious elements of routine 'work' [1].

This chapter portrays the way in which various facets of football 'apprenticeship' at Colby Town caused many trainees to come to a realization of the fact that, in reality, life within the professional game was not purely about issues of fame and fortune. It depicts their reaction to the less acclaimed aspects of club culture by illustrating how they coped with instances of verbal discipline, competitive pressure and institutional seriousness. It portrays also the way in which authoritarian managerial strategy shaped the contours of trainee/staff relations and helped transform the post-school novelty of getting paid to play football into just another way of making a living.

#### Authoritarianism and Colby Town Club Culture

Though the daily chores and training requirements carried out by trainees at Colby Town were the basis upon which occupational behaviour was structured (see chapter two), the disciplinary functions which these tasks served were continually supplemented by an additional form of behavioural control; verbal authoritarianism. Centered around the reinforcement of player subordination, this openly explicit managerial tactic comprised a

mixture of violent and abusive language, direct personal castigation, scornful humour, and traditional all-male 'banter', and was common to all coaching staff at the club - none more so than youth team coach Terry Jackson.

It is clear from commentaries, accounts and official directives concerning life within the professional game that the utilization of verbal authoritarianism has long since featured as a highly pervasive facet of footballing man-management (see Wilshaw, 1970; Dougan, 1980; Barclay, 1983; Butcher, 1987; Farmer, 1987). Commenting on the way in which coaches might accommodate various "types" of player attitude, the Football Association Coaching Manual of 1939, for example, states that in order to "spur-on" those players who "give-up easily" and demonstrate "some weakness of moral fibre - a lack of 'backbone' a "really sharp word may be necessary" from the coach concerned (Football Association 1939:11/12). Discussing the historical emergence of the 'football manager' himself, Wagg (1984) too has described how, prior to the financial (and to some extent psychological) emancipation of players during the 1960s, autocratic, 'barrack-room' managerial styles were not uncommon to the practices of some clubs whose leaders seemingly capitalized on the fact that many professionals had neither the occupational 'freedom' nor the confidence to question official demand.

Later still, Wilshaw (1970) has indicated how a selection of the managers he dealt with during the course of his research into vocational guidance within the professional game, adopted an authoritarian stance in preference

to, what he terms, a more 'permissive' managerial approach, as a matter of assumed necessity (see also Tomlinson, 1983).

On the field of play they [the managers] require players to be tough as well as skilful, and they feel they [the players] should be shown an example of toughness from the leader of the club.

(Wilshaw, 1970:76).

Undoubtedly, such observations reinforce the way in which notions of 'military' practice may be applied to the occupational socialization of English professional footballers (see chapter two). Like those common to army life, such managerial styles revolve around issues of ruthlessness and stringency (see Brotz and Wilson, 1946; Hockey, 1986; Beevor, 1990; Langley, 1994) as a consequence of what Tomlinson (1983:154) has termed the "Darwinian principles" upon which player/manager relations have traditionally been based. Football managers need success to secure both their own employment and that of their players. For this reason they rely heavily on those who can bring that success on the field of play, and dispose rapidly of those who cannot. Through its disciplinary tone, verbal authoritarianism has often been regarded, it seems, as a means by which managers might stimulate individual consistency and team fortune, and has in turn been granted a degree of institutional acclaim. In this sense, football has pursued its connection with the wider military precedent assuming some kind of implicit correlation between the adoption of verbal (and physical) discipline and organizational prosperity.

Consequently, authoritarianism has emerged as something to which players must be seen to respond positively. Speaking from his own experiences, ex-

Ipswich (and later England) manager Bobby Robson (1982:121/2) has emphasized how, although aggressive, such methods of institutional communication have come to be recognized as a kind of occupational hallmark within professional football - a way in which managers might assess the integrity of their players and identify potential strengths and weaknesses amongst them.

One of the necessary [managerial] qualities is to be able to go into a dressing-room and berate players in a manner which wouldn't be tolerated in any other industry. If a shop floor manager spoke to his men the way I sometimes speak to my players, the whole factory would walk out on strike... A good player will respond to criticism. If the manager is slap happy and indifferent, the players will become slap happy and indifferent.

Certainly, more recent accounts of trainee life within the professional game bear witness to the continued use of authoritarian managerial techniques. In his (albeit limited) assessment of youth coach attitudes towards trainee development, Roderick (1991:70) has suggested that although the coaches who took part in his study showed an awareness of the detrimental affects of "over-criticism" and "negative behaviour", one individual described such strategies as having the potential to stimulate 'personality reactions' from young players [2]. Thus, in short, Roderick (1991:70) goes on;

Those trainees who countered this knuckle-rap with a positive 'I'll prove him wrong' attitude, would [in the view of the coach] be more likely to 'get on' and progress within the football club.

That is not to say that all football trainees automatically accommodate this authoritarianism without question. At Colby Town the highly critical attitude of Terry Jackson was one of the most uncomfortable features of



institutional entry for many first year recruits, and one with which the majority expressed major adaptational difficulties. Specifically problematic was that Jackson's indiscriminate use of violent language and derogatory comment contrasted sharply with their previous experiences of amateur footballing practice.

Steve: I think you're tre't more as an adult now, it meks you into more of a man in a way. As [Associated] Schoolboys an' that it were all nice talk an' that, but now if you need a tellin' off, they give it t'ya. Like there's a lot of discipline an' action of the club an' that.

Neil: Well, y'know, if you have a bad game you get really bollocked, and its just, y'know, "You should do this, you should do that", he's just on your back really if you have a bad game.

Adrian: Well, when I was playing for Devonshire Boys you wouldn't really get a bollockin', but now if you have a bad game, now they'll punish, - well not punish - but shout at you.

Neither were such remarks confined to first year trainees. Despite their extended period of subjection to Jackson's managerial traits, a number of second years still found many aspects of his authoritarian approach hard to accept.

Gary: You come down here as a Schoolboy and...they're dead nice to you an' everythin', and as soon as you get here, like at our age now, after two weeks you've run you're bollocks off, you get slaughtered all the time, like off people trying to make you feel that big [indicates inferior stature] - you've got to show them what you're made of an' all that.

Damien: I mean you're bound to have a bad game now and again, but he [Terry]...hauls you off and says "Oh you'll be lucky to get in my side again.." an' things

like that - which you don't wanna hear when you've had a bad game...You don't want people comin' in an' sayin', "Oh you were shite you were"...Like, he's just a shit-head. I've never really hated anybody in my life apart from him. But - well, I mean he's your boss isn't he...I suppose he's the one I have to bow down to.

But aside from these isolated examples, how, we might ask, did authoritarianism manifest itself in terms of everyday trainee life? It is important to emphasize the endemic nature of such behaviour. Here, for example, during the course of group interview, Martin Chadwick and his close friend Simon Gregory (both second year trainees) attempt to explain the kind of disciplinary reaction Chadwick received from Jackson, after producing a relatively poor performance in an important end of season Cup game.

Martin: After that game Andy - that t'other day - I were in at 8 o'clock...in't' mornin'.

Simon: He [Terry] wouldn't fuckin' speak to him [Martin] after the game. He got me to tell him to be in at 8 on Tuesday...

Martin: He said to me [on the way off the pitch], "Piss Off, I don't want to see you in't' dressing-room after".

Simon: He said, "You'll be lucky to get another fuckin' shirt this season". But he [Martin] was sub [substitute] the other day.

Martin: And then he med' out the only reason why I got a shirt, - when wer it, Wednesday, - he says "Oh I wer short on numbers but you're lucky to get a shirt".

From this encounter, and the previous comments of Damien Blackwell, notions of personal/occupational 'threat' may be seen as something which

Terry Jackson perceived as appropriate and effective features of his overall coaching strategy. But Jackson's authoritarian repertoire was not based entirely upon verbal chastisement. In addition, physical punishment had an important role to play in the establishment of behavioural norms.

Such punitive measures surfaced in various guises. During the early days of pre-season training, for instance, first year trainees were frequently ordered to complete long distance runs as a result of their below-par efforts in small-sided games and/or their inadequacies in terms of physical fitness. As well as serving to accommodate overall fitness objectives, these practices constituted an additional element of trainee 'mortification' whereby the rigours and authoritative demands of the professional game could be firmly implanted within the minds of recruits (cf. Goffman, 1961).

As regards the youth team squad as a whole, training sessions throughout the season were often followed by additional and unexpected bouts of sprinting and/or strenuous exercise, which were duly perceived by trainees as a method of punishment for their unacceptable work-rate during morning and/or afternoon activities. Likewise, a poor weekend result for the Colby Town youth team would inevitably lead to a more stringent and disciplined coaching approach to all occupational duties throughout the following week.

Away from this collective setting, punishment took on a more subtle appearance. Individuals were occasionally told to leave the training ground on account of their poor working "attitude", or instructed to stand out of group activity for short periods having failed to apply themselves accordingly. More often than not such ostracization was accompanied by a

sharp reminder from Jackson as to the high level of disciplinary standards at the club and the obvious shortfall incurred.

We did the 'circle drill' in training today where everyone stands round and passes the ball to one-another. Chadds [Martin Chadwick] got caught messing about by Terry and got the usual treatment after answering him back. "Do it properly Martin... and don't answer me back, or I'll knock your fuckin' head off".

(Fieldnotes, 29.10.93).

Some of the first team who have been injured trained with us this morning and joined in the five-a-side [game] at the end. Fed up with always playing as a defender Robin [Hindle] decides to play up-front - "fancied scoring a few". Needless to say, Terry took exception. [Terry] "Robin, stay at the back and play from there". [Robin] "All the others get to play up front". [Terry] "If they all put their fuckin' hand in the fire would you?" [Robin] "Yeah". [Terry] "Hey, Robin go on, piss off - go on, fuck off get back to the club now - I'll see you there."

(Fieldnotes, 10.11.93).

Intensive periods of "personal coaching" (one-to-one coach/trainee sessions) were also used as a means by which individual trainees might be 'punished' or scrutinized for their lack of general team commitment. A case in point was that of second year Gareth Procter who received extra 'coaching' on account of a poor 'tackling' display during a youth team pre-season 'friendly'.

After the training session and five-a-side [game] Terry keeps Gareth back and grills him in front of me and year one. He says he's not 'hard' enough. Not nasty enough. "You'll never make a fuckin' footballer tacklin' like that..". He sets up a practice and sends each first year boy into the grid [10m square grid marked out on the grass] to try and dribble the ball past Gareth. "Make the fuckin' tackle. D'ya wanna be a footballer or what? Where's the aggression?" His voice is booming. He stands over Gareth and talks to

him like dirt. I've never seen such a dressing-down. I'm astounded. First year Neil Morrissey reminds me that "This is when Terry's a bastard." It's about 75 degrees and we must have been training for two hours solid. Gareth looks on the verge of passing out. Then we move to the full-size goals. We knock the ball into the box [into the goal-area] and he has to head them out past the 18 yard line. We seem to do it for ages, but we're going nowhere until he does it properly - until he heads all the crosses back over the 18 yard line.

(Fieldnotes, 31.08.93).

In terms of everyday experience, such explicit authoritarian outbursts varied in frequency and intensity. During actual youth team matches, for instance, when parents and members of the general public were in attendance, regular criticisms towards individual and team performances were made by Terry Jackson but these were not as vehement or as personal as those handed out within the working confines of the club.

More 'private' forms of authoritarianism were, in many ways, a taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life for trainees. They constituted an integral part of club culture, and as such represented something which individuals just had to come to terms with. Attempts were made by trainees to combat the humiliating consequences of such treatment by constructing suitable coping strategies. Mimicry and humour played a key role here with various boys priding themselves on their ability to accurately re-enact the authoritarian manner of their coach and to recite, verbatim, the exact content of popular trainee reprovals.

Where brief periods of 'rest' allowed, informal conversations in training often revolved around the way in which either the group as a whole, or particular individuals, had been chastised during the course of the session.

Alternatively, such issues would frequently re-emerge at a later stage to dominate dressing-room discussion, at which time these experiences acted as a collective focal point for the trainee populace to defend their own number and to offer verbal distaste towards Terry Jackson. Amidst the comfort of this collectivity, those individuals who had been the centre of humiliation were often encouraged by their peers to overcome such ordeals by viewing the lighter side of events, or by looking on them as a way in which Jackson might merely be trying to offer a timely “kick up the arse”.

### Methods of Motivation?

Irrespective of their length of service, the majority of trainees at Colby were opposed to the authoritarian atmosphere pervasive within their immediate working environment. This opposition focused primarily around feelings of resentment towards their coach on account of the personal humiliation they, or others, suffered.

Yet this disposition was not sustained by all. Though disapproving of their everyday treatment, some trainees were of the opinion that rather than being regarded as a matter of personal verbal attack, these strategies could also be viewed as a method of managerial motivation. Attitudes of this nature were more prevalent amongst a small group of second year trainees who appeared to have developed a higher degree of tolerance and insensitivity towards these customs of behavioural control. During their first year within the professional game they, it seemed, had established an implicit understanding of the fact that it was essential for young players to passively withstand verbal attack (be it related to personal circumstance or

performance) and to respond to it in a controlled, positive manner, thereby proving one's 'toughness' and strength of character in the face of adversity.

Again, biographical accounts of life within professional football have brought forth much comment in relation to the way in which different players may or may not be motivated by repeated managerial criticism.

Highlighting his own reaction to the intense personal demands of professional club culture Neale (1990:52-64), for example, has explained how on entering the game he felt compelled to develop a "mental hardness" as well as a "physical toughness" in order to adapt to the abrasive nature of his new found occupational role (see also Johnston, 1990). Moreover, Wilshaw (1970:213-219) has reported that whilst 75% of the professional players sampled during the course of his research said that managerial criticism "drove them to action", and a further 91% expressed a preference for managers exhibiting "dominating personality" traits, 89% also admitted that they played better when praised by those in positions of authority. Reinforcing the benefits of managerial compassion Lineker (1993:197) has stated that alongside workers in other occupations, in his opinion, "ninety-nine percent of footballers" are more likely to perform better if they receive "a pat on the back from the boss" rather than persistent bouts of verbal rebuke.

As Farmer (1987) clearly illustrates from his experiences of the authoritarian regime in place at Wolverhampton Wanderers during the 1950s and 60s, although established managerial logic infers that players should be positively responsive to negative, authoritarian comment, very

often this is not the case. Speaking of ex-Wolverhampton manager Stan Cullis, Farmer (1987:29) concludes;

His [Cullis's] observations were correct, but his means of getting across the message were not always successful. His abrupt and often vehement style had, on some of the more timid characters, the opposite effect, and their game was destroyed.

Of course, such claims are nothing new. Research into broader aspects of sports participation has shown that authoritarian coaching techniques may well have an alienating and detrimental effect upon some 'athletes' (see Percival, 1971. Smoll, Smith and Curtis, 1978) [3]. This scenario was clearly apparent amongst trainees at Colby. Finding themselves in a similarly alienated position, many recognized that this kind of indiscriminatory authoritarian stance was beneficial to but a few of their number. Even Bill and Bev Sommerfield, proprietors of the Colby Town trainee hostel, acknowledged their recognition of trainee discomfort in relation to the details of club practice and its stringent methods of socialization.

Bill: It seems to me that the boys do feel at home here but that they aren't happy with the fact that football is all about being shouted at.

Bev: I mean that's the sort of thing they have to put up with...Bill has always said "O.K. that works with some people but everybody is different", and some need a kick up the back-side and some don't. I mean you've probably heard a lot of it. I mean all the great managers have all got a bit of it in them. They do these things, and hopefully at the end of the day [they] get a little bit more out of them [the players] for doing it.



The general feelings of trainees themselves were accurately summed up by first year's Adrian Thornton and Neil Morrissey who voiced their assessment of the effects of negative criticism on the youth team squad as a whole.

Adrian: I think its for you to do well. I don't always think its always needed, 'cos I think people react in different ways. I think others would be better off saying (sic) "Come on you can do better than that...you're doing it all wrong, you should do it this way". I think people should tell you how to do it better...But he's [Terry's] the manager and he'll do as he pleases.

Neil: What you need as a youngster is that you need to, ~ I mean you do need a lot of encouragement an' that. An' a lot of times you don't get it so if someone bollock's ya' you're gonna feel really down and you're head's gonna go down. But if someone says, "Well O.K., you've done a mistake but I know you can do better", then you feel much better.

Having said that, it would be naive to assume that the effects of authoritarian club culture were restricted to issues of initial occupational 'shock' or personal motivation. On the contrary, its consequences transcended such boundaries. As trainees pointed out during the course of interviews, not only did authoritarianism permeate their daily experiences of working life but it also served to restructure their whole frame of reference towards the game itself. No longer was football just about fun, playing games and enjoyment, it was something much more serious than that. It had become a matter of instruction, obedience, payment and routine. It had become their living.

## Getting Serious

A general consensus appears to exist amongst many footballers that once the professional standard has been reached the game becomes more serious, more tense, and somehow less enjoyable (see Keegan, 1977; Shankly, 1977; Icke, 1983; Chapman, 1993). Whether this is due to the emergent presence of increased financial incentive, competition for places, or managerial expectation is uncertain. Whatever its causal origins, 'seriousness' was certainly a dominant factor in the lives of trainees at Colby, so much so, that nearly all made reference to its existence during the course of the 1993/94 season.

According to many, the 'enjoyment' element of the game, which had once been the predominant motivating force behind participation, had given way to a more disciplined and calculated occupational outlook. Although still a part of a broader work-place rationale, enjoyment, it seemed, was now an issue of secondary importance, having been overtaken by more pressing concerns.

Davey: It's got more serious since I've moved up here, y'know 'cos its more like a job. But it hasn't got to a point where its a job and not fun. Its still what I want to do. I still enjoy it. But sometimes you think, 'I'm getting paid for this, this is my job now'.

Robin: Like when you were younger you used to get a regular spot [team place] - like if you were one o't top boys, one o't top notches - played for't City Boys an' that. Like everyone used to say "Oh he plays for't City Boys an' all that...and you were playin' wi yer best mates really...yer best mates ye'wer growin' up wi an' that. An' I found that really enjoyable... But now its got to that stage where you've got to buckle down an' earn a livin' out o't game. And you've got to be dead serious about it.

According to some, seriousness had direct consequences in terms of personal performance.

Martin: You don't enjoy it [playing].

Simon: Well you used to, but like comin' here for two years - I mean, its just...

Ben: That's why you don't enjoy it s'much, I mean you're just worried about gettin' a bollockin' everytime you go on't pitch. You're scared to do owt wrong.

Damien: Yeah, you just want to get rid of the ball, its like a fuckin' bomb in'it.

Gone were the days when playing football was a time of relaxation and when one could unwind and take pleasure in the social and collective company of friends. No more was leisure time structured around a 'kick-about in the street', or a game of 'five-a-side with a few mates'. There were professional legalities to consider if such pastimes were to be fulfilled. At regular intervals throughout the season Terry Jackson made a point of reminding trainees of their contractual obligations as regards participation in recreational activities outside of the club. These warnings were not exclusive to games such as football, nor were they particularly negotiable, as this extract from trainee contracts illustrates (see also Appendix C).

8. The Player shall not without the written consent of the club participate professionally in any other sporting or athletic activity. The Player shall at all times have due regard for the necessity of his maintaining a high standard of physical fitness and agrees not to indulge in any sport, activity or practice that might endanger such fitness. The player shall not infringe any provision in this regard in any policy of insurance taken out for his benefit or for the benefit of the club.

Many trainees spoke of this more intense occupational approach as a rather sudden transformation which had occurred since their arrival at Colby. In reality however, institutional entry had merely served to reinforce an already existing sense of seriousness evident in the lives of many trainees since their days as Associate Schoolboys. Admittedly, during this preceding amateur period football had remained a 'fun' pastime, irrespective of the fact that it had meant endless journeys to and from the club at weekends and continual demands on parental time and effort. But many individuals failed to acknowledge how, over time, seriousness had crept into their enactment of the game and their overall attitudes towards it. The exception here was first year Pete Mills, who, whilst reminiscing around past experience, provided a clear description of how football had gradually become more serious for him.

AP: When you say it gets more serious when you get to a professional club do you mean as a[n] [Associate] Schoolboy or - ?

Pete: As a Schoolboy it was more serious than it was with yer Sunday league and everything else, y'know playing for the school an' that, but it wasn't as serious as it is now...y'know like playing for the youth team. Last year [U16's Associate Schoolboy] wer quite a serious year as well, y'know when you were trying to get taken on. Every game you had to prove yourself. Every Sunday we had to come down and just play together so it wer quite hard, so that was quite serious as well...

AP: What is that seriousness? What is it all about?

Pete: I don't think its like 'serious' in not having a laugh or owt, its that you've got to go out and perform. You've got to... y'know there's that pressure on you where you've got to do it. You've got to do it in every single game. Everything you do round the football ground, round the training ground, everything's got to be,

y'know, perfect, so that you can like push to get a career in it. Y'know, you still have fun, you still get enjoyment out of it, but there's that point where you've got to, y'know, do as well as you can. Makes it that everything's got to be serious.

From these comments I began to form some understanding of how seriousness manifested itself within the processes and practices of everyday trainee life. For most, the managerial approach to football had changed, as had the way in which they now viewed their participation in the game as regards increased occupational commitment and responsibility. But more importantly the whole structure of daily life, and the context within which occupational activities were performed, led to an accumulation of tension whereby trainees felt compelled to take their 'job' more seriously, and to accommodate increased levels of personal 'pressure'.

#### Under Pressure: Tough at the Top

Like notions of authoritarianism and seriousness the concept of pressure is something to which professional footballers, past and present, frequently refer in their (often ghosted) biographical writings. Football, Dougan (1980:68) states;

...is pressure - pressure to compete, to win, to get to the top, to stay there, to survive. Not all the pressure is confined to the pitch. It exists in the background, at some clubs all the time, and for some players it can become unbearable.

Certainly, one of the key areas of concern for the Commission on Industrial Relations in their 1974 report into the professional game, was the amount of pressure which footballers might find themselves under, both in an

occupational and personal sense, and the resultant effects which this may have on their overall lifestyles. Quoting Dr. Neil Phillips (the then honorary medical officer of the Football Association) the CIR (1974:27) goes on;

The list of pressures on them [professional players] is endless. They exert pressures on themselves because of their own ambitions. Money, the bonuses they play for that can make all the difference to their standard of living, add to that weight. Then teammates put pressures on them, for football is a team game, and one man's failure may be a team's disaster. The coaches and managers put pressures on them for the success of the team is tied to the players' performance. The directors, the crowds, even their own families all exert pressures for their own reasons on the players. Everyone wants success for his or her team but the buck stops with the player. To know the total weight of such tensions the ordinary man in the street should ask himself how he would feel if he were promoted in his job or how he would feel if he were suddenly sacked. Players, in effect, know these extremes - every three days of their lives... getting promotion... getting sacked... Just think of it". [4].

As far as trainees at Colby Town were concerned the whole issue of 'pressure' constituted a range of different meanings. On a broader level, pressure existed as a result of the way in which many individuals felt under constant surveillance both within club and hostel environments - the authoritarian club culture, the enforcement of curfews on social time, the sharing of rooms, restricted family access - all seemed to have some effect (see chapter two).

On occasion trainees discussed 'pressure' and 'seriousness' in the same context using both terms to air their grievances towards the way in which football had become less enjoyable for them with the advent of professionalism. More often, however, references towards 'seriousness'

inferred a general psychological change in trainee approach or attitude to the game, whereas the concept of 'pressure' was used to map out the specific tensions and forces which 'seriousness' comprised.

So what were these tensions? Why did trainees feel under constant pressure? More importantly, who applied this pressure, and how? One area of common concern appeared to be the fight for professional contracts, as Bill Sommerfield explained.

Bill: Y'know, kids now, there's a lot more pressure on these lads. We don't intend putting pressure on them...but there becomes more pressure on them because they're looking for contracts, an' there's a lot of lads come through us, y'know, in a season - trialists an' that. Y'know, its very difficult an' there's a lot of things to take in, particularly when you've got you're education as well...

Trainee discussion around such issues was confined mainly to second year's, and in particular the four individuals who had only been given two-year 'trainee' contracts at their time of club entry. However, even for those on "three-year deals", it was commonly accepted that if individuals became surplus to requirements at any point during the trainee period it was likely that the club would "pay them off" by insisting that they leave with a compensatory financial sum equivalent to their potential earnings under the remainder of their contractual terms.

The following interview extracts illustrate the pressures which the fight for contracts and continual performance assessment induced, irrespective of initial contract length. The first example features Gareth Procter, a second year trainee on a three-year contract, whilst the remaining two are from

fellow second years Ben Tattersall and Gary Riley, who had only been granted shorter two-year terms.

Gareth: Like wi mi Sunday side and wi Wigan Boys an' that I always enjoyed it, I mean 'cos there didn't seem to be any pressure at all. But like, say now, now when we're playin' you've got to perform an' that to get a contract an' stuff, it don't seem as much fun. You still enjoy it when you're playin' but you worry more before about what you've got to do, an' afterwards if you've done it al'reyt an' that.

Ben: Well you feel as though - its there [pressure] everytime you play, especially if there's people higher up at club watchin', like Boss an' Derek Laird [reserve team coach] an' Mick Linch [first team coach] an' people like that...y'know, you really want to impress them an' that.

Gary: Even if I had a bad game I still used to enjoy playing, now I'm so nervous about making a mistake 'cos there's so much pressure on every game that you play, the enjoyment goes out of it. You've got to do everything by the book and you don't want to take any risks...And there's always people watchin' you, even if you can't see 'em, you know there's people there watchin' you all the time...its a very highly pressurized job. Everything you do there's so much pressure on you. I mean you go for a crap in the morning and you get marks out of ten for it.

The pressure to perform was also felt by first years, but because the second trainee year was commonly perceived as the more important of the two, their fears of departure were less imminent. Nevertheless younger trainees did acknowledge different kinds of occupational pressure. Again, these were performance related, but were more directly concerned with the expectations put upon them by Terry Jackson. Describing how life as a trainee footballer had actually differed from what he originally expected, Adrian Thornton, expanded on the way in which, much to his surprise,



Jackson had begun to insist that he adopted an uncharacteristically 'aggressive' approach towards his game.

Adrian: Terry Jackson is pushing us all on, 'cos he does want us all to do well, but there's a nasty side to it now ~ well not all nasty but there are nasty parts to it...I never really thought about the pressures of the game,...'cos...everytime I played for Devonshire Boys I'd just run out and enjoy it, I'd always have a smile on my face...But now you've really got to have that aggression in you, you've really got to get your adrenalin going whenever you're playing..

AP: Can you generate that aggression? Do you find it difficult to do that?

Adrian: Well I found it difficult to begin with, 'cos its just been a total change you see, but maybe as it goes on...I think its just the 'will', the real 'will to win' y'know, because now if you don't win you get clobbered for not winning, whereas if you didn't win when I was playing for Devonshire - it wasn't such a big thing...

Adding to their more serious occupational outlook on the game, the pressure to 'win' and to upgrade one's levels of aggression was something that had become increasingly evident to first years. Though not always directly explicit, 'aggressive' instruction and inference played a central part in team talks before official fixtures and in less formal chats during training sessions. Phrases such as "get their first" and "win your battle" were frequently and vehemently employed by Terry Jackson in order to stimulate aggression from players and inculcate desired 'professional' values [5]. Moreover, the authoritarian stance which Jackson took served to reiterate the way in which new recruits should go about their general work, be it in training or competitive games.

Related observations have also been made by Barclay (1983) who, whilst charting the occupational downfall of one particular football hopeful, has highlighted the way in which young players may be required to adopt an aggressive and more physical approach to their game in order to prove their suitability for professional status [6]. Likewise Roderick (1991) has emphasized how a sense of 'winning' at team level might dominate football trainee life at the expense of individual development and performance.

These two factors appeared to be related at Colby in the sense that together they represented a strategy aimed at breeding a vigorous and forceful playing attitude on the part of each trainee. Thus, whilst 'winning' was encouraged, it was not just a team affair, it was an issue of personal importance structured around the development of an inner drive or motivation and a burning passion to succeed in every competitive situation. It was commonly accepted that if everyone won their own 'battle' by applying themselves in the expected aggressive manner, the team, as a combined unit, could not fail to fulfill its pre-determined objectives. Furthermore, the development and/or possession of this kind of 'killer instinct' signalled an acceptance of these aggressive tendencies, and, in the eyes of Terry Jackson, appeared to render trainees more eligible for career progression.

Yet there were times, within all of this, when the priority placed upon winning games did appear to raise some concern amongst the Colby trainee group. By mid-season, for instance, a number of first years had begun to question the extent to which Jackson's pre-occupation with youth team success had in fact come to overshadow the broader development of

individual players. Being a relative newcomer to an established club hierarchy, such methods of prioritization, it was felt, were a means by which Jackson sought to prove his coaching/managerial ability and claim greater contractual security for himself (see also PFA, 1995; Garlick, 1996). Intrigued by these accusations, I asked Jackson during interview as to whether or not he saw youth team success as a key feature of his occupational remit.

AP: As a manager Terry, do you feel that you're here to win things, or do you see your job as just to let everybody have a game and assess them...?

Terry: My job as a youth team coach as I see it, and I know everybody else does here, is to produce good young players. Now if that means us coming runner-up and having 4 good players, or us winning the league and having one good player, then we'd rather come runners-up. At the end of the day we're here to produce good young quality footballers, that's the thing that the club's looking for. It's not the be-all-and-end-all for us to win the League or win the Cup or to win games day-in and day-out. We're here basically to produce...people who go on to play for the reserves and the first team, that's our job.

In essence this statement constitutes a denial of first year allegations concerning Terry Jackson's organizational motives. Whilst for some Jackson's repeated selection of second year trainees for youth team games was in the interests of winning and its occupational spin-offs, such selection procedures were justified by Jackson in terms of the importance of the second trainee year. Elder boys, he claimed, were given priority not because winning was paramount, but because they had less time to 'prove' themselves worthy of a professional contract. Like others before them, first years, it seemed, would have to wait for the privilege of prioritized selection, making sure that in the meantime their institutional progress met

official expectation. As for Terry Jackson, all he could do was to fulfil what he saw as his own managerial objectives as governed by club demand, whilst at the same time continually espousing notions of equal opportunity amidst guarantees that all trainees would be given a fair chance to “make the professional grade”.

### Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the way in which three aspects of club culture at Colby Town - authoritarianism, seriousness and pressure - served to modify trainee perceptions of life within professional football. Authoritarianism has been cited as an all-pervasive aspect of trainee existence and as a managerial strategy which contrasted sharply with prior individual experiences of both the professional and amateur game. I have pinpointed the main impact of this autocratic stance by showing how it led trainees to view football in a fundamentally different way - as a ‘serious’ means of earning a living rather than as a ‘fun’ pastime. I have also highlighted the main elements of ‘seriousness’, as put forward by the trainee populace under the general guise of work-place ‘pressure’, and mapped out the key constituents of these concepts in relation to issues of occupational expectation.

Whilst not exhaustive, this analysis illustrates the dominant themes around which authoritarianism, seriousness and pressure were discussed within the context of everyday life. In turn, it demonstrates how a complex network of images, symbols and actions were constructed and interpreted around these three interrelated themes.

As regards the use of authoritarianism as managerial strategy, it is important to consider how its indiscriminate application appeared to be justified within this sporting context. Many trainees had arrived at Colby with formidable reputations as schoolboy footballers. Often accompanying these were inflated levels of self-confidence, which, when multiplied collectively, represented a potentially volatile cocktail of personality characteristics and idiosyncrasies. As well as representing a broader form of institutional control, the employment of verbal authoritarianism was one method by which Terry Jackson aimed to safeguard against the development of trainee over-confidence. In this sense negative comment was used to repress and re-direct the sometimes vibrant temperaments and attitudes of youth team members. Problems arose when the more comprehensive application of such man-management techniques failed to meet the motivational needs of some players. Not all possessed high levels of confidence to begin with. Not all responded positively to negative criticism and personal castigation. But these issues seemed unimportant in comparison to the regulation of self-esteem. If players found it hard to motivate themselves or to cope with the harshness of managerial demand, that was their problem. More immediate were concerns towards effort and success. After all, how could the team function effectively if some thought they were better than others? How could the sporting 'battle' be won without a complete sense of 'togetherness'? Ultimately, it was the creation and maintenance of equality, group cohesion and collective team spirit which Terry Jackson regarded as his primary occupational objective at Colby. Correspondingly, it is to a more detailed analysis of how such egalitarian institutional values and behaviours were constructed that I now turn.

## Notes

- [1] See Roadburg (1978), for an investigation into the different ways in which professional footballers may regard their occupational role.
- [2] Interestingly, in conclusion to his investigations into the Youth Training programme within professional football, Roderick (1991:75) has suggested that youth team coaches might benefit from guidance in man-management techniques as regards the way they relate to trainees.
- [3] For further reading see Smith and Smoll (1990), who have inferred that children with low levels of self-esteem (who participate in youth sports) may respond more positively to highly supportive and highly instructive coaches, and more negatively to coaches who limit these behavioural traits. In addition, Kenow and Williams (1992) have suggested that sports coaches should be more supportive and less negative with athletes who exhibit high anxiety and low self-confidence levels. For a broader analysis of possible athlete perceptions of coaching behaviours see Smoll and Smith (1989) and Tutko and Richards (1971). For more on problems of authoritarianism within professional football see Butcher (1987).
- [4] For additional insight into the likely pressures of a career in professional football see Yaffe (1974). For information regarding the more specific pressures of those attempting to graduate into the professional game see Croall (1976a, 1976b), Macleod (1983), and O'Grady (1974).
- [5] Such comments, comprising the analogy between the sporting and the military 'battle' portray shades of the more historic evangelical tones of the muscular Christian ethos which emerged during the Victorian era. (See Simon and Bradley, 1975; Mangan, 1981; Tozer, 1985).
- [6] Barclay (1983:39-44) offers a detailed account of how one individual's inability to adopt such aggressive tendencies, at the apprenticeship stage, led to his failure, and subsequent expulsion from professional football. On a more general level Kane (1966) has stated that there may be some evidence to suggest a personality 'type' amongst young footballers of outstanding ability, the characteristics of which include tough-mindedness, extraversion, and (ruthless) efficiency. For broader insight into the alleged aggressive tendencies of professional footballers see Underwood and Whitwood (1990).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 'Togetherness', Favouritism and Institutional Relations

Personality plays a decisive part in team selection. Some managers, like some teachers, have their pets, their blue-eyed boys who can 'do no wrong', even when they are doing everything wrong on the pitch. This points to a basic insecurity in managers themselves. They need a player, some chosen favourite, to boost their self-esteem. It is not usually the individualistic player they choose, but an ordinary, mediocre one, who is anxious to please the Boss.

(Doogan, 1980:36).

Wherever there is respect for authority, there too the uncomradely tendency to play up to those in command will be found, to smile for advantages, to climb at the expense of others, to scheme. Wherever there is respect for authority, there too the furtive tendency to say one thing and do another will grow.

(Palm, 1977:79).

Authoritarianism served a host of behavioural purposes at Colby Town, the most important of which were aimed at bolstering over-riding club concerns with the development of group cohesion, team spirit and 'togetherness'. Representing the ideological hallmark of player relations, 'togetherness' was the interactional fulcrum around which work-place routines took place and the term most commonly used by trainees and staff alike to describe and encapsulate official desires towards levels of solidarity amongst youth team members. Whilst improving their own skills and showing individual initiative both on and off the field of play, an enhancement of team collectivity was something which trainees had to

demonstrate if they were going to succeed in the eyes of Terry Jackson. In every circumstance the good of the team came first, irrespective of personal cost, irrespective of individual ambition.

In this chapter, I discuss the occupational complexities of 'togetherness' and pinpoint the personal consequences of its social construction at Colby. I offer a critical and in-depth analysis of its organizational standing, and consider the extent to which official 'theory' surrounding its existence was reinforced and manifested in and through the institutional arrangements of actual working 'practice'. In turn, I highlight the more intricate details of youth team interaction, illustrating how trainees viewed the promotion and subsequent conditions of 'togetherness', and how they accepted its underlying principles in relation to the impact it had on their working lives.

#### 'Togetherness' and 'Equality' ~ In Theory

Professional football is not alone in its explicit orientation towards notions of collective endeavour and group cohesion. As we have seen in chapter two, issues of 'mutual dependence', 'community spirit' and 'team loyalty', have traditionally featured within the occupational codes of a whole range of military contexts in the interests of efficient working practice (Brotz and Wilson, 1946; Dornbusch, 1955; Janowitz, 1969; Barker, 1981; Hockey, 1986; Beevor, 1990) [1].

In the case of Colby Town, group cohesion was widely acclaimed as the formula for youth team success (see also Roderick, 1991). Mutual dependence was regarded as the fundamental framework around which all



aspects of professional and social life should be structured. According to Terry Jackson, the better trainees got to know each other, the more effective their team performances would be. During interview, I asked Jackson to elaborate further on the rationale behind these ideas.

AP: You often talk about 'togetherness', can you give me a bit of background as to why you try and promote that?

Terry: Well, I think its important that the lads stick together both on the pitch and off the pitch to a certain degree, although they need their own privacy. And I think if you, - like youth team players do at any football club, they do things together, whether its the cleaning up, the boots, whether its the jobs, the youth team spend more time at the football club than probably any other person - because they're job demands that, and you've got to be a team to do all the different jobs and all the different things required of you. And whether its training or coming up from the training ground, I like the lads to be together, y'know, I like us to work as a team, play as a team, try and stick together, and try and promote a little bit of comradeship really.

The accommodation of trainees within the club's residential hostel was just one way in which this collective ideology was reinforced (see chapter two). The routines and demands of daily 'jobs', in and around the club, served as a means by which teamwork could also be re-emphasised, particularly in relation to the systematic and co-ordinated completion of occupational tasks (see chapter one).

On a more 'intimate' level, Jackson attempted to increase the depth of working relations between trainees with respect to their enactment of footballing skills, techniques and team play. Adopting the seemingly taken-for-granted belief that a more intense and personal training environment necessarily fostered some kind of 'mental familiarity' between trainees, at

regular intervals during training, Jackson stipulated that certain individuals “worked together” in order that they might develop a greater understanding of each others footballing “strengths and weaknesses”.

Friday training sessions, in particular, were noted for such ceremony, especially on days which preceded Saturday youth team games. Rather than constituting whole group activity, training, on these occasions, often centered around “pairs work”, where individuals were required to carry out jogging, stretching and sprinting exercises whilst in the company of those who they were most likely to play next, or nearest, to in forthcoming matches. Following this, team selection for small sided games at the end of Friday morning training sessions frequently deviated from the usual ‘first versus second year’ pattern, accommodating instead the placement of “first-choice” youth team players alongside each other, thereby further enhancing team-mate familiarity.

Verbal reinforcement occupied an equally prominent role in the everyday conditioning of trainees towards cohesive practice. Crucial to ‘togetherness’ in this respect were principles of egalitarianism, where individual ‘worth’ was located as the rhetorical hub of group solidarity. Continual reassurances from Jackson reminded trainees that, in the eyes of the club, no-one was “any better than anyone else”. Comments which were often followed by declarations that, in terms of professional training and opportunity, all players were looked upon as “equals” at Colby, and would be treated as such by officials throughout the duration of their stay.

Such remarks did offer some form of encouragement to trainees, but amidst these espousals contradictions were evident. For one thing, clear distinctions

existed between the daily occupational demands placed upon each year group (see chapter two). The predictability of youth team selection, and its bias towards second year boys, also presented inconsistencies (see chapter three). For first years, such blatant transgressions of equality were hard to accept, particularly during their early days at the club. But these processes, it seemed, had to be recognised in terms of the privileges and benefits accorded second year status. After all, the majority of first years knew, that it was not unusual for younger trainees to spend their first season on the sidelines in order to facilitate the professional development of their elders.

Whilst an acceptance of this 'graduative' ethos provided some element of personal comfort, inevitably, such obvious differences in daily work-place practice did give rise to more structured and critical trainee perspectives. As time passed, first years came to question a whole range of occupational scenarios which further contradicted institutional notions of equality. As my own relationship with trainees developed, it became apparent that a number of second year boys also had reservations about the supposed indistinguishable treatment of youth team players. For them, instances of managerial partiality and selectivity had shown that the promotion of group cohesion was more often a matter of 'official' lip-service than everyday action. In turn, these occurrences gave rise to a variety of informal trainee concerns surrounding the authenticity of 'collective' club policy, which, despite repeated managerial claims to the contrary, caused privilege and favouritism to be placed high on the occupational agenda at Colby Town.

### Privilege and Favouritism: 'Golden Boys' and 'Being Loved'.

In terms of sociological research, issues of privilege and favouritism have long since been recognized as everyday features of working life within a variety of organizational settings (see Miller, 1969; Palm, 1977; Runcie, 1980; Salaman, 1986; Collinson, 1992a). Resultant observations suggest that such practices offer little in relation to the enhancement of group collectivity. Commenting on the findings of his own research, Miller (1969:307), for example, has outlined the way in which “overt friendly” relations between workers and foremen within the context of dockworker sub-culture had the potential to generate ill-feeling in and around the work-place. Discussing manager/worker relations within the London fire-brigade, Salaman (1986:52) too has stated how instances of kow-towing in the name of “careerism” caused existing levels of ‘watch’ solidarity to break down, stimulating instead feelings of jealousy and betrayal amongst work-mates.

Insofar as a small number of trainees at Colby Town were commonly identified by their peers as clear managerial ‘favourites’, similar traces of intra-group bitterness and resentment were never far from sight. The most common grounds upon which related accusations of favouritism were made (by both first and second year trainees) were those concerning the prestigious and reputable backgrounds of four key players (three from year 2 and one from year 1) all of whom, according to the majority of remaining trainees, received preferential treatment from coach Terry Jackson and Assistant Manager Len Drinkwater.

Commonly referred to as the 'Golden Boys', and/or the 'Loved Ones' of the trainee pack, these individuals, it was suggested, gained favour as a result of the fact that, prior to the commencement of their training at Colby, they had received national recognition for their footballing abilities, and had subsequently commanded a greater degree of attention and respect on arrival.

The three second year boys in question - Jimmy Briggs, Martin Walsh and Colin Jones - were those that had come to the club having completed the two-year Football Association scholarship programme at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre (cf. Lodge, 1984; Lovejoy, 1992; Shaw, 1993; Greenberg, 1995), two of whom - Briggs and Walsh - had also gone on to represent England at International 'Schoolboy' level. As for Adrian Thornton (the one first year trainee allegedly implicated within this 'favourite' clique), he too had represented England at under-16 level during his final year of schooling, but unlike his counterparts did not possess the added distinction of Lilleshall graduate.

All of which meant that inferences towards 'England' constituted a central theme within a pervasive trainee discourse surrounding favouritism. A point confirmed by second years Robin Hindle and Paul Turner.

Robin: I mean, they've got their favourites down 'ere an' that. I suppose if you're face fits, an' like you've had some relationship with England or some'at like that, you get 'loved' a bit, like. Y'know, they think, 'Oh he's played for England, he's gonna be a good player, or he's played for England now he's brilliant', y'know, give him all't attention. An' like, y'know, its all stupid really, we should all get treated't same, like they says (sic) like when I first came down here, "Oh you'll be treated't same, you'll all get same respect off me...".

Paul: There's a lot of favouritism. Well, a lot of its just England, 'cos the club get a lot of recognition for it.

AP: Do they. In what way?

Paul: Well, it, like, gets in the papers an' that, like, 'Three England lad's at Colby', an' y'know, people come to watch and they say, "Who's the England lads", an' stuff like this...It's wrong, 'cos it made me feel bad last year. I wasn't jealous of them at all, it just made me think, well, why should they get it. I mean its only because they're England, and a lot of the other lads just felt terrible. I mean we thought we were worthless compared to them. I mean, he shouldn't do it really, but, that's Terry...

Amongst the collection of stories permeating trainee circles as regards the conditions and rewards of favouritism, rumours suggested that those who were 'loved' were frequently consulted on matters concerning youth team selection as a consequence of their supposed advanced 'international' knowledge of the game, and that, in addition, these individuals were strategically allocated hierarchical positions of squad responsibility, (i.e. Team Captain, Vice-Captain and/or 'warm-up leader' in training). It was alleged also, that favourites received larger 'signing-on fees' from the club, and that, in the melee of daily activity, they "stuck together", passing only to each other within practice games and even during official youth team fixtures (see also Yaffe, 1974; Roadburg, 1978).

A number of boys inferred that 'favourites' also enjoyed specific occupational perks such as receiving more pairs of free boots than anyone else, being allowed home more readily when ill or injured, and escaping the highly degrading jobs in and around the ground. Pursuing the intricacies of

privilege further, I asked first year Nick Douglas, and second year Gareth Procter, about their experiences and perceptions of favouritism at Colby.

AP: Do you think there is favour?

Nick: At this club yeah. Whether it is with other clubs or not I'm not sure, but at this club there's a lot of favouritism. If you've been at Lilleshall, if you've played for England...I think you've got a better chance of getting in the team or being his [Terry Jackson's] favourite person, 'cos you'll find that...those that have been at Lilleshall and played for England, they're all in the team, and they're all the Captains. Both England players are Captains in first and second years...and that's favouritism I think.

Gareth: There's some'ot lads who he'll get to do all't shitty jobs an' that, an' some'ot lads its, "Oh ger'off 'ome, an' you can 'ave an extra day at 'ome", an' stuff like that. Which is, it's not rey't good for't lads, 'cos if one lad's gonna do one thing, you're gonna want same aren't ya', or there's gonna be a bit'o trouble between't lads. But like lads have got used to him doin' it now...he did it all last year so he's bound to do it this year again. He shouldn't really, we should all be tre't same. Its like they gi'yer all this, "Oh there's nob'dy better than any't t'others", like he gives yer all that rubbish, an' then he treats some people better than others.

From my own observations it soon became apparent that a distinction was evident between the way in which Terry Jackson addressed certain squad members as opposed to others. During my initial club visits, for example, I noted how Jimmy Briggs and Colin Jones were often singled out by Jackson to accompany him during daily walks to and from the training ground, and for social chats in the main club corridor whilst trainees awaited their cue for entry into the Matchroom Restaurant at lunch-times.

Many boys joked that these individuals were the only ones naive enough to occupy such an associative role, given Jackson's purported inability to

discuss anything more stimulating than football. Further investigations suggested, however, that such practices were not insignificant in terms of the enhancement of trainee/coach links. For whilst exploring the whole issue of how one might become a 'favourite' at Colby, the social intricacies of the Briggs/Jones/Jackson relationship surfaced as a matter of considerable importance, particularly for other second years.

AP:           How do you become a favourite?

Damien:    I don't know you, just lick his arse. You've got to stand at the top of the corridor before training an' things like that, talkin' to him all the time. Y'see, I cannat talk to him, I don't like talkin' to him, I don't know what to say to him.

Paul:        I mean a lot of the time they all stand at the top of the corridor just talking, I don't know why, I don't even think Terry's funny me...I can't understand it...like they're at the top of the corridor everyday...everyone's always saying, "Oh the bloody Lilleshall lads", an' stuff like this...but it doesn't really bother me much.

Gary:        He's got his favourites. He's got certain people that he likes...Like Jimmy an' that, like, he's one of his favourites. If he thinks someone's got half their own mind and won't just follow him and do what he says without saying anything back...even if he knows he's wrong, he doesn't like it at all. 'Cos I'm not the sort of person who'll just shut-up and do everything he says. I mean if I think he's wrong I'll tell him he's wrong, and he doesn't like it. So he doesn't get on with people who speak their mind to him, if you know what I mean.

Amidst these comments there are signs of intra-group resentment and jealousy, but also apparent are issues of conformity and mutual appreciation. In fact what these quotations show is that as far as some trainees were concerned, favouritism was not just a one-way process of



individual sponsorship and investment on the part of Terry Jackson. Rather, in the case of both Briggs and Jones, privilege, it seemed, was constructed around an altogether more calculated relational strategy of social symbiosis, which in promoting some kind of close working friendship, served to further enhance the occupational position of these two boys in terms of institutional acceptance.

More revelations followed, especially regarding the specificities of the Briggs/Jackson dyad. According to trainees this relationship acquired greater resonance as a result, not only of Briggs's footballing background, but also because of his familial ties within the game and the relatively unfounded professional pedigree of his coach. Of particular importance here was Terry Jackson's alleged inexperience and lack of knowledge as regards full-time professional coaching. That in the space of five years Jackson had emerged from the obscurity of non-league management to his present position without any experience of the professional game as a player, led many boys to question his overall ability to judge individual talent at the professional level. Compounding these concerns was the fact that Briggs' father was himself an ex-professional player, and, over the fieldwork period, an Assistant Manager at Endsleigh League level. Such circumstances meant that many trainees continually debated whether or not, in the face of repeated adversity, Jackson would in fact have the courage to deny Briggs the opportunity to succeed at Colby. After all, who was he to contest the ability and potential of his senior Captain, given the sporting 'stock' from which he came?

Whilst there was an underlying feeling amongst trainees that Briggs was a valuable member of the youth team squad and one worthy of his leadership responsibilities, much discontent prevailed as to the overall extent of his privilege. This was not helped by the extended periods of home-leave which he was granted at times of injury, nor by the way in which Jackson regularly contacted him by phone at the trainee hostel during weekday afternoons or evenings to discuss team affairs.

Curious to find out if Briggs himself was aware of trainee conjecture towards his position, I asked him whether or not he felt comfortable as a part of the wider youth team group particularly in relation to his capacity as overall squad Captain.

Jimmy: Now and again they give me stick, but...peoples' always gonna give you stick behind your back, whatever, ain't they, even your mates give you stick now and again, y'know what I mean.

AP: But, like, it must be hard being 'Skipper' [Captain] in that respect?

Jimmy: Oh yeah its hard 'cos you get a lot of stick an' that, but you just get through it don't ya', that's the sort of person I am...it ain't gonna bother me...I just get on with mi' job and that's it, that's probably why, y'know, I've done so well, 'cos I just get on with mi' job, y'know what I mean, I'm not bothered. But if someone says something to me I just let it pass, I wouldn't like, start back at him...

AP: I mean, you seem to have a good relationship with Terry.

Jimmy: Its 'cos I've been brought up football, football. Like, when I go home my Dad's in football an' all we talk about is football... Like, Terry just always talks to me about football 'cos I've been brought up with it an' I'm quite well-off in know-how. I've got quite a good

football brain, y'know what I mean, stuff like that. I can talk about football like Jonah [Colin Jones] can, that's why he [Terry] gets on with both of us...I just get on with him...you've got to ain't ya', you don't want to fall out with anyone, 'cos in the end he's the one that's gonna say whether you're gonna get a contract.

There can be little doubt that Jimmy Briggs was genuine in his keen and steadfast pursuit of professional player status. By his own admission, however, he was additionally adept at purposefully presenting a much sought after institutional persona which served to further promote his career aims. In this sense, Briggs readily detached himself from over-riding club concerns towards team solidarity and by means of impression management pursued instead what Feldman and Klich (1991:68) have termed a self-centered "careerist orientation to work". These daily 'performances' (cf. Goffman, 1959) clearly enhanced manager/worker relations. Jackson, it seemed, basqued in the reflected glory of his Captain's occupational attitude. Displaying the idealized features of trainee identity (i.e. individual integrity, physical ability, dedication and psychological maturity), Briggs personified the epitome of club desire as regards the fulfilment of 'professional' values, necessarily increasing levels of relational intimacy between himself and his coach by living out everything that Jackson advocated and stood for (see also Kanter, 1977).

Having said that it is pertinent to point out that such practices were not unique to Briggs. In reality such 'careerist' orientations to work were much more widely adopted within trainee circles. Although many individuals explicitly espoused their commitment to cohesive club practice, implicitly a general trend prevailed whereby a number of trainees regularly prioritized

their own career needs over and above those of others, and those of the youth team squad as a whole. The most obvious example of this was the way in which some boys denied injury in order to remain eligible for youth team selection, knowing only too well that they would be incapable of performing to their maximum potential. It was common also for squad members to play or train-on through injury and pain thereby preserving their position in the next “starting line-up”, and generating increased favour in terms of managerial preference.

Such notions of individuality again provided stark contrast to the collective tenor of club rhetoric. But at the same time they offered insight into a fundamental flaw surrounding the adoption of solidarity as a key principle within trainee life. Experiences of schoolboy football and YT selection had taught trainees that, in reality, being a good ‘team player’ and showing consideration for the welfare of others were relatively unprofitable ventures in terms of occupational success. More important was the cultivation of a keen sense of self-preservation and individuality, which, when coupled with a subtle but ruthless physical and emotional disregard for oneself and one’s team-mates, seemingly facilitated greater levels of official respect.

#### Distinguishing Divisions: ‘Favourites’, ‘Grafters’ and ‘Victims’

Insofar as individualism and self-preservation were recognised as necessary occupational commodities by a number of trainees at Colby, Jimmy Briggs was not alone in his instrumental pursuit of personal success. His more advanced liaisons with Terry Jackson did, however, render him isolated in terms of the wider trainee group. Even amongst other favourites Briggs was

the exception and not the rule as regards trainee/coach relations. Despite rumours to the contrary, neither Colin Jones, Martin Walsh, nor Adrian Thornton (the three other key squad 'favourites') appeared to gain any real advantage in and around the work-place as a result of their backgrounds or reputations, save the fact that Jackson often addressed them in a more amicable manner than he did some of their peers.

Thus, favouritism was not a straightforward issue. It involved varying degrees of privilege and fortune. Clique membership was flexible, in that whilst the position of established favourites generally remained intact, from time to time others emerged on the periphery of this privileged group to stake their claim to permanent inclusion.

Crucial to such claims were matters of footballing ability and consistency, particularly within the context of youth team games. Trainees who repeatedly produced reliable and disciplined weekly performances, for example, gradually came to command automatic youth team selection, thereby stimulating a barrage of subsequent criticism as to their potential as 'favourites' alongside those already occupying this envied position. In many respects these comments were misleading in that because individual levels of confidence and performance were so prone to fluctuation, players constantly risked falling in and out of 'favour', thus, never seriously contending permanent clique status. During the course of the fieldwork period however, there were a small group of boys who, as a direct result of their improvement throughout the 1993/94 season, did gain greater levels of attention and partiality from Terry Jackson. Amidst a spate of league

success in front of goal, Paul Turner was one such trainee who found himself in this somewhat unfamiliar 'peripheral' situation.

Paul: In a way I get cussed (sic) off the lads 'cos they say I'm one of his [Terry's] 'favourites', but I don't go licking up to him like some of 'em do.

AP: But why do people think you're a favourite if you're not 'England'?

Paul: I don't no. He likes Robin as well, an' he's not an England boy. But with me I think its just the last couple of weeks really, 'cos, I mean, I've been scoring a few, and for the last couple of weeks in training he's been saying, "Well done", an' all that, an' I've had some stick off the lads...

Whilst the ups and downs of trainee performance necessarily meant that the category of 'potential'/'peripheral' favourite remained fluid, two other player sub-groups were also identifiable which were less susceptible to change and less favourably regarded in terms of manager/worker relations. The first constituted a number of individuals who were commonly referred to as "grafters" or "solid" players. Fulfilling a relatively inconspicuous occupational role, these boys were noticeable only by the fact that they were regarded by both colleagues and officials as players who 'kept their heads down', 'battled away' and 'just got on with the job in hand'. In addition, a small minority of trainees existed who engendered a rather more negative managerial outlook. Described by their peers as Terry Jackson's "victims", or those who he plainly "disliked", this faction gained much collective support as a consequence of their alienation within everyday working life, particularly as a result of the way in which their apparent exploitation was generally regarded as somewhat undeserved and no fault of their own.

The hostile managerial inferences involved here were commonly identified as being directed at three boys in particular - Gareth Procter and Damien Blackwell of year two, and Steven Williamson of year one - all of whom, it was claimed, Jackson "did not rate" in terms of overall footballing "ability and attitude". At the outset of my research the most obvious manifestations of such discriminatory treatment concerned the way in which Williamson was repeatedly isolated from the rest of the group during pre-season training sessions, being sent on long distance runs for making minor mistakes in small sided games or being left out of team activity on account of his alleged lack of fitness. As the season progressed, the plight of second years Gareth Procter and Damien Blackwell became more obvious. Having witnessed the uncomfortable nature of their occupational position at first hand as regards Jackson's derogatory attitude towards them (see chapter three), I asked Gareth Procter to elaborate more fully on the personal complexities of his own situation.

Gareth:     Thing is, he's rey't two-faced. He's all rey't wi' yer one minute, an' then't next minute he's gerrin' on at yer for no'wt, or 'avin a go at yer like, an' tryin' to mek' ya look daft in front o't lads... Like he'll pick on't smallest stupid thing to 'ave a go at ya'. If he doesn't like ya thar'is...

AP:           Why do you think he doesn't like you?

Gareth:     I've been telled (sic) stuff thar' he don't like mi. Like all't lads know thar' he don't like me an' that, an' other people 'ave said, "Oh he could be like try'in to like gee-you-up... try'in to get you goin an' that". But ya never know, he's rey't two-faced. One minute he's like rey't as rain wi' yer, an't next minute he's talkin' about yer behind yer back an' stuff.

Concern amongst the trainee populace specifically surrounded the methods of public chastisement employed by Jackson towards these individuals. Subtle indications of Jackson's feelings were also made apparent during training sessions and youth team games, where, when selected, Procter, Blackwell and Williamson not only attracted more verbal criticism than their peers, but received a much less enthusiastic response from their coach in relation to overall levels of work-rate and skill. Damien Blackwell was quick to offer his thoughts on such occurrences, as was Tony Chadwick, who, as the season progressed, pondered ever more frequently his own position as regards being "disliked".

Damien: I don't think he really has a like'in to, like, mi'self for some reason or other...because like each time I play he seems to be on mi' back all the time... Like if I do somethin' good, he still doesn't say owt to us, y'na, an' like there's other lads who's like gerrin tackled all the time, an' cannat beat their man, an' y'na, an' not doin' the right things, an' cannat pass the ball, an' like he just turns a blind-eye an' doesn't say anythin'...

Tony: He does, like, show an interest in you, but he doesn't seem as enthusiastic about your work and about your training as he does them [favourites]...Its 'them who play well get praised' and when they train bad, if its somebody who's not one ot' favourites, you get slaughtered, whereas if its somebody who's 'liked' [its], "Oh, unlucky, try and do this next time",...whereas if you're one ot' ones he's not bothered about its, "Go on, piss-off, go and do some runnin'."

In fact so deep-seated were feelings of frustration and resentment amongst several boys as to the way in which Jackson treated them, that some seriously contemplated leaving the club before the end of their YT period. Epitomising this dejected and somewhat helpless stance, Tony Chadwick



went on to share how his attitude towards the overall structure of youth policy at Colby had changed drastically since his arrival.

Tony: I didn't think that at a club like this, or at any other club, that they'd have people who'd be, y'know, they're favourites, or have favouritism. I don't think its right. And it all comes down to like whether you're a favourite or not, because you don't know how to become a favourite, you're either liked or you're not...I can't believe that there's so much 'bentness' in it. Y'know, you wouldn't imagine it. You think, well, professional people, in professional jobs, and they've still got favourites. But when it comes down to that it should be out of window, it should be straight, who's playin' well and who's not. But it don't go down like that...I know you're gonna get favourites in any job, but not in football 'cos its not a thing you can do, 'cos if you're not a good player, you should'nt be mek'in it.

In terms of the way in which trainees adopted and accepted 'togetherness' as the underlying ethos of day-to-day life, such instances of discrimination and differentiation served a broadly destructive purpose. For some, these conditions proved beneficial, in which case the individuals concerned rarely acknowledged the existence of favouritism let alone its physical and verbal consequences. For others, favouritism was a prominent part of daily conversation simply because of the way in which it structured the events of working life and encroached upon their general levels of confidence and self-esteem.

But the divisive effects of these differential trainee/coach relations could not be held solely responsible for the integrative flaws evident amongst the youth team squad as a whole. Accompanying such overt forms of inequality were matters much more fundamental to trainee identity than managerial approval. The greater experience of second years over their minors was one such concern which caused issues of trainee authority and status to be

contested on a regular basis. Thus surfaced the existence of a divisive inter-year-group rift which, in disrupting the relational balance of daily life, posed a further threat to institutional notions of 'togetherness'.

#### Lateral Antagonisms: The First v Second Year Split

Whilst the relational tensions and differences between year groups one and two at Colby were not solely evident in and around the work-place (see for example chapter six), it was here that interactive struggle reached its heights, with issues of occupational privilege representing a permanent site of intra-group antagonism, and more complex concerns regarding notions of 'job' allocation, youth team selection and professional progression additionally stimulating instances of squad grievance.

As I have outlined in chapter two, the allocation and fulfillment of 'jobs' at the club was largely dependent upon trainee age and status. An imbalance in domestic responsibilities existed whereby on completion of their initial year trainees were automatically granted a degree of exclusion and reprieve from menial chores. Offering a direct contradiction to the collective and egalitarian aims of youth policy, these arrangements inevitably caused friction to develop between respective year group members.

Specifically problematic for first years was the way in which their elders were often allowed to spend time socializing and relaxing both in and out of club confines whilst they were made to carry out daily duties. Symbolically inferring some kind of authoritative superiority for members of year two, such occupational conditions perhaps not surprisingly engendered feelings

of animosity amongst first years. Sensing this, I asked a selection of trainees from year one as to whether or not they thought some kind of psychological rift did actually exist between members of the youth team squad as a whole.

AP: Do you feel like there is a big gap between first and second years?

Steven: In a way. A lot of things that we do, we tend to do it in first and second years. I think that's carried round from't club - I think Terry splits us up too much.

Pete: Yeah, there's definitely that there. They've [second years] been down here a year already, and a lot of 'em have played a lot last season...They're not showin' off an' that, but in the way they act an' that, compared to the first years, they just seem to be different characters...

Adrian: I suppose the second years think that they've got a right to think that they're better than us, 'cos they've been here a year longer than us, and 'cos they're a year older. They look down to (sic) us I think, or certain ones do anyway.

Billing Hall, the Colby Town training ground, was also a significant arena for the physical manifestation of this lateral divide. Carrying equipment such as marker cones, footballs, and training bibs to and from this site was a daily first year chore, as was the distribution and collection of these resources during and after training. Differentiated training patterns for years one and two proved equally problematic. First years were often required to train for longer periods than their second year counterparts in order to make up for their lack of youth team appearances, and to bring them into line with desired levels of squad fitness.

Added to the fact that the afternoon completion of 'jobs' severely reduced the amount of free-time available to them, such occurrences meant that first year trainees frequently featured as the butt of second year jokes regarding their lowly institutional status and tight working schedules. Appearing relatively harmless, these jibes took a largely unsympathetic tone, being spoken more out of bitter personal memory than malicious intent. But such activity did not stop there. First year testimony confirmed that this superior, and somewhat hierarchical second year attitude occasionally transcended the bounds of work-related humour, and surfaced more readily within the realms of physical and verbal intimidation.

Steven: There's been a few grudges, like people goin' for others in trainin' an' that. Like, there's been a couple o' stupid challenges that didn't need to 'appen. I mean, I don't know if its just me, but I'd say that there's a bit o' nobblin'. I mean, I don't know if there's any truth in it, but sometimes I just get the feelin' that there's some stupid challenges goin' in, in trainin'...

AP: What on you?

Steven: Not on me, just watchin'...I mean Robin's one o' those who guz in for a few daft challenges an' that I suppose...I mean mainly its second years that go in...Its like second years are tryin' to prove that they're better than you in a way, so they can ger'int side wi' it bein' their important year. Its probably like it every year.

Offering some kind of justification towards this more forceful second year scenario, Tony Chadwick commented upon the way in which the claustrophobic nature of trainee existence necessarily led to the occurrence of such events.

Tony: You're seein't same people everyday and you're like, instead of like bein' friends, you're like brothers,

you're like livin' with'em all't time an'...it causes a bit o' friction and it rubs off then in trainin'. You have a bit o' needle, y'know what I mean, just little things to start off wi' that get you goin' then it just carries on in your mind, and it just keeps buggin' ya' an' annoyin' ya', an' - it does ya' no good for ya' game.

Commensurate with the indications of Steven Williamson, on continuing my enquiries into the motives behind such conflict, it transpired that central to these actions were issues surrounding second year 'proof' of footballing ability and 'rites' of youth team selection. The importance of the second trainee year, it seemed, and the urgency with which individuals felt they had to make their mark as potential professionals, weighed heavily in the minds of older trainees. They knew that irrespective of what had gone before them, a consistent and positive occupational display at this stage of their careers would dramatically increase their chances of securing a professional contract.

Individuals posing any kind of threat to this overall process had to be dealt with in some way. Because first years were the most likely people to provide this threat, particularly in terms of competition for youth team places, it was they who suffered the consequences of second year insecurity. To this end, the general authoritative attitude which many members of year two imposed upon their minors was not only a measure of work-place humour and intimidation but part of a more dominating occupational strategy aimed at preserving second year rites of status and privilege.

Aside from these physical aspects of second year supremacy, other methods of interactive behaviour further reinforced this protective work-place ethos. Alternative strategies involved the verbal chastisement of first years in

relation to their enthusiastic and insatiable attitudes to work. Frequently apparent within the day-to-day routines of training, a common ploy here was for second years to constrain first year activity via verbal threat or ridicule, thereby bolstering inflated management perceptions of their skill, fitness and ability levels.

At training...I get sent to work with Charlie and Gary, [the first and second year goalkeepers], as I am a "spare man". Charlie wanted some close volleys [close range shooting practice], but Gary complained about his keenness to train and improve. It seemed a shame that Charlie's eagerness was stifled and that his desire to improve was being denied. Although obviously aggrieved he was powerless to do anything, and despite the fact that an argument looked certain early on, he did eventually back down, as Terry [Jackson] came over to see what we were up to.

(Fieldnotes, 03.12.93).

This morning Adrian [Thornton, first year Captain] was doing some sit-ups in the weight-room and Martin [Walsh, second year] came in with repeated derogatory shouts of "busy bastard", telling other second years of Adrian's futile attempts to "look good in front of Terry". Later, at the training ground, after a couple of runs in the sprints, the second years tell me and the rest of the first years not to go too fast, so as not to make them "look bad". Then they get "pulled" [berated by Terry] for it anyway, for not going "full-out" [sprinting at full pace]. We all do extra.

(Fieldnotes, 04.02.94).

It must be acknowledged that during the early months of the season in particular many first years were keen to impress upon Terry Jackson their commitment to Colby and to their professional progression within the game. As a consequence, their enthusiasm did, on occasion, far outweigh that of their elders. For second year boys hoping to achieve a more permanent professional position by way of less energetic means, these enthusiastic

endeavours proved extremely disconcerting. A point made clear by the way in which 'offending' first years were immediately castigated for their attempts to stand out.

Adrian: When we first came down [here], everyone was trying, and then in the middle of it all people would say, "Slow down, you're going to fast, let's all just go at one pace". And I was talking to Davey about this and he was saying, y'know, we're only going at the slowest ones pace then, and its not doing us any good. It did surprise me because it didn't seem to be professional or anything, Y'know, "Put your hands on your hips and look tired"...You get some stick. I mean I get stick 'cos they say I'm 'busy' and everything and I do a lot of running, and I do a lot of wasted running, and I don't know if they mean it, they probably do. But I feel as though if I work harder up-front, I feel as though I've had a better game...I don't know why I'm doing any harm by doing that. A lot of the second years have a moan at me about that, but in a way I take it as a compliment.

Charlie: It does annoy me sometimes. Y'know, I think, if I'm gonna do this I want to do the thing properly, otherwise there's no point doing it. You know which one's are going to say it. Its people like Damien, an' that. The way they'll do it is that they'll say, "Slow down", and then they'll keep the same speed so they look as if they're winning. That's the way they are, selfish...

These strategies of occupational restraint should not be regarded as unique to footballing life at Colby Town (see for example Davies, 1972; Gowling, 1974; Roadburg, 1978). Nor should their employment be viewed solely in terms of inter-year-group antagonism. Like those instances of 'output restriction' observed within wider industrial arenas (see for example Roy, 1952, 1954; Miller, 1969; Beynon, 1975; Ditton, 1976; Burawoy, 1979; Riemer, 1979; Linstead, 1985; Collinson, 1992a), such methods of worker regulation were also utilized as a means by which collective resistance could

be expressed towards management control of the labour process as a whole, particularly with regard to the daily demands of Terry Jackson. When second years lacked the energy and drive to partake fully in training, 'go slows' and 'time-wasting' tactics were frequently administered in order to adjust the pace of training-ground activity. Such practices were helped by the fact that Terry Jackson did not participate in group exercise or the enactment of tactical routines. Hence, as the physical distance between squad members and their coach increased, so too did the verbal policing of set tasks.

In this sense, output restriction at Colby was not just a matter of intimidation as regards the protection of second year status, it was an issue of collective group loyalty. However, because this more general feature of work-place constraint was governed by second year desire, it merely served to reinforce the overall domination and authoritative stance of senior trainees, emphasizing further the disintegrative nature of club life. Although over time, first years correspondingly employed these regulatory training habits of their own free-will, they rarely administered them in the company of second years, on account of the intense disregard with which such actions might be met.

As if these cumulative measures of interactional domination were not enough to provide second years with the security they needed in relation to fears of status erosion, youth team selection also surfaced as a critical area of trainee conflict. Central here was that as a consequence of injury, or in order to stimulate a range of older trainees to improve their individual



levels of performance, Terry Jackson regularly included a number of younger trainees amongst his weekend squad members.

Team inclusion was viewed as a significant career breakthrough for first years, providing the opportunity to impress coaching staff at an early stage, and the chance to claim increased levels of peer group respect. But there were drawbacks. Whilst a selection of first years were regarded by Jackson as well capable of regular youth team selection, second years saw their involvement as yet another form of occupational threat, thus, finding it hard to engender approval.

Adrian: I think sometimes when some of the first years get in the side, you feel intimidated by some of the second years, when you're playing, 'cos you don't want to do anything wrong, and afterwards you think that they'll think that you're crap an' everything, and that you shouldn't be in the team, and I think that puts you down. And it puts you off when you're suddenly put in there. It did with me to begin with. I felt like that when I'd had a bad game or something, and then Terry put me in for the next game - I felt they'd be saying he shouldn't put me in. And you're confidence drops when you think they'd be saying that..

Pete: You can feel, y'know, that they think that you shouldn't be there, and that one or two of their mates should be there. But its just like all't second years stickin' together. Its like sayin' y'know, only us second years should be playin. Its like every position, people are fighting for it, and first years will say, "Well I think he should be in", and second years will say, "Well second years are more experienced and better players"...

Ultimately, what these quotations confirm is that within a range of trainee activity at Colby significant flaws did exist in and around the whole ethos of youth team 'togetherness'. What these revelations do not allow us to judge, however, is the position of Terry Jackson amidst this catalogue of

antagonism. What, we might ask, were Jackson's overall perceptions of group solidarity? Was he aware of the depth of inter-year group division, or were notions of collectivity purely academic for him?

Certainly, as regards the intimidatory habits of second years Jackson, it seemed, was somewhat naive. Trainees did acknowledge that he was aware of 'output restriction' to some degree, hence, his occasional reprimands in training concerning the general pace of activity. But comments here did not show any sign of a recognition towards issues of first year peer group subordination. Similarly, in terms of second year strategies of intimidation, the consensus amongst first year trainees was that Jackson had no idea of the politics of youth team inclusion either - a position they were reluctant to correct on account of the negative impact which they felt their observations may have on their careers.

So what was Terry Jackson's view of group integration amongst his youth team squad? During the final stages of the fieldwork I put some of these issues to him, enquiring initially about the justificatory reasons behind methods of occupational discrimination between year groups.

AP:           About the first and second years with the jobs thing.  
Do you think its fair that one lot have a load of jobs  
and the other's don't?

Terry:       When I first came to the club, all youth team players  
did the jobs at the club. That means we had 18/19  
players doing the jobs. First of all they used to get in  
each others way, and secondly, as a second year, I  
don't think you should have to do jobs, having been at  
the club initially for a year. So what I did, I said that  
all the first years will do the jobs, the cleaning-up  
jobs, and that the second years would continue to do  
kits and their own boots, and players boots, but they  
won't actually do cleaning jobs. 'Cos in the second

year, its a year that's important football wise...so I don't think they need to be doing jobs to distract them from what they're here for in the first instance, which is to play football and be footballers. So in the second year, my lads don't do any jobs at all.

Silenced somewhat by the way in which these clear objectives contradicted Jackson's own views on the development of collectivity and mutual dependence, I explored instead the possible notion of a first/second year split within the work-place.

AP: Do you think there's a first and second year split, where the first years hang around together, and second years do things...

Terry: When you've worked with somebody for a year, and then another group come in... you tend to stick with the lads who you've known for the year... There's no such split. I would never let anything like that occur. People tend to go out with other lads a little bit, but its never a 'them and us' situation, 'cos I would never let it get to that situation.

Although not explicit, the rather defensive manner within which Jackson chose to frame his answer, did appear to point to the fact that we may have been discussing a sensitive issue here. Furthermore, by this time, Jackson, it seemed, had recognised that comments regarding the divisive pattern of trainee life had surfaced during my interviews with youth team members. But such forceful denials of trainee evidence, and contradictions of personal rhetoric, were not isolated to matters of group integration. Additionally, Jackson's general attitude towards issues of favouritism and individual privilege held further contraventions of equality, and similarly dubious disclaimers towards trainee testimonies.

AP: Inevitably, do you find that you get on with some lads better than others?

Terry: Its like kids. You have kids and they're as different as chalk and cheese. These lads are no different to anybody else, they have different personalities, different make-ups, different ways you've got to treat them. I don't dislike or like any more than anybody else, but what you find is that you get lads who are more responsible and who can do jobs a little bit better, and they've been used to doing things so you tend to give them the things to do, and say, "Well look, this is how we want it doing, now you do it". But at the end of the day they're all given the same opportunities, but they are individuals so you have to treat them as individuals to a certain degree.

Interesting here is the way in which Jackson himself raises notions of his personal 'likes' and 'dislikes' towards trainees. Moreover, justification is also provided for the increased responsibility given to those boys emanating from a Lilleshall background. In this respect, what Jackson postulates is that because whilst completing the FA scholarship programme young hopefuls are expected to carry out similar daily chores to those constituting 'jobs' at the professional level, such individuals were, in his opinion, more qualified to accommodate leadership positions on entry into the Colby Town environment.

But what did all this mean in terms of everyday practice at Colby? Clearly, inconsistency was apparent between Jackson's verbal espousals and physical actions. To suggest that this mismatch was grossly pre-determined would be somewhat harsh. Neither can we assume the neutrality or authenticity of trainee comment regarding favouritism, particularly when one considers the intensely competitive nature of the youth team environment and the potential therein for feelings of jealousy and animosity to breed. What we

can be sure of, however, is that as Jackson admitted, he did hold some boys in higher regard than others. Then again, whether this was as a consequence of their footballing backgrounds or simply a matter of ability and potential, remains open to debate.

## Conclusion

Whilst amidst the rhetoric of youth team life at Colby group cohesion, team spirit and ‘togetherness’ were central to the routines of trainee behaviour, in practice such ideological values were not stringently upheld. Having outlined the ‘official’ grounds upon which ‘togetherness’ was based, this chapter has explored how everyday events within the club served to highlight inconsistencies within this overall process. I have argued, for example, that issues of managerial favouritism featured large in the daily experiences of trainees and that the manifestations of these practices presented clear differences in the work-place conditions of particular individuals. In turn, I have addressed other relational tensions including those of inter-year group control and intimidation, illustrating by way of respondent opinion, how interactional mechanisms of self-preservation effected individual and collective perceptions of work, whilst at the same time representing traditional aspects of collective work-force resistance.

Such data do provide a basic outline of the framework around which actual working life was structured at Colby. They offer little, however, in terms of the way in which group cohesion and interaction were located within broader aspects of trainee life. In this sense, they fail to indicate whether or not the diverse social and educational activities of trainees served to

fragment or bolster collective club policy (given the ‘outside’ influences which individuals encountered within these contexts), or, indeed, the extent to which trainees managed to reconcile and negotiate cohesive group norms in terms of identity construction and masculine development in and around alternative lifestyle locales. How, we might ask, did trainee relationships differ amidst the social ‘freedoms’ of institutional respite? How did year group members co-ordinate and organize leisure-time pursuits? Moreover, how did Colby officials facilitate and monitor trainee socialization in terms of squad movement outside club environs? In order to examine these matters further, it is to a closer inspection of trainee life outside work that I now turn, beginning in chapter five with a look at issues concerning trainee educational provision.

## Notes

- [1] For insight into issues of group cohesion within non-military working environments see Salaman (1986).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Getting An Education: Imperative Investment or 'Just a Day-Off'?

The club, like all modern clubs, likes to think that their sixteen - and seventeen-year-olds - are still pursuing their education, following some other form of training, acquiring a useful qualification or skill to fit them for the big wide world outside the hothouse they call football. They don't like being accused of ruining young lives, even though they know that most of the seventeen-year-olds will end up on the streets, out on their arses, their hopes of a life in football gone forever. But you don't think like that, not at seventeen. How can you get up the motivation for another life when since the age of ten, football is all you've ever wanted to do? And now you are doing it.

(Davies, 1992:88).

Retirement is a time nearly all footballers dread. Many put it to the back of their minds in the hope that it may never happen, and as a result are totally unprepared for life after football. Most players have only ever known the world of football and are largely ill equipped for a job outside it. Footballers do not need any academic qualifications and as a result many neglect their studies at school. They are committed to a career in football and never contemplate the possibility of failure.

(Chapman, 1993:178).

Whilst instances of authoritarianism, collective loyalty and individual favouritism do not set football apart from a range of alternative work-place contexts, one of the things that often clearly distinguishes life within the professional game from other more conventional types of work is that age invariably determines career length. Accommodating high rates of labour wastage and the ever-present threat of physical injury, on average football offers its more successful employees a prospective playing career of around



10-15 years, with the accompanying likelihood of 'early retirement' before the age of 35 (Houlston, 1984; Puvanendran, 1988). What this means is that alongside notions of fame, fortune and super-stardom, footballs' young hopefuls must seriously consider the wider occupational options open to them, preparing not only for the possibility of rejection and failure, but for the ultimate conditions and consequences of life outside their chosen profession.

In this chapter I look at how such preparation took place within the lives of Colby trainees. I present an analysis of the educational and vocational activities which they undertook on a weekly basis during the 1993/94 season and highlight their attitudes towards academic achievement in general. Because the majority of my observations within this area of trainee life were carried out with first year boys, they feature most prominently here. Some facets of second year educational/vocational pursuit are considered, however, thereby allowing a more general overview of trainee post-career preparation to be presented.

### Professional Football and Post-Career Preparation

Professional football apprenticeship has traditionally been criticized for its unstructured and non-standardized format. Of particular concern for many over a number of years has been the extent to which governing body provision has failed to meet the educational and vocational needs of young players. High rates of occupational 'drop-out' have meant that the Football Association (FA), the Football League (FL) and the Professional Footballers Association (PFA) have received on-going criticism for allegedly neglecting

issues of alternative career training on behalf of both professional and trainee players (see PEP, 1966; DES, 1968; CIR, 1974). The popularity of the game itself has spawned further problems, in that the cultural kudos attached to professional football as a career has often led young recruits to accept notions of sporting grandeur over and above less attractive and more probable career outcomes. In this sense, too many talented young players, it seems, have automatically assumed overwhelming success to be their inevitable footballing fate and, in choosing to negate the educational/vocational opportunities on offer to them, have succumbed to the harsh realities of enforced 'early retirement' (Gowling, 1974; Houlston, 1982, 1984, 1987; Icke 1983; Harrison, 1994).

As a consequence of these factors, during the early 1970s the Football League (FL) and the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) took it upon themselves to improve educational and vocational provision for both trainee and professional players and to raise the profile of post-career planning within the game as a whole (see chapter one). Since that time, the alternative occupational/career strategies and opportunities on offer to footballers have increased. No longer, for example, are those leaving the game necessarily condemned to the stereotypical expectancies of side-street newsagent or pub landlord (Dougan and Young, 1974; Chapman, 1993). Neither, as in previous years, are programmes of trainee education now left purely to chance, or organized solely around a framework of personal choice and/or parental insistence. Instead, through the establishment of the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society (FFE & VTS), the PFA have ensured that post-career educational/vocational preparation

has not only become a compulsory element of football trainee life, but a heavily subsidized (if optional) feature of professional player status.

These advancements are encouraging. But there remains some cause for concern as regards the overall welfare of young players, particularly when one considers that these changes have little to offer in terms of the structural dynamics and contractual insecurities which necessarily impinge upon footballing careers. Given these circumstances, what, might we ask, do more recent PFA initiatives hold out for Youth Trainees as regards the practicalities of long-term career planning? What are young player experiences of post-career training and vocational guidance within the game? How do these prepare and inform individuals in relation to life outside professional football? Moreover, how seriously is such preparation taken and pursued by trainees, or indeed, by the clubs themselves?

#### Professional Football and YT Policy

The educational and vocational obligations now attached to traineeship within professional football exist as a consequence of PFA/FFE & VTS implementation of YT policy in 1983. The educational provision made available through day-release courses (usually the Thursday of each week throughout the footballing season) is delivered via a national network of Further Education colleges and is stringently geared towards occupational preparation for the Recreation and Leisure industries. Respective day-release options are organized around a loosely differentiated system of certification, whereby trainees are categorized and selected according to their school GCSE achievements, and advised by either club and/or college staff as to

which programmes of study would best suit them (FFE & VTS, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c).

Broadly speaking, trainees gaining four GCSE passes at grade C or above (including English) are encouraged to pursue what the FFE & VTS (1993b:iii) term a “more academic” educational route, entailing the completion of a BTEC National Certificate (or G/NVQ level 3) in Leisure and Tourism or Business and Finance. For those with “vocational” leanings, who fail to attain such scholastic standards, a City and Guilds (C&G) Certificate (incorporating NVQ levels 1 and 2) in Leisure and Tourism/Sport and Recreation is recommended. Trainees wishing to pursue the BTEC option who have failed to attain appropriate GCSE grades, but who possess a favourable educational record, may be considered for BTEC course entry on negotiation with college staff. For the more academically ambitious and able (i.e. those having acquired GCSE Grade A or B in 5 or more subjects) the completion of ‘A’ Levels is also a viable option.

With the benefit of hindsight, the FFE & VTS offer some guidance with regard to ‘A’ Level study. In their Educational and Vocational Advice for Trainees and Parents or Guardians, the Society remind trainees that in order to make themselves eligible for university entrance three subjects must be followed to ‘A’ Level standard - warning, in turn, that such academic commitments may conflict strongly with a “...full time ‘job’ in a very competitive industry” (FFE & VTS, 1993b:2). Unlike BTEC and City and Guilds courses, which are predictably time-tabled on specific day each week so as to accommodate broader footballing needs (i.e. the fulfilment of coaching, training, fixtures etc.), the pursuit of ‘A’ levels, the FFE & VTS

proceed to point out, often necessitates class attendance on an 'in-fill' or part-time basis - arrangements which have the potential to place trainees under added strain on account of the way in which accompanying students "may well be spending most of their time in an 'academic' environment as opposed to the non-academic professional football environment" (FFE & VTS, 1993b:2).

On the basis of past experience the FFE & VTS claim that the pass rate of trainees enrolling for 'A' Level courses is "very low" (FFE & VTS, 1993b:3). For this reason they recommend that academically oriented recruits study for a BTEC National Certificate under the approved FFE & VTS college scheme, whilst at the same time aiming to gain one 'A' Level each trainee year at separate night-school classes. Assuming that employers and universities continue to regard BTEC qualifications as 'A' Level equivalents, such educational commitments, it seems, ensure that trainees keep their career options open by maintaining a realistic chance of gaining at least one creditable qualification during the YT period.

Representing the authoritative structure upon which vocational training is based, alongside these course options the FFE & VTS promote their own occupational Code of Discipline in relation to college attendance (see FFE & VTS, 1993b, 1993c; PFA, 1993a). Illustrating clear parallels with wider industrial procedure practices here include the use of verbal and written warnings for breach of both club and college regulations, and stipulations that educational/vocational attendance is compulsory for all trainees except when on first team or International playing duty, or when certified medically unfit for college tasks. Furthermore, within this system, financial

penalty and personal dismissal are presented as active measures of employer control, thereby enhancing the formal and 'professional' image of PFA/FFE & VTS operations, and providing reassurance to trainees and parents alike that post-career planning is an integral part of trainee life.

All of which appears highly conducive to the pursuit and achievement of Further Educational success. Question was, did governing body 'theory' reflect institutional practice for trainees at Colby Town?

#### Educational and Vocational Provision at Colby Town.

Education was a particularly high-profile issue at Colby Town at the start of the 1993/94 season simply because this period marked the point at which the club had chosen to re-enter the official educational/vocational programmes run by the PFA/FFE & VTS having attempted, rather unsuccessfully, to construct and implement their own 'in-house' schemes during the previous academic year. As a consequence of contacts made during that time, club officials had also decided, forthwith, to commission the voluntary services of a part-time Education Officer, Ron Wild. A retired secondary school Headmaster, Wild had originally been drafted into the club to structure, advise, and teach on the 'in-house' educational courses which had run during the 1992/93 season. However, with the club relinquishing their own ideas and resorting back to PFA/FFE & VTS provision, Wild now found himself in an unofficially recognised role as liaising agent between FFE & VTS officials, the club itself, and a variety of educational establishments within Colby.

This melee of historical activity meant that at the outset of the 1993/94 season Ron Wild inherited a group of first and second year Youth Trainees with a diverse range of educational backgrounds and needs. These he discussed with each individual in early September 1993, in the privacy of an office allocated to him on club premises. From the resultant findings a broad assortment of educational experiences and opportunities were made available to trainees for the forthcoming academic year.

These options incurred the involvement of four main educational centres situated in and around the Colby area; Walton-Grange College of Further Education (for FFE & VTS approved BTEC and City and Guilds study courses each Thursday), Brownes College of Art (for 'A' Level Art on Tuesday's), Spearsbrook Community College (for tuition in General Catering on Tuesday evenings, and for 'A' Level Business Studies, History and Geography, and GCSE Maths re-sits at various week-day times) [1] and Jenkins Lane College of Technology (for re-sits in GCSE Geography, again on Tuesday evenings). For those second year boys whose previously existing 'in-house' educational provision had collapsed as a result of administrative complications, Wild also offered a City and Guilds (parts 1 and 2) Leisure Studies course, tutored by himself at the club (either in his office or in other available rooms) every Thursday afternoon.

The allocation of trainees into particular groups of study depended primarily on their educational backgrounds and qualifications. Having been advised by Ron Wild as to which course(s) they would best be suited in the light of previous experience, trainees made the following choices for the 1993/94 season:

Name	GCSE's Obtained Grade 'C' or Above	Chosen Course(s) for the 1993/94 Season
<i>Year One</i>		
Steven Williamson	0	City and Guilds Leisure GCSE Maths
Neil Morrissey	0	City and Guilds Leisure GCSE Maths
Andy Higgins	1	City and Guilds Leisure GCSE Maths & Geography
Charlie Spencer	2	BTEC Leisure GCSE Maths & Geography
Davey Duke	2	BTEC Leisure GCSE Maths
Nick Douglas	5	'A' Level Art
Adrian Thornton	5	BTEC Leisure GCSE Maths
Pete Mills	10	BTEC Leisure 'A' Level Geography
<i>Year Two</i>		
Ben Tattersall	0	'A' Level Art General Catering
Simon Gregory	0	'In-House' Leisure
Martin Walsh	1	'In-House' Leisure
Tony Chadwick	1	'In-House' Leisure
Robin Hindle	1	'In-House' Leisure General Catering
Jimmy Briggs	3	'In-House' Leisure
Damien Blackwell	3	'A' Level Art General Catering
Colin Jones	5	'In-House' Leisure
Gareth Procter	7	'A' Level Art
Paul Turner	8	'A' Level Business Studies & Geography
Gary Riley	9	'A' Level Business Studies & History

**Table 5.1** Trainee Scholastic GCSE Achievements and Chosen College Courses for the 1993/94 Academic Year.



Within the trainee group there were those who would have preferred not to pursue their education at all. Frequent comments throughout the course of the 1993/94 season from Ron Wild indicated that he found it difficult to even maintain the attention of his second year City and Guilds tutees, let alone receive any amount of constructive comment or written work from them. Because the 'in-house' first year course designed for these boys had failed to last the duration of the previous season, many had simply lost interest in post-career vocational training, with a return to weekly educational sessions being viewed more as a detriment than a benefit to professional career chances. Regarding his own education as a matter of pure obligation, Jimmy Briggs talked of the way in which he attended Ron Wild's Thursday classes simply because "...there's something in our contract that says we've got to". Team-mate Ben Tattersall espoused similar feelings towards his attendance at the exclusive and palatial Brownes College of Art, describing how he would have been "...happy not to do now't really, but they [the club] said you've got to do some'at...". Likewise, Robin Hindle failed to recognize any real vocational value in his weekly Tuesday evening catering classes, or in Thursday afternoon group sessions with Ron Wild.

Robin: Well, like, we do cookin' on a Tuesday night. I just go there for like a laugh. Well, I don't go there for't laugh, but its just t'mek some'at so y'can eat it an' that. Its good. Its just gerrin' y'self there. But once yer there yer' its alright. Gerrin' mixed in t't dough an' that, yer' all mucky an' that, its dead funny. But doin' this wi Ron Wild, I don't think that's doin' owt for me.

Whilst such disillusionment was widespread it was not confined to educational provision within the context of club life. State schooling too had

proved equally taxing for a number of trainees, particularly in terms of the way in which they had struggled to recognize its long-term significance.

Robin: Ever since day-one at school I wer always crap... right from't junior school. Like, I always had to work a year behind an' that all't time. But when I gor-rup t't big school, like t't comprehensive, it were just crap. I just had a muck about wi all mi mates an' that, an' always got sent out, all't way from day-one, from't 1st, 2nd, 3rd, up t't 5th year...

Simon: I just hated it [school] so much, that no matter what, I wouldn't have done the work. I mean, they could have threatened to expel me an' I wouldn't have done the work 'cos that's how I was, I hated doin' it, probably 'cos I'm so lazy, but that's me.

Ben: I aren't really bright anyway... I could 'ave passed some of mi exams definitely, its just, I mean I aren't a whiz-kid or owt, 'cos whiz-kids can pass 'em wi'out doin' their work anyway....I think if I'd worked 'ard I could've done some but I just cun't motivate mi'self to revise. Y'know, its borin'.

Insofar as the vast majority of trainees at Colby emanated from working-class family backgrounds, these sentiments correlate strongly with existing sociological findings which suggest that working-class youth frequently employ 'disaffected' attitudes towards education on account of the fact that they fail to connect fully with the middle-class codes upon which it is allegedly based (cf. Hargreaves, 1967; Parker, 1974; Willis, 1977; Corrigan, 1979; Walker, 1988). The reasons for the construction of such attitudes are clearly complex and by no means uniform. What a number of these texts point out, however, is that as far as adolescent males are concerned class-based notions of educational dismissal may be closely linked with the development of masculine identity and the prospective fulfilment of physical/manual labour within the much celebrated 'post-school' world of

work (cf. Willis, 1977; Jenkins, 1983; Walker, 1988. See also Jefferson, 1989) [2].

For nearly all trainees at Colby, professional football had long since represented an idealized 'working' goal and, as such, had occupied a position of key occupational importance within their adolescent lives. Related activities had subsequently been allowed to take precedence over and above a whole range of other issues, one of which was school work. A number of individuals talked, for instance, of how the fulfilment of footballing commitments had frequently come before homework and/or GCSE coursework during their latter school years, sometimes with the approval of parents and teachers alike. First year Davey Duke, described how he was often allowed "...a couple more days.." than his class-mates to complete written assignments due to his intense involvement with professional clubs and the extensive amounts of travelling he had to carry out in order to attend their Schools of Excellence. Neil Morrissey also revealed how, as a mark of encouragement, some of the teaching staff at his school would regularly "...let me off for a week.." as regards the completion of academic tasks.

Unanimous amongst trainees was the feeling that, in the past, schoolwork had definitely "suffered" as a consequence of footballing desire. Some attributed this to reduced levels of motivation once they knew they were guaranteed a YT place at Colby, either during their final months of schooling or from the time they signed as Associate Schoolboys at the age of fourteen. Others pinpointed the extent to which they had taken substantial amounts of time off school in order to compete, both at home and abroad,

for 'District', 'County', 'City Boys', 'International' and/or top 'Sunday League' teams. First years Charlie Spencer and Adrian Thornton, and second year Paul Turner, found that the time taken up by actual playing commitments had often presented real problems in terms of lifestyle priorities.

Charlie: There was a time when - probably 2nd or 3rd year of secondary school - when I was playing for my schools' District team, and my schools' County team and my school, and my Sunday League team, and Stenton United [Endsleigh League Div.1] U14's and U15's, and training...

Adrian: I kept on having to have days off when we were going abroad on trips an' things...and then in my final year, when I got into the England [under 16's] team, we went to Sweden, and we went to Turkey for about a week, and that was about a week before my [GCSE] exams started.

Paul: At one stage I used to be playing 3 or 4 games a week. I mean, when I was at school in the 4th year I used to play for the 4th year, the 5th year and the Sixth form, then I still had District and County, and the Sunday teams as well...

Accordingly, parents had expressed their own worries in relation to the neglect of schoolwork. Many trainees spoke of how their mothers in particular had remained anxious about their prioritization of educational achievement during school-days, whilst, in more subtle ways, fathers had quietly encouraged the pursuit of footballing ambition, reinforcing deeper levels of emotional investment by ferrying their sons too and from training sessions and matches often at great financial cost to themselves.

There were, of course, other trainees for whom, despite lifestyle prioritization problems, academia had always meant much more. First year

Pete Mills, and second years Paul Turner and Gary Riley stood out in this respect as a consequence of the level of realistic career foresight which they exhibited, and the seriousness with which they accorded educational/vocational involvement. Collectively, these boys were known as the “brains” of the youth team squad on account of their favourable GCSE results and their studious pursuit of ‘A’ Levels. Though, by his own admission Pete Mills emanated from strictly working-class origins, Riley and Turner had come from altogether more ‘professional’ familial backgrounds. Riley’s father, for example, held a hierarchical position within a regional Police Force, whilst Turner’s was heavily involved in the computer software industry. Nevertheless, similarly progressive educational attitudes were evident in the case of all three boys, their main intention being to utilize fully the facilities and services on offer to them and to attain a series of qualifications thereby safeguarding against the inevitability of career termination.

Paul: If I didn’t get taken on, first of all I’d try for another club, somewhere local, and if that didn’t work out... hopefully I’d have my two ‘A’ Levels as well. I’ve already thought about it a lot. I mean, if I apply to a lot of universities, I mean, I spoke to my old Headmaster an’ that, and if you say you’ve been an apprentice at Colby, you’ve got 2 ‘A’ Levels an’ that, and you can explain the situation, a lot of them will say, “Oh fair enough”... So hopefully that will work out.

Pete: I think you’ve always got to think about if I get ‘bombed’ [refused a professional contract] - what am I goin’ to do after that. I suppose you’ve got to get as many qualifications as you can wi’out over doin’ it an’ ruinin’ your football...

Gary: I want to, like, get the best qualifications that I can just to see if I can, like, sort mi’self out in the future

instead of, like, football being over for me so I've got nothing to fall back on, which I don't want to do.

Central to Gary's educational frame of reference was the parental guidance and encouragement he had received whilst still at home, particularly as regards the importance of school work over football.

Gary: I'd always been told off mi' mum an' dad that I had to do mi homework all the time, and they always checked up on me... especially when I was younger. Mi' mum always used to get me to show her the homework that had been set and then I'd have to... give her mi' homework and show her that I'd done it... If I had to go out and play football straight after school, when I got back I'd do my homework about 9 o'clock and then go to bed. I'd never, like, leave it. If I was playing football for North London Boys and I had to go straight after school, and it was away, and I didn't get back until 12 o'clock, I'd go into school, tell the teacher, and then do double homework ...the next night.

Amidst the somewhat masculine anti-school aura of club life these educational standpoints were undoubtedly the exception and not the rule. For most trainees educational achievement was a thing of the past - an unnecessary distraction to the pursuit of occupational success. Implicit within the context of club culture was the understanding that to succeed as a professional one had to 'think' as a professional, and that meant 'thinking' only of football. For any player to admit to an affinity for academic attainment or to overtly undertake steps towards post-career planning was, in effect, to admit also to the inevitability of footballing rejection. Not surprising then, that for first, as well as second year youth trainees, vocational preparation threw up a whole series of occupational contradictions and behavioural conflicts, a number of which became clearly

evident during Thursday 'day-release' sessions at Walton-Grange college of Further Education.

#### Day-Release at Walton-Grange

The suburban setting within which Walton-Grange college is situated lies about five minutes drive to the North-East of Colby town centre. In recent years the annual enrolment figures of the college have been in excess of 20,000 students, making it one of the largest Further Education establishments in the Greater Haddington regional area. It boasts a student intake of varied ages, abilities and ethnicities, and maintains strong community links with a range of educational outlets throughout the town. In addition, it fosters healthy relations with nearby centres of Higher Education, and correspondingly offers a diverse and comprehensive assortment of educational and vocational resources.

The Leisure Studies department at Walton-Grange accommodates approximately 6 full-time and 10 part-time members of staff at any one time, and is located on the second floor of the recently re-furbished Linghurst Building, which is annexed to the main college site. The departmental Curriculum Manager is Jonathan Bainbridge, whose teaching staff offer a broad range of specialisms, thereby allowing an assortment of leisure based courses to be on-going. These facilitate accreditation through a variety of nationally recognized governing body awards and schemes, (i.e. The Institute of Sports and Recreation Management [ISRM], The Business and Technology Education Council [BTEC], City and Guilds of London

Institute [C&G], The Royal Society of Arts Examination Board [RSA] and National Council for Vocational Qualifications [NCVQ]).

In accordance with past practice, during 1993/94 academic year, the department administered both City and Guilds and BTEC football trainee options as stipulated and required by the FFE & VTS. The full-time departmental members of staff responsible for the teaching of these courses were Jonathan Bainbridge (BTEC) (standing in on 'maternity leave cover' for Shelley Norris, YT Football Trainee Programme Leader) and Barbara Kelly (City and Guilds), with part-time tuition being shared primarily between David Brickliffe (City and Guilds) and Hilary Chamberlain (BTEC). Other part-time and full-time members of college staff were recruited to teach various curricular modules, but, by and large, the workload associated with first year football trainees was distributed between these four individuals.

Although within their YT proposal guidelines the FFE & VTS (1993b) claim that the day-release courses they offer are 'exclusive' to football trainees, at Walton-Grange this was not the case. Despite the fact that all eight of the City and Guilds group were footballers, with regard to BTEC provision, three conventional students were situated within the class of eighteen. Three of the five Football League clubs accommodated by Walton-Grange were represented amongst the eight trainees in the City and Guilds group, whereas a mixture of boys from all five clubs were evident amongst the first year cohort of BTEC students.

For the majority of the academic year teaching sessions for both sets of students were held in a twin-classroom portable 'unit' situated in one of the college car-parks, next to the gymnasium. Some course options such as



Information Technology, were located within the Linghurst or main college buildings, however, on the whole, “the mobile” was considered by both staff and students as the educational base for football Youth Trainees.

I attended Walton-Grange college on a weekly basis throughout the research period. Participant observation was split between the two aforementioned college groups. I began, and ended, the academic year by observing the BTEC classroom sessions for two separate five-week periods. In-between, I joined the City and Guilds (NVQ levels 1 and 2) group. This bias, in terms of time allocation, was due to the fact that the latter course was much more practically based, and I therefore spent a considerable amount of time travelling with trainees to various venues in order to observe and participate in the different elements of their educational programme (i.e. practical experiences of local sports centre management, swimming and life-saving classes, etc.). I took part in all lesson tasks, both academic and practical, and adhered also to the social expectancies of college attendance.

Courses for football trainees at Walton-Grange college were arranged and perceived along strictly hierarchical lines. A clear-cut educational divide shaped trainee and staff attitudes towards the qualifications on offer, and the individuals concerned. Accordingly, amongst trainees themselves, individuals were intellectually and verbally categorized according to their chosen course option. A sub-cultural group consensus existed whereby those studying for the BTEC National Certificate were known as “the brainy bastards” of day-release, whilst their City and Guilds counterparts were recognized as “the thick cunts”.

In turn, these general attitudes appeared to be reflected in the differing classroom behaviours of the respective groups. The atmosphere within BTEC lessons, for example, maintained a relatively studious and calm aura, where, although the majority of trainees paid little attention to what was going on, for the most part, they did at least attempt to fulfil set tasks and complete homework assignments. In the case of City and Guilds students, things were different. Intent on living up to their informal peer group label, these boys chose to ignore teacher input throughout the majority of lessons, preferring instead to discuss a variety of issues ranging from sexual endeavour to the micro-politics of club loyalty.

Aside from occasional references to set work, sexuality and sexual promiscuity were the main topics of conversation for trainees within both class groupings. During lesson time this was often manifested in the form of crude banter concerning the physical characteristics of female staff and students. In the BTEC class, for instance, weekly debates accommodated speculation about what Finance teacher Hilary Chamberlain looked like naked, and whether or not the colour of her pubic hair corresponded to that on her head. The main stimulus of BTEC classroom disturbance - Colby Town's Charlie Spencer - made a habit of provoking Chamberlain, and fellow student Debbie Shields, with suggestive comments regarding their private lives, and frequently attempted to impress remaining class-mates by continually threatening (and, at times, proceeding) to "get his cock out" under the table in defiance of his tutor's strict behavioural reprimands.

Similar occurrences were common amongst City and Guilds boys as regards their teacher Barbara Kelly. She, it was alleged, possessed an insatiable

sexual appetite geared, not surprisingly, towards young male footballers, and thus engendered an equally rampant desire, Steven Williamson persistently argued, to “fuck us all silly”. Though these allegations were never made explicit, City and Guilds trainees spent long periods fervently debating their authenticity during lessons, whilst at the same time assessing the degree to which the vital, and clearly visible, statistics of the “birds” in the latest edition of the Daily Sport rendered them “fit as fuck”, or “rough as ars’oles”.

To this end, both trainee groups regularly attempted to establish their own educational agenda within lessons, psychologically drifting in and out of set activity, interested only in finding excuses to disrupt work routines, divert teacher attention, or “skive-off” classroom obligations via trips to “the library”, “the refectory”, “the bogs” or “the computer room”. For many of these individuals college was not about learning and/or vocational preparation. It was about getting away from the authoritarian restraints of club culture, about adopting a “..couldn’t give a fuck..” attitude to ‘the establishment’, and about “chatting up birds” and pursuing wider personal relationships with girls which would both elevate them in terms of peer-group masculine prowess, and provide alternative forms of entertainment during lonely week-day evenings.

That is not to say that pragmatic and reactionary methods of behavioural control were unavailable to college staff. On the contrary, in line with the trainee disciplinary code of conduct laid down by the FFE & VTS (1993b), course tutors were at liberty (and in fact officially required) to report any occurrence of inappropriate trainee behaviour (i.e. lateness, absenteeism,

insubordination, lack of equipment - pens, pencils, rulers, etc.) to the respective clubs of the individuals concerned by 9.30am on the following Friday morning. Such sanctions did, of course, carry the ultimate penalty of occupational dismissal. However, in terms of general trainee perception the overall value of these regulatory arrangements remained questionable. As far as most boys were concerned if a club wanted to maintain an individual's contractual services they would, irrespective of college behaviour. Despite the fact that such measures were widely advocated by a number of staff (and by FFE & VTS representative Eddie Mellors on his sporadic monitorial visits to Walton-Grange), in reality the full force of disciplinary threat repeatedly failed to materialize. In this sense, many teachers confessed to having not passed on 'incriminating' evidence to clubs regarding trainee misdemeanours firstly, because such actions might then be misconstrued by trainees as a sign of occupational weakness, and secondly, because a reliance on such litigation, it was feared, may necessarily infer some kind of professional incompetence, and therefore additionally serve to undermine one's teaching credibility within the department.

Of course, as regards other ethnographic studies of Youth Training, such forms of trainee behaviour are nothing new. Hollands (1990), for one, has talked of the way in which 'lad culture' predominated in his 'off-the-job' observations of a group of 'disaffected' and 'disruptive' young people. Banks et al (1992) have reported similar findings in relation to their investigations of college attendance with young construction workers. In both these cases the authors comment on the ways in which the staff concerned found it difficult to cope with such educational conditions, to the point where issues

of student 'occupation' and 'control' often became the primary focus of pedagogic practice.

In accordance with these observations, a number of teachers in the Leisure Studies department at Walton-Grange espoused an intense disregard for the overall educational conduct of football Youth Trainees. Whilst discussing the various vocational orientations of BTEC class members, for example, Hilary Chamberlain expressed how, in her opinion, it was categorically "unfair" to situate "conventional" students alongside footballers on account of the way in which the latter dominated group discourse and severely hindered work-rate levels. Other tutors talked of how they had traditionally found football trainees extremely "difficult" to teach, describing them as "unco-operative" individuals, who, because they had no respect for anyone but themselves, deliberately set out to be "trouble-makers" and "wind-up merchants" in class.

The negative repercussions of trainee behavioural tendency also stimulated problems in terms of curricular responsibility. As Jonathan Bainbridge explained, traditionally one of the most difficult aspects of his job had been to cajole people into teaching football Youth Trainees in the first place.

AP: Do you think staff see it as... 'Oh no it's Thursday morning, I've got the footballers'..?

Jonathan: Yes, that has certainly happened. I've also had staff use phrases like, "I've done my stint". I've also had it put to me a little more softly by saying, "I think I'm running out of ideas". I've also had staff say to me, "If I hear that bloody joke again, I've heard it for the last ten years, if I hear it again and they fall off their chairs, I'm gonna scream". It's all new for them.

Bainbridge himself, clearly found such teaching commitments stressful.

Jonathan: I can't do it. I can't teach these boys. They get me going.

AP: But that's the whole point for them isn't it?

Jonathan: Yes, exactly, but I think, 'Well Christ, I'm not paid for this', especially since nowadays I don't do that much teaching.

Of particular importance for a number of staff members was that their motivation as FE teachers was gleaned not from those students who needed constant attention and discipline, but from those who had a genuine desire to learn. Highlighting the complexities of these motivational factors, both Barbara Kelly and Jonathan Bainbridge pinpointed, what in their opinion, were the main differences between football trainees and other students as regards educational orientation [3].

Jonathan: Teachers come into FE with a slightly different motivation. They come in because they think they've got something to give. We feel that we've got some sort of vocational angle. We get the YT people in ...and we feel it our mission, our job, whatever, our background, that what we are about is giving a learning programme, or giving access to trainees, in this case, to a learning programme which will allow them to understand which business their in... So that if and when 90% of them fail, which they will never admit, they will have skills which will make them more employable in a range of activities.

Barbara: Some of them [staff] find them [footballers] quite difficult to deal with. A lot of people can't cope with the fact that basically they're not really interested in being here, and they [the staff] just find it hard to deal with because they just want to teach motivated people, and you can only get flashes of motivation from these. It's not a consistent thing. Y'know, when they come through the door, you've got to catch their attention,

you've got to catch their interest, and it's quite difficult to do.

Whilst discussing these issues further, Barbera Kelly made it quite clear that unlike herself not all staff were prepared to spend time searching for such occasional 'flashes' of 'attention' and 'interest'. Some, she claimed, failed to show any real concern for football trainee lesson content on the grounds that under such circumstances periods of intensive classroom preparation were inevitably wasted. Those teachers who adopted such attitudes, Kelly went on, preferred to opt for an altogether more informal and flexible classroom approach whereby trainees were not only left to generate their own discursive topics and dominate educational proceedings, but were often allowed to leave lessons early having completed a minimal amount of work (See also Hollands, 1990; Banks et al., 1992). Less stringent teaching techniques of this nature were not explicitly publicized or advocated within the Leisure Studies department. They were, however, identified by a number of staff members as a means by which specific individuals ordinarily chose to cope with the somewhat hyper-active and hyper-masculine educational approach displayed by the majority of football trainees. Teaching footballers, it seemed, was all about survival, and crisis management was, for some, simply the most effective way to avert personal breakdown.

So much for college staff and the student clientele as a whole. What though of the more specific perceptions of first year Colby Town trainees? How did they view their side of the educational bargain in terms of vocational preparation? Moreover, to what extent did they seriously prioritize education within the wider context of football club culture?

Certainly, at the beginning of the 1993/94 season individual attitudes towards day-release were relatively positive, with many boys regarding college as a necessary part of their training - something to 'fall back on' if and when they had to leave the professional game. As time went on, however, and trainees became increasingly influenced by the sub-cultural expectancies of club life, educational enthusiasm waned. In this sense, as the season progressed, day-release came to take on a whole new meaning, being viewed more as a day-off work than a vocational aid. BTEC student Pete Mills elaborated further.

AP: Do you see college as a relevant part of being a young apprentice footballer?

Pete: I don't think it has owt to do wi' it really. It's just a day-off training... Its like a day away from't regular routine. It i'nt that strenuous is it really? We have a good laugh in class an' that, we hardly do any work. Its just a day away. I quite enjoy it...

For Charlie Spencer, college attendance merely represented an opportunity to impress upon others his status as a trainee footballer. A time to illustrate and enhance his masculine prowess amongst those of 'inferior' social standing.

Charlie: You can tell all our lot 'cos we all wear decent clothes. We all look smart an' that. I mean, we don't look like college - y'know we turn up at college not looking like college kids, we turn up at college in our best gear...College is alright. Its good for totty and fanny [girls] but apart from that I'm not really interested in education anymore. If I got a contract I wouldn't need to be...



Individuals picked out certain aspects of college life which caused them to see it in less positive terms.

Davey: Its a load of shit really. I mean, I suppose if you pass...and come out with a BTEC at the end of it its worthwhile then, but it just doesn't seem to make any sense what we're doing. We don't do anything to do with leisure or sports. Its just like being back at school, you just change lessons and you don't really know what's going on. You just do the work, that's all it is really...Its all them speaking to you and you just write notes and they give you their photocopies an' that. The work's pretty easy but that's borin' as well 'cos you're just sittin' there and the teachers are just ramblin' on...

Charlie: Everything we do is just dictation...I mean, obviously its a higher level thing so you've got to do a certain amount of work an' that but y'know its just so boring. The teachers don't vary the lessons, they don't want to help you out really, they just think you're dumb footballers - even though you've got decent grades - well, I haven't but the rest of them have. They talk down to you...the work's crap. Y'know if it was writing and it was interesting to do it would be alright, but its just not interesting - and it has no bearing on leisure.

The lack of practical sporting involvement for students on both BTEC and City and Guilds courses, in conjunction with a heavy emphasis on written project work, meant that boredom featured large in the day-release experiences of Colby trainees. This self-motivated academic ethos was something which they struggled to come to terms with throughout the year. Consequently questions were raised as to the limited variety of courses on offer to them, particularly in relation to the overall scope of vocational preparation (see also Roderick, 1991; Garland, 1993).

Interestingly enough, such issues had been cited by Ron Wild as one of the reasons why Colby had withdrawn their trainees from FFE & VTS provision

during the 1992/93 season. Not only had the club been keen to isolate its own boys from what they saw as the distractive influence of other clubs, at the same time, Wild argued, Colby officials had expressed disappointment “...with the type of education programme that the YTS were insisting that the players took part in”.

In some respects, Walton-Grange could not be held entirely responsible for these alleged shortcomings. With FFE & VTS backing, they had originally attempted to include other academic options within their leisure-dominated football trainee package. However, because the FFE & VTS placed such strict monitoring regulations on the attendance of trainees, and because so many individuals were prone to absenteeism, college staff had found it difficult to diversify educational choice whilst at the same time operating a coherent system of trainee regulation. Despite the fact that some staff were convinced that limited educational provision for trainees within the industry as a whole was purely a consequence of poor organization on the part of the FFE & VTS, Jonathan Bainbridge did indicate that such issues represented only one aspect of a much wider problem involving a number of influential agencies.

Jonathan: When they [footballers] first came, they all did City and Guilds, which we then negotiated away from, which was just us negotiating, not nationally, because some of them were obviously more competent and could too easily meet the demands of City and Guilds 481. We then, at some point, got into where we were saying “Right, we’ll offer a variety of things and they can do anything at the college”. That was an educational nightmare, but I think, more importantly, it was a pastoral nightmare - tracking the students. It’s bad enough as it is at the moment, but when you’ve got people doing ‘A’ levels, GCSE’s, City and Guilds, BTEC Leisure, BTEC Business and Finance, and things like reporting procedures - we weren’t happy

with that. We weren't happy with that, the clubs weren't happy with that and the PFA said they weren't happy with it.

But there was more to Colby trainee disillusionment with college attendance than mere choice of vocational pathway. The attitudes and practices of club officials were equally influential in terms of the way in which trainee priorities concerning educational achievement gradually changed. In contempt of FFE & VTS (1993c) regulations concerning the compulsory educational attendance of trainees (except in the event of first team/International selection or certified illness), on more than one occasion during the 1993/94 season Colby officials instructed first year boys not to attend college because of ensuing week-day reserve, under-21, and youth team games - withdrawals which were subsequently reinforced by written confirmation to Walton-Grange declaring the individuals concerned medically unfit for day-release attendance. Although such playing opportunities were gratefully accepted by trainees as a chance to perform at a higher footballing level, they also carried implicit messages as to the wider occupational standing of educational attainment within the club itself. Via inferences like these, and the derogatory comments of professional players and coaching staff, first years soon came to realize that to show too much interest in college was to necessarily put into question ones allegiance to the non-academic footballing fraternity. During interview, Pete Mills explained how such inferences had been made explicit to him during his first YT year.

AP: Do you find that people in the club encourage you to go to college and get an education?

Pete: I think there's a thing higher up in the club where they think education's important - an' then at the

lower level with the Manager's an' that, y'know, they'd rather us be there [at the club] an' trainin' than be at college...I'd say nobody doesn't want us to go. Nobody's sayin' we're gonna stop em', or try an' stop em', but I think like Terry an' that think, 'Oh', y'know. - Like when I passed my GCSE's there were a bit of, y'know, friction like, cos' they think you're not a footballer. They think you're studious, you're not one'ot lads, y'know what I mean.

AP: Why, what did they say?...

Pete: Y'know, "Ten GCSE's an' you can't play football", an' all this. Y'know, they were tryin' to get at me...just by usin' that. But you never know wi' Terry, he tries to get at you anyway, y'know, he tries to see how much you can take.

Genuinely fearful of the extent to which these allegations might influence and inform managerial decision as to his eligibility for career progression, Mills spent much time in and around the club playing down his academic achievements, particularly in front of Terry Jackson and peer group members. Despite having attained ten GCSE passes at grade 'C' or above, a favourite tack in this respect was for him to deny having adopted a calculated attitude to academia whilst at school, espousing instead an altogether more laid-back educational approach which appeared congruent with general trainee feeling.

Pete: I wa'nt really very studious at school...I wouldn't say I was one o't thick ones but the teachers, y'know, used to be always at me saying I've got to improve, y'know, learn more, try harder an' that. In the GCSE year most of 'em said I wouldn't pass, and mi expected grades were like D's and C's, an' then it came t't exams, an' I just fluked it really... I always used to sit with the same section of lads and lasses, and there were always that thing that we were like 'the lads' of the class, y'know what I mean, and they [the teachers] used to - it was always the studious ones who they used to give

all the help to, and we either knew it or we didn't, we never got any help or owt.

Such practices are not unique in terms of wider football culture. Studies carried out by both Garland (1993) and Hughes (1990) provide evidence to suggest that issues of educational contradiction and denial are an established feature of trainee life within professional footballing circles (see also Parker, 1983b; Houlston, 1987; Harrison, 1994). Nor should these events be accepted as facets of first year status only. Second years Paul Turner and Gary Riley talked also of the way in which they had been “given stick” about being “schoolboys” and “boffs” by coaches and players alike, on account of their ambitious educational interests, and how this had subsequently taught them to remain somewhat coy about their alternative career plans.

Whilst the ridiculing comments of Terry Jackson and others were seen by some as just one part of an on-going ‘test’ of trainee character (see chapter two), they also provided insight into broader issues of institutional contradiction. On the surface, Colby prided itself on the range of educational opportunities it had on offer to trainees. Through the services of Ron Wild, the club explicitly promoted education to prospective YT signings as a major club concern. But, once initiated, trainees were implicitly encouraged, it seemed, to negate alternative vocational desire in exchange for a complete commitment to footballing success. That is not to say that such encouragement and derision was intentional, nor that appeals towards trainee academic pursuit were explicitly advocated. What did occur, however, was that as a result of pressure from significant others within their working environment, trainees learned to view education in a specific

light, not as something which claimed sub-cultural value or precedence, but as something which one pursued at ones own risk, something which was decidedly unmanly, and something which had the potential to affect ones everyday life, both in terms of peer group identity and managerial acceptance.

### Conclusion.

In more recent years PFA/FFE & VTS initiatives have dramatically re-structured educational/vocational provision within professional football and in doing so have sought to raise the profile of academic pursuit particularly within the context of Youth Traineeship. In this chapter I have examined the academic experiences of trainees at Colby Town and analysed their fulfilment in relation to FFE & VTS national programmes of educational provision.

Whilst the diverse cultural origins and backgrounds of Colby recruits make it difficult to assess the degree to which these governing body initiatives served to positively inform and influence individual attitudes towards education, what these data illustrate is that, for the majority of trainees, dreams of footballing success far outweighed issues of post-career vocational planning in terms of lifestyle prioritization. Trainee experiences correspondingly emphasize the way in which club staff and senior players featured strongly within this prioritization process as a consequence of the sub-cultural values, inferences and standards they promoted. Such inferences meant that, in the main, college attendance was viewed as little more than an escape from occupational routine, surveillance and order, and

a chance to upgrade ones masculine prowess by way of informal peer group activity. Moreover, because college environs contradicted the repressive constraints of club life, day-release was regarded as just one in a whole range of trainee 'leisure-time' pursuits, the accompanying constituents of which I explore more fully in chapter six.

## Notes

- [1] Tutors from Spearsbrook Community College were also commissioned by the club to teach some 'A' Level options on site at Colby, in order to accommodate the training and playing commitments of some trainees. Often one-to-one affairs, these classes were held in Ron Wild's office.
- [2] Debates surrounding issues of class and, in particular, the traditional distinction between player/director class-origin have traditionally characterized academic and journalistic writings concerning professional football, see for example, Wiseman, (1977), Mason, (1980), Bale, (1983), Metcalf, (1988) and Korr, (1989).
- [3] For further comment on the way in which teachers within Further Education have accommodated the unorthodox behaviour of the more recent 'new vocational' influx of YT students see Gleeson (1986), Broomhead and Coles (1988), and Parsons (1990).



## CHAPTER SIX

### Outside Work: Leisure-Time, Boredom and Social Relations.

I hate any sort of sitting still, and that is not typical of most footballers. They love sitting still, doing bugger all, going bugger nowhere, looking at bugger nothing. It's their favourite hobby, along with cards and crumpet. Once training is over, they flop, their mind and body fold under them and they become one-dimensional discarded toys on the carpet of suburban life, waiting to be wound up for the next game, for the whistle to command them back to real life.

(Davies, 1992:84).

Within the confines of the digs or hostel, the lads will play cards...read football magazines and sex magazines, play records, talk about football, women and sex, or just watch television. Out of the digs, the lads will seek the cheap entertainment in the form of snooker, putting, bowls, and tennis...the cinema...or just walking round the shops looking at the clothes they will buy when they have saved enough money...

(Gowling, 1974:162).

Like a number of other lifestyle activities, educational attendance was a strictly non-work experience for many trainees at Colby Town simply because it fell outside the supervisory mandate of youth team coach Terry Jackson. No Jackson, meant no immediate fears, no worries, no inhibitions, no stringent or career threatening behavioural conditions - no work, just play, just leisure. Leisure-time was a time to escape club control, to sample the delights of youth culture, to dismiss thoughts of occupational commitment, progression, rejection, failure, to enjoy the 'freedoms' of normal life, to mingle with 'the outside world', to live dangerously.

Considering the constituent elements of trainee leisure and the format around which these were structured, this chapter depicts how individuals utilized non-work time at Colby and how, on occasion, they undertook activities within it which contradicted club norms and standards regarding personal and professional behaviour. It also raises further questions concerning issues of institutional 'totality', emphasizing how, in reality, trainee leisure-time failed to accommodate periods of individual 'freedom', facilitating instead pervasive forms of accountability in accordance with which official methods of personal surveillance were subsequently promoted.

#### Leisure, Youth Training and Football

Over the past two decades a wealth of academic material has emerged concerning leisure-time activity and its related industries, a portion of which has come to represent the sociology of leisure (see for example Roberts, 1970, 1978; Parker, 1972, 1983a; Horne, Jary and Tomlinson 1987; Rojek, 1989). Conventional assumptions within this sub-discipline have located leisure as a relatively 'free' and apolitical sphere, which, in opposing the rigid and mundane structures of everyday life, represents something of a 'cultural reflex' to the limits of social regulation and labour constraint.

Critical analysts have questioned such postulations, and have suggested that any realistic understanding of the complexities of leisure as a social process can only be gained if and when one considers further the structural details of its political, economic and historical development (Clarke and Critcher,

1985; Griffin, 1993). Ideological standpoints of this nature are useful, Hollands (1990) argues, particularly within the context of the new vocationalism and Youth Trainee status, in that in representing a radical departure from traditional notions of leisure, they facilitate a recognition of how the 'substitute wage' might severely limit non-work activity for those on training schemes, thereby reducing the range of leisure-time 'choices' available to them.

How can this type of critique be applied to the circumstances of trainees at Colby Town? Certainly, as regards monetary gain there is little, if any, room for discussion concerning personal limitation here, particularly in the light of the financial rewards received by boys over the age of seventeen (see chapter two). Nonetheless, leisure was still a relatively ambiguous and contentious area of life for the Colby trainee group as a whole, and one which threw up a number of tensions and contradictions in relation to conventional assumptions concerning its 'free' and/or apolitical value.

One of the key issues raised in chapter three, for instance, was that since their arrival at the club, many trainees had experienced the transformation of football from a one-time leisure pursuit into a daily occupational chore. This process had caused a gap to appear in the lives of some boys as a consequence of the fact that prior to recruitment their out-of-school hours had been primarily invested in the fulfilment of footballing activity to the negation of alternative interests. This social void was further exacerbated by the practicalities of professional commitment, the stringent policing of which meant that the 'free-time' allocated to them was often rigidly

governed by the restraining boundaries of club 'officialdom', and the structured nature of occupational expectation and routine.

Coupled with issues of work-place constraint, these binding residential obligations led the majority of trainees to feel as if they could not escape the penetrating depths of institutional surveillance, a situation which, Etzioni (1961:151-174) argues, is not uncommon within organizations which seek to 'totally' "embrace" the lives of their employees by way of collective involvement and a "pervasive" sense of behavioural control (cf. Goffman, 1961; Foucault, 1979). Similarly Salaman (1971:67) has highlighted how patterns of employment may act as "restrictive factors" towards the spare-time desires of some workers, particularly in relation to the construction of personal associations and friendships outside of the work-place. Utilizing a range of occupational examples to substantiate his claims, what Salaman (1971) proceeds to ascertain is that because some members of society follow a schedule of work which is out of kilter with the majority, for them, conventional methods of social intercourse with people other than work-place companions can prove difficult (see also Janowitz, 1969).

Trainees at Colby were undoubtedly subject to high degrees of organizational 'embrace' both in an occupational and non-work sense. Their work fostered a somewhat unorthodox pattern of occupational activity, whereby relatively short day-time working hours accompanied regular evening and weekend commitments, and because of this they were necessarily compelled to spend large quantities of 'free' time on a collective and strictly regulated basis.

Aside from officially sanctioned periods away from the club, when individuals were able to mix freely with friendship and family groups, these were the restrictive and insular circumstances under which trainee leisure generally took place. This did not mean that all trainees participated in the same kind of leisure activities, nor that, as a group, they fulfilled similar tasks at regular, pre-determined times. What it did mean, however, was that like work, leisure-time engendered problems of privacy and boredom as a consequence of its predominantly collective nature, and raised issues of intra-group tension as a result of the fact that life in 'digs' represented the organizational hub of its enactment.

### Life In 'Digs'

All personnel at Colby Town referred to trainee hostel accommodation as the club "digs". Digs were the most popular and immediate site of trainee leisure-time escape from the work-place. Situated in a secluded residential area of town adjacent to the Colby ground itself, the club's hostel comprised three Victorian terraced properties; two of which had been converted into one building to form the main shared living environment for up to 24 'guests', and another smaller unit which was utilized each season to accommodate the three second year boys deemed most suitable for partially supervised co-habitation. All trainee eating arrangements were governed from the main hostel building, and, in addition, a proportion of this property was allocated for the personal and private use of proprietors Bill and Bev Sommerfield and their family (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

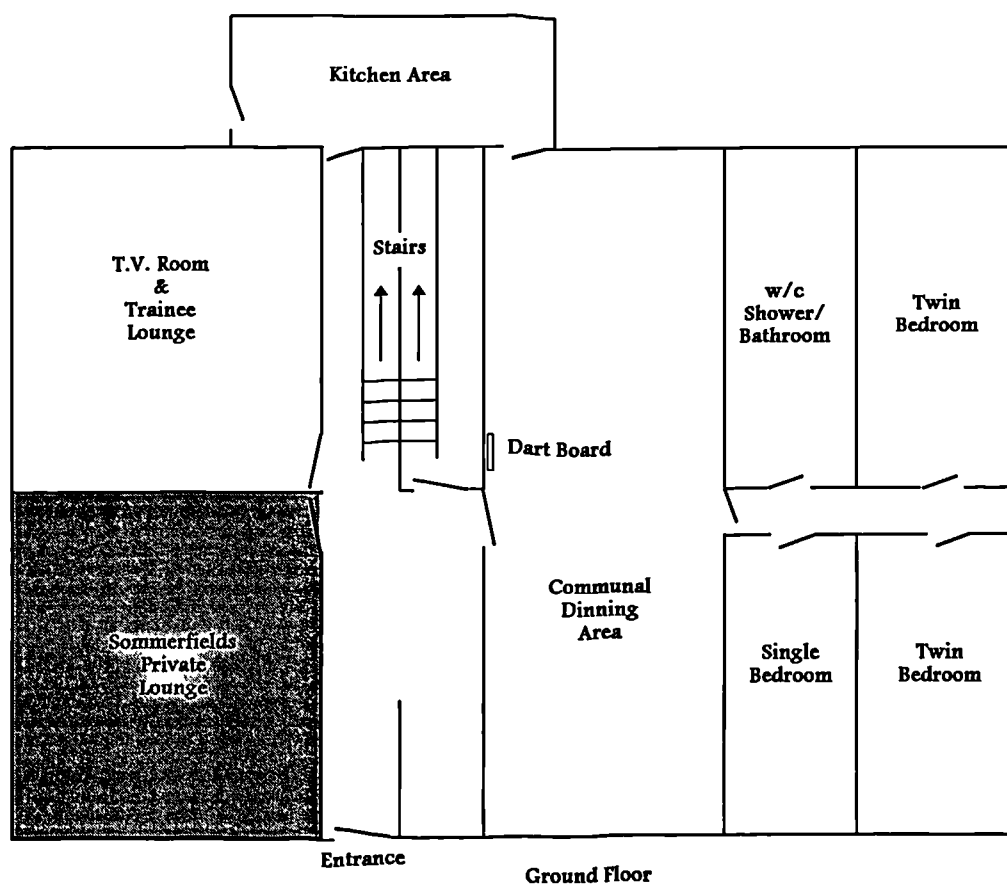
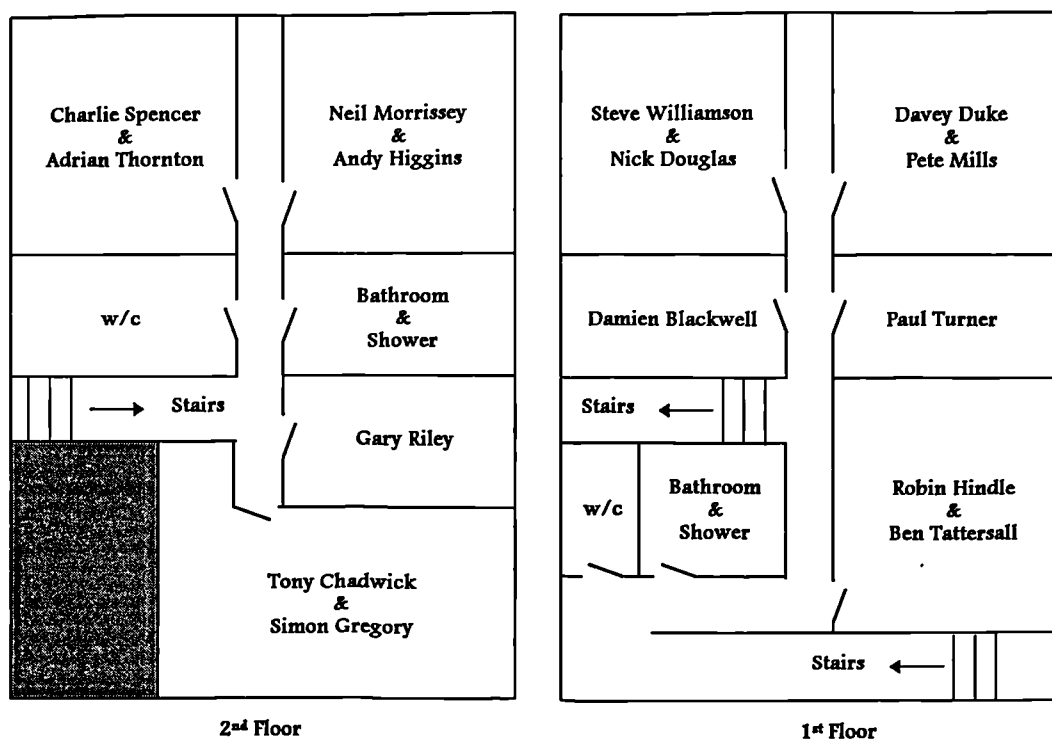


Figure 6.1 General plan and habitation layout of Colby Town main hostel building during 1993/94 season.

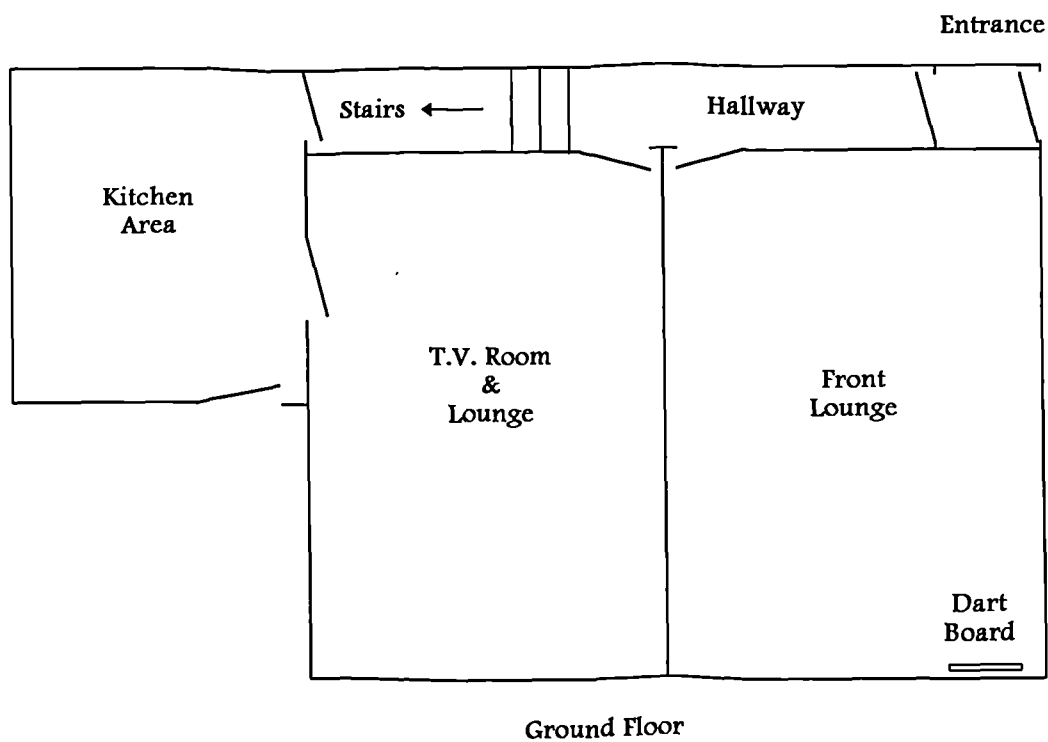
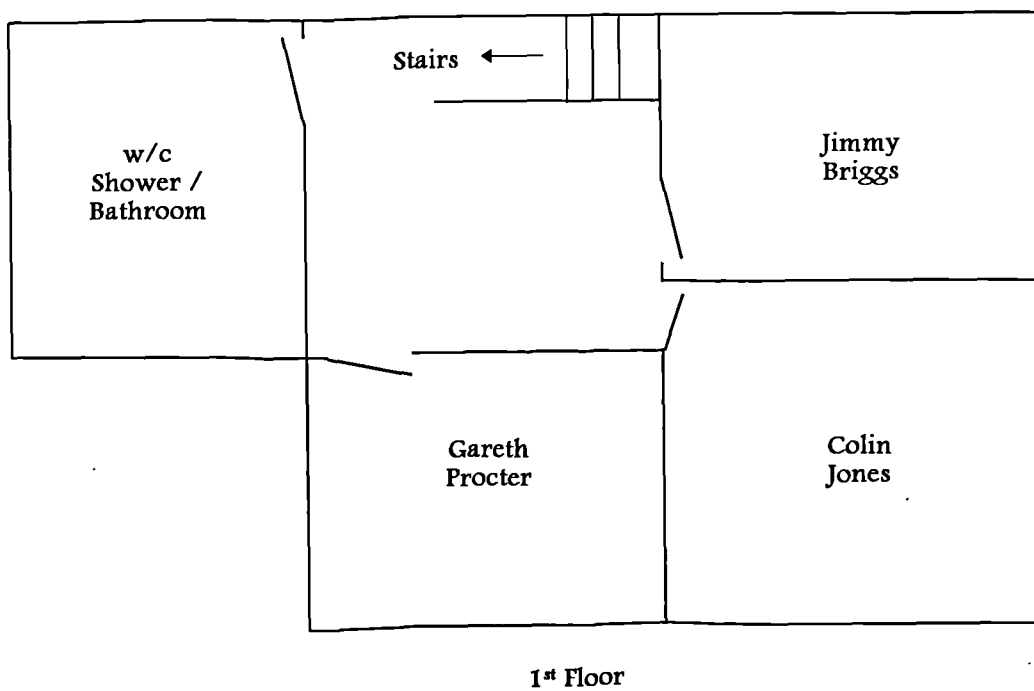


Figure 6.2 General plan and habitation layout of Colby Town annexed hostel unit during 1993/94 season.

Whilst it was within the confines of the club itself that the regulations and routines of trainee life were devised, it was from this residential base that the official dictates and social norms of non-work activity were imposed. For this reason, digs were viewed by the trainee majority as a site of intense personal constraint. Privacy from public gaze was of utmost importance here. An electronically operated door-lock guaranteed security against alien entry to the main hostel building. Friends and acquaintances who managed to legitimately transcend this barrier were restricted to communal dining areas only. When visiting the club or arriving to transport relatives home, even the mothers and sisters of trainees were prohibited from entering trainee bedrooms or upper hostel floors in the interests of collective seclusion.

Amidst such stringent regulation there were benefits. As we have seen in chapter two, for example, trainees were substantially catered for in terms of domestic responsibility. Moreover, items of relaxation such as Satellite TV and video facilities were provided within communal areas, supplementing the vast array of privately owned home-entertainment systems and gadgets (i.e. midi-stack hi-fi units, personal stereo's, video recorders, radios, portable televisions, computer games etc.) situated within trainee bedrooms. But these resources did not compensate for the wider frustrations of social restraint, nor for the more specific pressures of 'batch' living (cf. Goffman, 1961), as first years Nick Douglas and Davey Duke clearly pointed out.

Nick:        When I was a Schoolboy [Associate Schoolboy] I used to come here and I used to think 'Oh what a great place to live in'. But I only stayed for one night, I didn't stay for night after night. An' like you get here an' for't first week I think ...everybody's like dead chirpy an' that lot. An' then after a few weeks people



start missin' home an' that, an' people start shoutin' at each other, an' everybody starts gettin' a bit angry... An' then after months people are always arguing because you're living, you're working, you're resting, you're playing y'know, with the lads who you are always with.

Davey: Everyone's so irritating, only little things and they'll just be moaning... and then it starts to arguments. It is hard but it's just something you've got to put up with... as soon as you come back from being at the ground together all day, you're here [at the hostel] all day. I mean, me and Pete usually lock ourselves in our room, but everyone always ends up coming in... and you just want to be on your own for a little while. But you can't really get to be on your own.

Residential collectivity often fuelled a recurrence of daily work-place intra-group tension (see chapter four), but evident also amidst the complexities of hostel life were a host of other social and domestic pressures which proved equally problematic. Homesickness, for example, was one issue which (contrary to the dismissive perceptions of both Bill and Bev Sommerfield) surfaced as a matter of common residential concern for a number of trainees throughout the fieldwork period (see also Wilshaw, 1970; Gowling, 1974; Laycock, 1979). Reiterating the feelings of Nick Douglas and Davey Duke, many boys talked of the way in which, besides opportunities for personal privacy, they missed a variety of other "little things" associated with home-life. Often springing to mind during the relative stillness of non-work time these included the comforts of parental care and support, the familiarity of neighbourhood settings, and the relational connections previously established with girlfriends, footballing comrades, and "mates" in general.

Davey: I miss mi' girlfriend and mi mum and dad, and mi dog - the little things, y'know. You don't miss 'em all the time it's just every now an then you think 'If I was at home now I could be doin' this'. It's just the little

things really... I'm the furthest away, a good four hours in a car and the bus is eight hours, and the train is anything up to six or seven hours. Plus it costs me fifty quid every time I go home, so its not just the travellin' its the money as well.

Gary: The first couple of months I came down here I never used to go out, I was really depressed an' everything...It was like 'cos I'd been seeing my girlfriend for about a year before I came down here, that was the main problem why I was gutted, but I was homesick as well. I just like mi own room, and mi mums cookin', an' daft little things like that, and that got me a bit cheesed-off...

Gareth: You always miss 'ome don't ya. I do when I've bin 'ome, like that night [the first night back at the club] I'll be a bit 'omesick... In't first year like, I missed 'ome for like weeks when I first started, but now its like a day or so, an then I'm alrey't - just night that I get back an' that, then I'm alrey't next day.

What complicated matters in this respect was that as far as some individuals were concerned the constrained residential milieu within which they found themselves offered little in terms the construction of new friendships.

Firstly, because it severely reduced the amount of free time they could spend at home, and secondly because it limited, even further, their opportunities to "meet outsiders" in and around the Colby area. All of which for Tony Chadwick and Davey Duke merely added to the broader anxieties of the school-to-work transition.

Tony: I mean, I'd go away for weekends like, when I were younger, like, to clubs an' that. Like, livin' away constantly for a couple, or three years, its not a burden or a pressure y'know, but I mean its just some'at else added up... Y'know I miss mi' auntie a fair bit, mi gran, mi cousin lives just down't road... y'know what I mean, its pretty close together all mi mums side o't family. An' like, you just miss seein' old faces really. I mean, course you mek new friends an' that, but its not same... I'd be see'in mi mum an' dad

an' all't rest o't family y'know, an' then't next thing I knew I wouldn't be gerrin' home for about three weeks a month. An' y'know, w'ar I mean, it wer' such hard work at first to get into it here. It seemed strange...

Davey: You've always got times you have to be here, and certain times you've got to be at places an' that, so you can't just relax and go out, it seems like you're locked up. You don't have to be locked up in here but there's nothing else you can do so you just sit here...So you don't meet any new people 'cos you don't go anywhere but there isn't anywhere really that you can go...

Though most boys were averse to discussing issues of homesickness and loneliness with either their peers or club officials on account of possible verbal back-lash regarding effeminacy and/or weakness, there was some evidence of institutional support in relation to these sorts of frustrations. Funded weekend home visits were one example of how the club sought to help out in this way. Terry Jackson also disclosed that because the majority of trainees lived a considerable distance from home, he did try to "get them away as many weekends as...possible", to ease the pressures of institutional confinement. Moreover, as regards broader issues of organizational socialization, an altogether more implicit system of monitoring appeared to exist in relation to the initial 'settlement' of young players.

AP: At first, when they come, do you find that some of the lads get homesick?

Terry: We always say that it takes them six months to settle into the routine of this club. It takes them until Christmas to settle down and to get into a regular rhythm of training, education, working, reporting, whatever, and its quite a hectic time for them. That's why they have to be closely watched and looked at, and we've got to know exactly what they're doing and when they're doing it and what they're doing it for. So

basically just to look after them to make sure they're OK.

Yet however good club intentions were, most trainees agreed that it was precisely the intense tenor of club inclusivity which made institutional acclimatization that much more difficult. Being bound by organizational routine and surveillance within the work-place was one thing, but official intrusion at a social level was a different matter altogether. Of specific concern in terms of leisure constraint, Simon Gregory argued, were the petty forms of discipline, evening curfews and club rules which fervently prohibited a more general freedom of trainee movement outside work.

Simon: I mean there's just too many rules. I mean, its just little things, like, that get to me. I mean, like, when they say you can only have biscuits when we say so an' all this crap, its just childish. An' I mean that's how I feel, I feel like a child in here. I mean, you wouldn't get that at home. They said this was a 'home from home' supposedly, but that's a load of shit, its nothing like home.

Later:

I mean, in here you can only go out 'til twelve o'clock on a Saturday night. I mean, how ridiculous. I mean, we're 18 most of us now...we should be able to do what we want on a Saturday night. Fair enough, when there's a game you've got to have rules to stick by, but I don't see why we should do it through the week or whatever.

AP: Do you think that they [the club] are trying to protect you?

Simon: Yeah, but what do they think we're gonna do when we leave here? I mean if we get taken-on another year, or another three years I'm living at home hopefully. What do they think I'm gonna do then? Do they think I'm gonna do the same as I'm doin' here? I

mean, I'm not. I'm gonna go out a couple of times a week aren't I. Its obvious.

For fellow second year Gary Riley, this overall lack of social and residential freedom was the predominant cause of intra-group domestic struggle.

Gary: I mean, we're 18! You need to have a bit of fun and you need to let yourself unwind. I think we should get one-night-a-week when we can go out and get everything off your (sic) chest and have a laugh, instead of being stuck in, 'cos it gets you annoyed, especially if you're not allowed home at the weekend. There's so much trouble in here, everyone goes mad with one another, people start getting aggressive an' stuff... I mean, I get wound up easy sometimes and there's been times when I'd really love to just hit someone 'cos I've been so cheesed off with the way things are going especially when you're injured as well... you just think 'Oh I can't be bothered with all this at all'. But the rules do play a big part in you getting cheesed off.

Not surprisingly, such inference and opinion contrasted sharply with the views of club officials. For Terry Jackson and Bill Sommerfield these frustrations were an accepted inevitability of trainee co-habitation. In their view, club constraint was a vital means by which they, and others, could adequately fulfil their position of 'loco parentis', and provide assurances to parents that Colby would carry out its legal obligations with regard to issues of responsibility and care. During separate interviews I encouraged both Jackson and Sommerfield to confirm their overall perceptions of, and attitudes towards, paternal club practice.

AP: Its interesting - that even though the lads are given more money because the club want to treat them like adults, they [trainees] don't see that they are being treated in this way having to come in at twelve on a Saturday.

Bill: Well, y'see, we've got responsibilities, not just to the club, but to the parents as well, and if parents thought we wasn't (sic) doing our job and letting them [trainees] get away and doing all these things they weren't supposed to do, they wouldn't be very happy... would they?

Terry: With 16/17 lads living together there has to be certain rules and certain times when they have to come in, and as young people in the sports world trying to make their living out of it they have to forsake one or two little things. We don't ask too much for them to forsake, they get other things on the other side of the coin like trips abroad...and getting well looked after at the hostel...so they don't have to give up too much.

In spite of the severe amount of trainee criticism directed towards 'digs' and 'digs rules' there were a minority of boys who, in support of this more disciplined stance, actually sympathized with, and to some degree upheld, the views and actions of club officials. Second year Colin Jones, for example, was quick to acknowledge that, in terms of "responsibility", Bill and Bev Sommerifeld's job must have been "difficult", especially since they had "so many lads to look after". Likewise, for Gareth Procter, social regulation was an accepted part of trainee status as a consequence of the seriousness with which he accorded occupational success and the expectant standards of such a "professional set-up". On a similar note, first year Charlie Spencer commented on the way in which, despite their drawbacks, Colby digs were "like a palace" compared to the standard of lodgings he had experienced whilst on trial at a range of other professional clubs, and on this score alone he was happy to endure the social and domestic conditions in place [1].

Of course, in reality, such proclamations did not mean that these boys necessarily condoned, or were somehow immune to, the constraining

features of club life. Nor should general trainee comment regarding the disadvantages of social constraint be interpreted as an indication that digs rules and regulations were the only point of squad contention in terms of non-work activity. In addition, trainee work patterns afforded their own problems as regards leisure-time pre-occupation. Central in this sense were issues of boredom and its resultant activities, the details of which I now explore.

### Leisure-Time Pursuits: Snooker, Shopping, Snacks and Snoozes

Although many trainees vehemently rebuked the social and occupational constraint they were under at Colby, one striking feature of their leisure lifestyles was that, even when presented with opportunities of 'free-time', the majority often chose to remain in the collective confines of the youth team hostel, thereby squandering their chance to escape the reaches of club surveillance and peer group company.

On finishing their daily work routines at around 1 - 1.30pm, for instance, second years frequently returned to the club digs where, in the main, they occupied themselves simply by talking, watching television, listening to music or sleeping, both during the afternoons and evenings. Though limited by longer working hours, first years also regularly took part in similar weekday activities.

There were exceptions to this rule. On occasion a selection of trainees would organize a golf outing to one of the local courses, or from time-to-time a small number would catch a bus or drive the ten-minute journey into town

in order to play snooker, attend the cinema, or just partake in window shopping. Evening trips to the local 'MacDonalds' or 'Chinese Take-Away' were also familiar pastimes, as were visits to the nearby petrol station where, once again, the purchasing of food, soft drinks and snacks were the main considerations in play. Whilst these sub-cultural peer group routines were relatively trivial, they did at least give trainees something to do in their non-work hours, providing particular appeal in the early weeks of the season for first and second years alike. Over a period, however, such activities, in themselves, became extremely tedious, at which point boredom inevitably emerged as a problem of serious spare-time proportion.

AP:           So what about spare-time, what do you do?

Davey:       Just relax really. We go out and play golf sometimes, go shoppin', the cinema, that's about it, just watch TV and lay in bed...Its really boring 'cos you get so much time and you just don't know what to do...

Pete:         Just watch telly, listen to music mainly. Just have a good laugh really, just sit around an' talk, that's it. A've a walk round t't garage maybe for some'at to eat. Go down t't bank or some'at. Just relax really, just sit around - bed. We never really just sit there doin' nothin', but you never really do anythin' or go out or owt. Nick's brought his computer up now an' that, so we're all round that now. Gives us some'at to do.

Adrian Thornton mapped out more intricately the typical details of daily life as regards the non-work routines of first years.

Adrian:       We get back from the ground, y'know, go up to our rooms, get changed, put your shorts and t-shirts on, by the time you've done that its time to have your tea, and you just wait around maybe twenty minutes, watch telly until you have you're tea...Then you go up to your room and lie there for a bit, then 'Neighbours' or 'Home And Away' comes on, so you watch that.



Then you'll probably watch something else or put a bit of music on or go to somebody else's room and just talk for a bit. And then it'll be time for sandwiches...Then we'll stay down[stairs]. Say on a Monday night we'll watch the football on Sky, but then on another day, after you've had your sandwiches, you'll go back up into your room, see if there's anything else on telly, put a bit of music on. Then after about 9 o'clock you'll probably just go and find somebody else, and you'll just wander round the place really.

AP: Do you never go out and have a walk, or...?

Adrian: Well we go round to the shop to get some sweets or something. Like Charlie, straight after his sandwiches, he'll go round to the chippy or something...but like a lot of the time when you're here you just want to go to bed, 'cos you're beds there and you're telly's there and you're music's there and if you lie down you nearly fall asleep.

Reinforcing these first year views, second year Gary Riley painted a similar picture, graphically portraying the isolated nature of life away from home, whilst at the same time inferring notions of 'voluntary confinement'.

AP: What do you actually do in your social time?

Gary: Nothing. Sit around. Just laze around - on your bed watching telly, and that's the afternoon. I mean, like, on average from about 2 o'clock 'til when you go to bed at about 11, for about nine hours you do absolutely nothing apart from watching telly or talking...

AP: Well, what would you do at home?

Gary: What would I do at home? Go round to mi mates house, go to mi girlfriends house, have a brew. Talk to people who you wanna talk to. I mean, a lot of the time [here] you end up talking to people 'cos you've got no other option, not people you'd want to talk to particularly. But like [at home] you enjoy yourself,

don't you, if you go round to see your mate and have a coffee or something, or a couple of cans and have a laugh. Whereas you can't do that here. You're not even allowed to bring any food into your rooms.

Although a good deal of unstructured activity took place both inside and outside of the club hostel during 'free-time' periods, there were some legitimate reasons for the trends described here. Despite the relatively short working hours of trainees, the physical nature of occupational activity did in itself command high levels of energy expenditure on a daily basis which thus led to increased personal fatigue. This was particularly so in the case of first years, many of whom initially found it quite difficult to adjust to the demands of training from the somewhat sedentary expectations of schooling. Hunger too was a regular and consequential topic of trainee conversation, in spite of the fact that youth team members were extensively catered for in this respect, both in terms of nutritional balance and quantity.

That is not to say that trainees failed to pursue what they regarded as their own more 'constructive' forms' of leisure-time entertainment in response to increased levels of boredom. Though there existed official restrictions governing their out-of-work physical activities (see chapter three) spring and summer afternoons and evenings were occasionally spent playing tennis or 'pitch and putt' in the local park. For those boys fortunate enough to occupy the more private environs of the smaller hostel unit, games of back-garden-cricket were also popular around this time of year. As regards indoor methods of spare-time occupation darts was a particular 'downstairs' favourite amongst some friendship groups, as was the more general custom of "taking the piss" out of each other (see chapter seven). In conjunction with these pastimes the 'secret' viewing of pornographic videos and

magazines was continually apparent during afternoon and evening non-work periods especially when Bill and Bev Sommerfield were off hostel premises and trainees knew that they were in the somewhat passive and non-threatening hands of auxiliary staff. Alongside all of these activities, 'sock-throwing competitions' were the most common form of recreation on a room-mate basis (an event requiring competitors to withstand the temptation of flinching ones body or facial expression whilst having a rolled-up sock forcibly thrown at them from close range), whilst, on occasion, large group games of 'hide-and-seek' were undertaken, the losers of which were usually forced to enact a range of semi-naked forfeits in and around the hostel building.

There are broader industrial connections here as regards issues of occupational monotony and the voluntary creation of pastime habits. Located primarily within the confines of the work-place itself, sociological accounts of organizational behaviour have been quick to highlight instances of labour-related mundanity and resultant employee attempts to alleviate task-based tedium (see for example Roy, 1958; Beynon, 1975; Runcie, 1980; Molstad, 1986; Charlton and Hertz, 1989; Collinson, 1992a) [2].

Issues of voluntary confinement and overt club constraint, however, were not the only grounds upon which boredom was based at Colby. In addition monetary restriction was a key element of leisure-time contention. To this end, many trainees (particularly those below the age of seventeen at the time of interview) complained of the ways in which their comparative financial poverty was limiting in terms of spare-time pursuit, and how such

limitations compounded their already monotonous lifestyle patterns (cf. Hollands, 1990).

Neil: Its so borin'. I suppose if you stayed here all the time [at the hostel] you'd be bored. Y'know you get sick of seeing each other, y'know, all the lads. You get bored sometimes. I mean normally I'd come in ...an' go to sleep and pass the time away.

AP: Is there nothing else for you to do? I mean, what could you do?

Neil: We could go to the pictures, an' stuff like that. But I got no money at all so I can't really go.

Reconciling the constraints of the 'substitute wage' with the social expectancies of wider trainee practice was, without doubt, a difficult task for first years to achieve. But they did at least have the prospect of 'big-money' to look forward to which, it was hoped, would provide the answer to these, and other, leisure-time frustrations.

### The 'Freedoms' of Finance?: 'Big-Money', Weekends Away and Rule-Breaking

Whilst evaluating the influence of the 'substitute wage' on Youth Trainee non-work identities, Hollands (1990:146) has stated, that for the majority of young people on training schemes it is "virtually impossible" for them "to afford leisure in a commodified and commercialized society, where nearly all activities and objects cost money". In providing examples of the extent to which many of the young people featured within his own research endured financial hardship and were denied the opportunity to "buy into the adult

world outside” the work-place, Hollands (1990:146/7) goes on to conclude that;

...the substitute wage can and does restrict young working-class people from fully engaging in consuming a range of commodities and activities. The ability to purchase appropriate clothes both for work and for pleasure, having money to go out and possessing the means to travel are all curtailed by the scheme wage.

Although many trainees at Colby Town were not explicitly restricted in this way as a consequence of club payment policy (see chapter two), there were a small number who, during the course of their first year, found themselves in similar monetary circumstances to those outlined by Hollands (1990). This position prevailed despite the range of occupational ‘benefits’ on offer to first years. As opposed to older boys, for example, younger trainees were at least exempt from making financial contributions towards board and lodging fees until they graduated to a higher wage scale at seventeen. College related travel and catering expenses were also reimbursed to first years, if and when appropriate receipts were submitted to club administrative staff via coach Terry Jackson. Furthermore, because Youth Trainee status deemed younger boys necessarily eligible for reduced rates in terms of national rail and coach travel, it was possible for individuals to save some money on the overall cost of self-financed home visits, all of which helped them to get by.

Yet taking even these more positive aspects of early traineeship into consideration, first year leisure-time activity and patterns of consumption were often severely restricted, with many individuals finding that their monthly YT allowance provided enough to service and accommodate only

the bare essentials of spare-time need. How then was trainee income distributed? From weekly payments of £31.50, typical first year spending patterns (for those under the age of seventeen) allocated; £5 for Thursday visits to college in order to cover food, travel etc. (to be redeemed), £5 on weekday evening trips to the newsagents, fast-food outlets etc., £10-15 on travel home at weekends, and £10-15 on a Saturday night-out with friends. Anything left over would then be “saved” in order to purchase clothing, or to fund additional nights “out on the beer” ~ categories of consumption which, alongside plans to buy one’s own car, significantly dominated levels of trainee expenditure and aspects of identity construction (see chapter seven).

Whilst recognizing the limits of first year spending, it would be inaccurate to assume, however, that because of their relative wealth, older boys at Colby were necessarily affluent. Purely by the fact that many second years bought into the material world of cars, clothes and drink on a more regular basis than their minors, meant that over-spending was just as much of a problem for them as it was for others. For many first years such a scenario seemed incomprehensible given the ensuing prospect of “big-money”, and the potential security and financial freedoms that would bring. But as second years Gary Riley and Damien Blackwell explained, despite earning much more than some of their younger counterparts, monetary constraints within the leisure sphere were all too familiar to them, particularly where escapes from boredom were concerned.

Gary:        You’ve just got nothing to do, and the only things you can do is like spending money. Like you spend a lot of money ‘cos you’re so bored. You just go up to the Chinese and spend a fiver every night on food, and it

adds up. Its like a-hundred-quid-a-month or something. And if you go and play snooker or something, you end up spending a tenor cos you've had a Mac Donalds or a pint or something with it. You don't realize it at the time, but then it all adds up and then you're skint.

Damien: ...When you're doin' some'at to occupy yer its not so bad... but the problem is, if you want some'at to do you've got to splash out, and that's at least a tenor.

AP: What, to go out somewhere like the pictures?

Damien: Pictures or some'at, three quid to get in...you want some money to get some'at to eat. You wanna go out an' play snooker, you've got to get a pint when you go to snooker, y'na'.

Though weekday consumption played a key role in boredom alleviation, it was closely monitored in terms of overall cost. One thing trainees were always careful to ensure was that day-to-day expenditure did not leave them short of money for the forthcoming weekend trip home. Weekends away held such importance because they represented a time when individuals were able to “unwind”, “relax”, and generally express their social frustrations, particularly in terms of “pulling birds”, “getting pissed” and more readily escaping the panoptic grip of club surveillance - activities and events to which financial outlay was crucial. In fact so central were these institutional reprieves to trainee life that many individuals thought nothing of travelling up to five hours by car, rail or coach in order to spend Saturday night in the comfort of familiar home-town surroundings or to simply go “out on the piss” with their old “school-mates”.

Because of their popularity, it was also common for weekend trips home to dominate daily and weekly youth team conversation. From Monday through

Wednesday, discussion centered on individual 'achievements' as regards the heterosexual and alcoholic exploits of the previous weekend. Remaining weekdays then saw speculation rise as to the possibilities of being allowed home on the coming Saturday, and probable plans of action if and when Terry Jackson authorized the materialization of this wish. Typifying the extent of trainee desire in this respect was the jubilant reaction generated amongst the majority of boys when weekend youth team games were cancelled. Rather than being regarded as a lost opportunity to perform, the greater amounts of weekend leisure-time made available by such occurrences meant that this somewhat occupationally negative scenario was hailed more as a time of collective celebration than one of personal or squad disappointment.

Pete: Y'know, I know a lot of people, on the Friday night before the game, are thinking, 'Well, we'll be home Saturday afternoon, and we'll be goin' out at night'...Y'know what I mean, even though you're playin' game, its really goin' home an' that that everybody's thinkin' about...

AP: So its all the wrong way round. The game's something you have to do to get home?

Pete: Yeah. But even though everybody puts their whole in t't game, I mean everybody's 'there' for't game. Everybody wants to win an' y'know, do their damdest to play as good as they can for't team and for themselves, but there is that y'know, 'Oh we're off home after it', as well, sort of feelin'... I don't think it affects us how we play, or the result or anything like that, but it isn't the right thing. It shouldn't be happening should it...

Just how much 'free' weekend-time trainees were granted depended upon a number of variables. Youth team fixtures were predominantly scheduled for



Saturday mornings, which not only meant that Friday night trips home were largely out of the question, but that squad members often began their weekend by reporting to the ground as early as 8.30am on Saturdays especially in the case of 'away' ties. Irrespective of the location of their own regional games, if the Colby Town first team had a Saturday afternoon 'home' fixture, first years were then expected to return to the club after fulfilling youth team playing duties in order to service professional player needs. These chores normally ended around 6.00pm, and involved the usual routines of sweeping and mopping both the 'home' and 'away' team dressing rooms and the tidying up of adjoining areas.

As in the case of weekday arrangements, second years were compelled to accompany their younger team-mates in attending senior weekend games. Such practices, Terry Jackson argued, were part of an "overall learning process" integral to the career development of prospective professionals. Neither did Saturday obligations represent the bounds of official weekend demand. Sundays too possessed their own social limits, requiring trainees to be either "on duty" for the occasional first team game, or to report to the trainee hostel by 10.00pm on returning back from home visits [3].

Whilst a strong emphasis was placed upon the importance of weekends away, trainee socializing in and around the Colby area itself was not entirely unheard of during the 1993/94 season. Evidence provided earlier by both Gary Riley and Damien Blackwell clearly illustrates that weekday excursions to the cinema and to the snooker hall were often accompanied by "a pint or something". In turn, there were other occasions when individuals slipped the catch-net of club surveillance and risked both their own

contracts and stringent group reprimand for “a couple of beers on the quiet”.

Thursday nights, in particular were a time when, for a selection of those with transport, “student nights-out” in nearby towns were popular, whilst remaining trainees split into customary friendship groups and frequented their local pubs - ‘The Bear and Staff’ and ‘The Peddlers Arms’ (see Figure 6.3) [4]. A relatively placid haunt, this latter location also served as the central setting for second year pool competitions, until, that is, mid-way through the season, when public complaint stimulated Assistant Colby Manager Len Drinkwater to, somewhat dictatorially, ban all trainees from entering public houses prior to the age of twenty-one.

Nick:        We all got done for going out. He [Len Drinkwater] got us in t’t ‘away’ team dressin’ room an’ said “From now on you’re not goin’ out. I don’t want to see you in any pubs until you’re..”, he was exaggerating but he said twenty-one...He said “Right, I don’t want to see you goin’ out at all no more, pubs or owt like that. You know its illegal for you to go in anyway...”

This typically authoritarian stance was effective insofar as it rendered weekday drinking exploits less “tied-on” than they had been previously. It failed, however, to deter trainees completely, encouraging instead a modification of group social habit to the point where, over a period of time, the frequency of socializing and leisure-time rule-breaking not only came to match, but categorically surpass, prior levels.

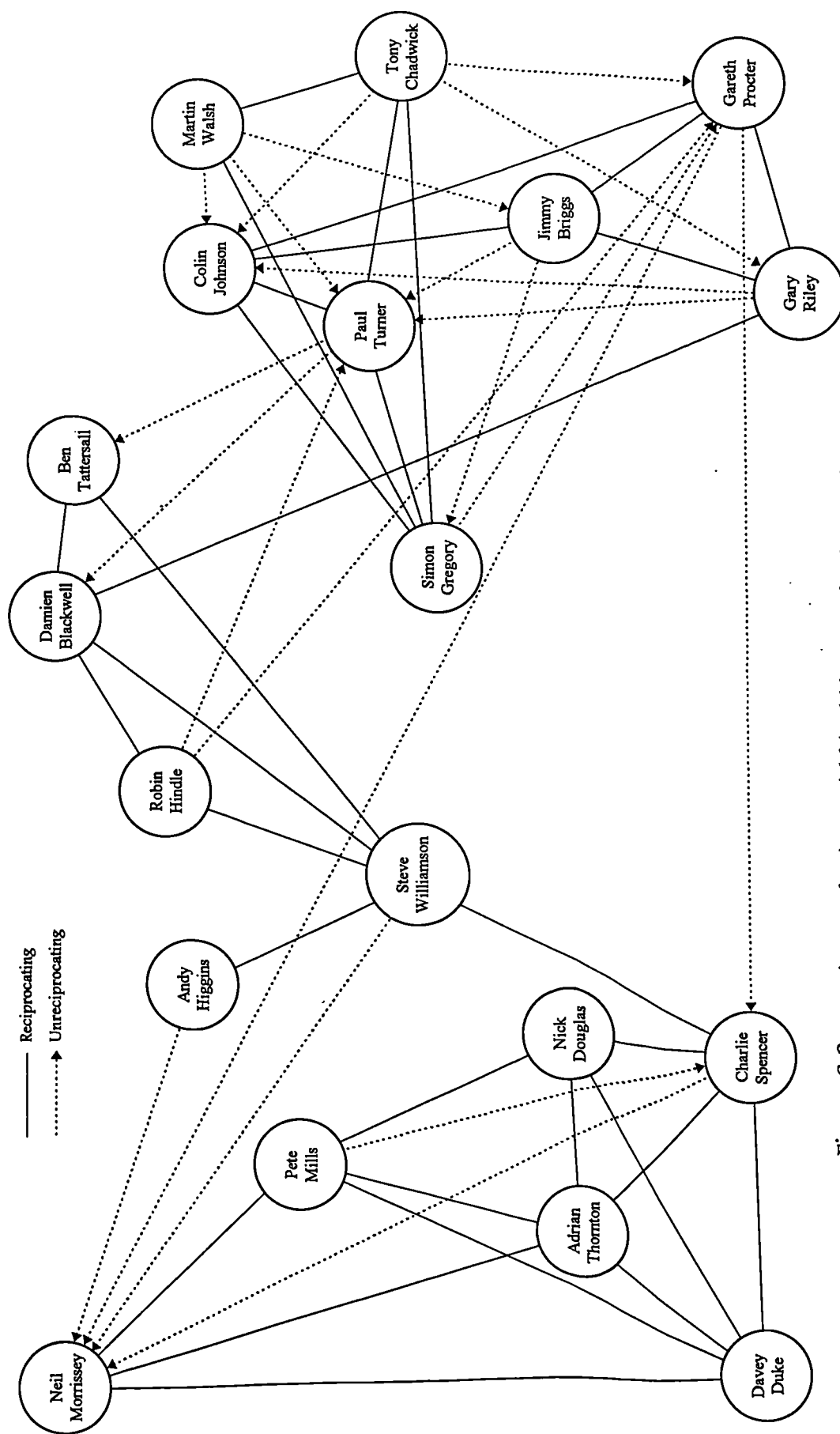


Figure 6.3 Sociogram of trainee social friendship groups for the 1993/94 season.

AP: I mean the drinking thing, although it stopped for a time, people seem to be going out much more now.

Davey: Oh yeah, everyone goes out a lot more now, now that the ban's been made. Everyone who goes home, they go out all the time.

AP: But even here?

Davey: Oh up here. I mean, people are goin' out tonight [Thursday].

AP: What do they have, a few beers?

Davey: Well they'll get pissed I suppose. Just enough so they can get in without being copped. That's how much they'll do.

AP: What, does Bill check them on the way in?

Davey: He sits in his chair. That's why his chair is there [with a view of the hostel entrance] so he can see everyone as they walk in. If you've been to the pub you stink of smoke an' that, so he does know. But as long as you don't get too bad he is good with that sort of thing. I mean, when there's just a few of us stayin' here he says "I don't mind you goin' out as long as you don't be silly". So he understands it 'cos he's done it himself. But he's got to keep us to the rules 'cos that's his job in'it.

Long before this time squad members had been made well aware of the fact that as far as trainee life was concerned drinking sessions were strictly out of the question. Terry Jackson for one, continually and vehemently reminded boys that if they were going to make the grade as professional players an affinity for alcohol and late nights were two of the things they would have to sacrifice. Needless to say, trainees in serious breach of club rules were subjected to severe doses of verbal chastisement.

Monday saw the end of season bash. Free bar and food in the Matchroom Club. The boys were drinking 'shorts' [spirits] in secret, which the pro's were buying them. Simon [Gregory] got sent home by Terry, as did all the first years. Then, when they got back to the hostel Bill [Sommerfield] went crazy about them talking to some girls on the way back. Next day, Terry had the first years in the 'away' team dressing room. With threats about his spies, and all his contacts, some owned-up to drinking. Adrian Thornton was told that he'd "never play for England again". Nick Douglas was told to "fuck-off home". Terry then proceeded to launch into Steve Williamson; "Steve, how many games have you played this season?" [Steve] "Oh, about six or seven". [Terry] "Do you know why?" [Steve] "No". [Terry] "Cos you're absolutely shit, that's why!". Then they all got the one-to-one treatment in the office. Terry tells them that if he had a lad, he wouldn't let him touch a drop, and that he will tell all their parents. He also tells Adrian that he's let him down. "I've never had a skipper like this. I don't care what you do when you go home but not when you're here".

(Fieldnotes, 12.05.94).

In reality, references towards "spies" and "contacts" did not need to be reinforced. Trainees were well aware that Bill and Bev Sommerfield employed strict methods of policing in this respect, as did other members of the general public who were only too happy to oblige in terms of the upkeep of disciplinary standards. This fact was born-out by the personal experiences of Neil Morrissey who, after only a short time at the club, was reported by the parent of an old school friend for his involvement in a night-club fight some two-hundred miles from Colby.

Early on at college this morning Thorns [Adrian Thornton] warns me of trouble back at the club with Neil Morrissey. Terry got a phone-call at around 5pm yesterday from someone in Neil's home town. He then confronted Neil when all the first years went back to the ground at 6pm to help out with the reserve game. [Terry] "Have you been in night-clubs drinking? [Neil] No why? [Terry] "Well that's not what I've heard". Apparently, Neil got 'jumped' and subsequently thrown-out of a night-club back home at the weekend. An old school colleague of Neil's who is

notoriously jealous of his achievements at Colby reported the incident to his own parents, who then rang the club. Neil has to see the Gaffer tomorrow.

(Fieldnotes, 21.10.93)

Neil: He [Terry] just said, "I don't want you drinking for these two years that you're on contract here". He was saying y'know, "Get out of my sight, I don't even want to know you", y'know, being really bad about it. Len [Drinkwater] just took me into a room and he said "Just forget about it". But Terry's still goin on about the nightclub even now [six months on]. Sometimes I just feel like turning round and planting him.

As regards the 'freedoms' of non-work activity, such social temptations were hard to resist, particularly given the high profile excessive drinking was accorded amongst an assortment of people both within the club itself and on a wider social scale. Boys talked, for example, of the way in which, whenever they contacted friends at home, stories surrounding wild parties and drinking binges regularly prevailed, thus serving to fuel their own appetite for unruly social endeavour. What was also difficult for trainees to accept was that on those occasions when weekend leave was granted, many of them often felt isolated from peer group camaraderie on account of the way in which 'professional' commitments made them feel obliged to relinquish an adherence to the heavy patterns of alcoholic consumption typical amongst those of their own age (cf. Gofton, 1990; Willis, 1990; Hendry et al., 1993).

Intensifying such pressures were issues of broader occupational practice. For whilst Colby trainees were strongly discouraged from drinking, rumours persisted, through the footballing grapevine, of how, after significant

victories, other youth team coaches actively encouraged their players to go out and “get pissed” rather than abstaining from alcohol altogether.

Paul: I mean there’s a story that all the Keeford Borough [Premiership club] lads, they didn’t have a good team spirit or something, and the Manager gave em’ about three hundred quid and said “Here you are,.. go out and get pissed”. And they told this to Terry and he said “Yeah that’s a good idea, we should book our tickets to the cinema then shouldn’t we”, an’ stuff like this. I just haven’t got a clue what he thinks we do at our age.

Constraints on alcoholic consumption were merely one aspect of existence through which individuals at Colby Town felt deprived of ‘normal’ teenage life. In short, trainees were frustrated. Frustrated over issues of boredom, mundaneity and personal confinement. Over issues of surveillance, constraint, suppression, loneliness, and collective tension, and over the way in which the distinction between club-time and free-time blurred into insignificance. Whatever the situation at other clubs, life at Colby was based around a stringent and comprehensive system of personal accountability involving the protection and nurturing of elite individuals. There was, therefore, was no room for mistakes, no room for teenage delinquency, no room for youth culture and no room for outside influences - just rules and regulations, just ‘good professional attitudes’, just an acceptance of total institutional commitment, the stringencies of which individuals were not at liberty to take or leave.

## Conclusion

That's the biggest problem here...sheer boredom, 'cos they have so much time on their hands. Some of these lads, I know what they do...These are the things that start, things can go wrong in your life. After saying that y'know we all have to do it - we've all been into pubs, we've all got drunk, we've all been into bookies, dog tracks, race tracks...But its knowing and realizing sooner or later that its not the thing to do...

(Bill Sommerfield, Colby Town hostel proprietor).

Conventional notions of leisure as 'freedom from constraint' were not applicable to trainees at Colby Town (cf. Hollands 1990). Instead trainee lifestyle conditions were all part of a calculated professional regime whereby individuals were groomed both physically and psychologically in relation to issues of self-control, personal discipline and professional attitude, and in accordance with which club officials systematically fulfilled their responsibilities of temporary guardianship.

Reinforcing further the 'total institutional' pattern of trainee life at Colby (cf. Goffman, 1961) this chapter has provided a brief outline of the constituent elements of youth team leisure-time activity and highlighted the tensions, frustrations and issues emanating from institutional restraint. Whilst, in the eyes of officials themselves, such restraints were a necessary consequence of club paternalism, the comments of Bill Sommerfield cited above ultimately bear witness to the fact that such constraining measures were somewhat futile. After a life-time in the professional game both as a player and as a hostel proprietor, Sommerfield was well aware of the drawbacks of institutional limitation. He knew implicitly that to withdraw social privilege from teenagers invariably meant that they would explore



their own creative avenues of entertainment. He knew also that this might necessarily involve a contravention of club rules. In this sense, it could be argued that a more flexible club regime may in fact have reduced trainee levels of boredom, tension and rule-breaking, and might even have stimulated individuals to adhere to club wishes more readily. As it was, an over-indulgence in general consumption represented one of the few ways in which trainees could express their individual autonomy, and, as the subsequent chapter will portray, one of the few processes around which masculine construction could take place outside the institutional confines of club life.

## Notes

- [1] For more on professional player experiences of club 'digs' see Cottrell (1995).
- [2] Within the biographical writings of players and ex-players issues of boredom frequently surface as a negative aspect of everyday footballing experience See McIlroy (1980), Brooking (1981), Butcher (1987) and Best (1990).
- [3] This curfew limit was reduced to 8.00pm during the latter half of the 1993/94 season on account of the fact that second year Gary Riley sustained neck injuries in a car accident whilst returning from a home visit. According to club officials, earlier arrivals back to the hostel made the occurrence of such incidents less likely.
- [4] This sociogram of trainee friendship groups was constructed from written trainee responses to the question; 'Out of the 19 first and second year trainees within the youth team squad, who do you prefer to hang around with?' Trainees were asked to provide up to five 'answers' or names of colleagues.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Masculinity and Football Culture

For every man, the outcome of his socialization is his entry into work. His first day at work signifies his 'initiation' into the secretive, conspiratorial solidarity of working men. Through working, a boy, supposedly 'becomes a man': he earns money, power, and personal independence from his family. The 'money in his pocket' symbolizes a 'freedom' - to bargain and consume; and a 'right' to the respect apparently enjoyed by his father.

(Tolson, 1977:47).

Football is a sport with so much excess testosterone you could stick a cigar in its mouth and call it Arnie.

(Troughton, 1994:18).

Viewed either in terms of its occupational or social characteristics, professional football is a strictly gendered affair. Its relational dynamics, its working practices, its commercial ventures, its promotional interests, are replete with images of maleness (cf. Williams and Woodhouse, 1991; Williams and Taylor, 1994) [1]. Life at Colby Town was no exception. Whilst in and around the club itself manliness was cultivated through the development of physical and emotional integrity (see chapters two and three), outside work, issues of consumption and personal identity dominated masculine concern (see chapter six). Added together these separate lifestyle elements mapped out the institutional guidelines of male behaviour, the rules of gender conformity, the limits of footballing masculinity.

Focusing on the key aspects of masculine construction within the lives of trainees at Colby, this chapter portrays how a range of both unofficial and official norms, standards and expectations influenced and informed individual gender identities. Two main theoretical concepts underpin the overall narrative. Firstly, the Gramscian (1971) notion of hegemony is used to frame and contextualize discussion surrounding the construction of divergent trainee masculinities. Secondly, in accordance with the class-based inferences made so far, working-class shop-floor culture is employed as the back-drop against which this range of masculinities is subsequently located (see for example Willis, 1977. 1979; Clarke, 1979; Collinson, 1992a). What transpires is a broadly descriptive analysis within which trainees are categorized according to their general lifestyle behaviours, their commitment to occupational success, and the specific masculine traits which they exhibit.

#### Masculine Construction: Institution and Individual

Though it is not my intention here to debate the detailed theoretical complexities of masculine construction, it would be inappropriate and inaccurate to discuss professional football's heavily gendered complexion in relation to the existence of a singular, monolithic masculine form. Instead, I take as my starting point an acknowledgement of the view that within professional football (as in any institution) a dominant or hegemonic masculinity presides at all times, beneath which a hierarchy of alternative subordinate masculinities continually challenge and contest this pre-eminent position [2].

Given this theoretical pre-disposition, how might we explain the formation of trainee gender identity at Colby Town? First, let us consider the hegemonic masculine ideals in place as regards the club itself. Trainee life at Colby was defined in terms of an explicit institutional logic which incorporated notions of personal integrity, conscientiousness, discipline and the development of a healthy 'professional attitude' (see chapters two and three). Such values, in themselves, strongly reflected a masculine working-class legacy which has come to shape the historical contours of the professional game (cf. Taylor, 1971a, 1971b; Critcher, 1972; Clarke, 1973). More specifically, 'professional attitude' held particular importance in terms of how well trainees were seen to accept traditional working practice, in that its assessment was based around the extent to which individuals accommodated both the routines of occupational duty and the physical and psychological rigours of actual performance.

Crucial in this sense was that all boys demonstrated a keen and 'hardy' enthusiasm for the game, a forceful 'will-to-win', an acceptance of workplace subservience, an ability to conform, and a commitment to social and professional cohesion. Providing trainees readily adhered to these stipulated norms and values, and providing also that they developed and matured to expected levels of footballing competence, they then stood a reasonable chance of successfully completing the transitional phase from 'apprentice' to 'artisan'.

Although levels of enthusiasm and motivation varied amongst youth team members, central to the occupational identities of all trainees was a general commitment to a successful career in football, and a psychological

acceptance of institutionally defined hegemonic masculine requirements. In conjunction with these ideals, however, traineeship was also lived out in relation to a number of unofficial behavioural norms and values, which collectively informed and impinged upon individual masculine constructions. Issues and experiences concerning heterosexual relations, wealth, and consumption, for example, all had a part to play in this respect (see also Hollands, 1990; Willis, 1990; Griffin, 1993). Added to this, the hyper-masculine behaviours of a selection of Colby's professional players also had a significant, if distanced, impact on trainee life patterns. What this meant in terms of the formation of individual masculine identities, was that whilst being obliged to consider the occupational standards espoused by club officials, trainees were also compelled to adhere to the social expectations of the all-male culture within which they lived and worked. Because degrees of individual investment within 'official' and 'unofficial' spheres varied, these somewhat contradictory circumstances necessarily led to the generation of a range of divergent trainee masculinities, a closer examination of which I now undertake.

### Conspicuous Consumption: Clothes, Cars and 'Cash to Spare'?

As we have already seen, a key leisure-time pursuit for trainees at Colby Town was to enter the consumer market-place. Here three main areas of consumption dominated individual spending; clothes, cars and socializing (see chapter six). Together these interests formed a series of tightly inter-weaved linkages around which wider notions of 'social-life' were established. Moreover, they were further connected via a matrix of

assumptions concerning the establishment and fulfilment of masculine prowess and reputation.

According to popular peer group belief, for example, the ultimate trainee social pursuit of 'women' and 'sex' could only be carried out to its full potential if and when one could boast; mobility via car ownership, an extensive range of designer clothing, a healthy cash-flow position, and frequent appearances "out on the town". Cumulatively, these lifestyle features necessarily allowed a demonstration of wealth, style and consumptive power which readily enhanced individual images of maleness.

Considered within the broader context of youth culture such trends are not atypical. Hollands (1990:150), for instance, has highlighted the way in which, despite their lack of disposable income, "clothing was the major item of consumption" for the Youth Trainees within his study. Similarly, in reporting the findings of their survey of young people in Scotland, Hendry et al. (1993:126) have stated that not only are "appearance and fashion" likely to represent common elements of peer group status amongst adolescent males, but in addition, such lifestyle components may also be related to class origin in terms of style replication (see also Clarke, 1976; Hall and Jefferson, 1976).

As far as trainees at Colby were concerned, contemporary dress-sense was tantamount to group acceptance. Clothes spoke implicitly of the individual beneath them, and were looked upon as an indication of the extent to which individuals adhered to informal group norms. Insofar as professional footballers (within England at least) have long since regarded themselves as influential trend-setting agents (cf. Gowling, 1974; Chapman, 1993; Taylor

and Ward, 1995), the purchase of exclusive designer clothing for boys at Colby symbolized not only their levels of wealth and social standing, but their desire to be associated with the game's elite male order. First year trainees in particular felt the pressure of fashion conformity more than most.

AP: There seems to be an identity thing going on around clothes, do you feel under pressure to buy certain kinds of clothing?

Charlie: There probably is. I think the lads buy clothes that are very similar, but they buy them, and they're like, 80 or 90 quid for some. You tend to, like, buy pairs of jeans that you can buy from 'Next' or something for about 35 quid, but they go and buy some for 90 [quid] or whatever.

AP: What sort of makes are you talking about?

Charlie: 'Armarni' [Gorgio Armarni] an' stuff like that, 'Ralph Lauren'. I've got 'Armarni' ones on now. Look. Its just silly money really and its just daft, and you just do it 'cos...I mean you look good. You look good in the same stuff...without the 'Armarni' stuff on, but its just because its got the 'Armarni' [motif] on that I feel a bit more confident. I know it sounds daft but...Its the same when you've got a shirt on or whatever, it just makes you feel a bit 'bigger'. That's the way it is. Its just daft money. I wish I could have the self-control to try not to spend that sort of money.

Crucial here, was a need to match the precedent set by older, and theoretically more affluent, trainee group members.

Neil: You'd probably get 'ripped' [ridiculed], if you went and got some 'Mish-Mash' jeans, but if you get some like 'Armarni' or 'Replay' or something like that, its in the - y'know, [its] what level they're at in clothing, so nothing will be said.



AP: Second year's you're talking about?

Neil: Yeah. But if you get anything like 'Wranglers' or anything like that you get 'ripped', totally 'ripped'. So really you've got to stick with the lads if that's what you like.

Charlie: I think the second years are very much image conscious...The clothes thing, its the second years that's got the clothes, 'cos if the second years didn't have 'em, we wouldn't get 'em. But I think the clothes is just a way of showing people that we've got the money. Its just a daft image thing I reckon.

Adrian: The second years... they've all got nice clothes and everything, and I think that when we [first years] first came here, probably still now, they've got a lot bigger wardrobes than us. They'll 'rip' us sometimes for like, "Oh no, I can't believe you've got those jeans on", and really, y'know, that's intimidating 'cos, y'know, we'd like to have clothes like that, y'know, expensive clothes. But...its not easy when you've been on YT money and then you're, y'know, trying to - I suppose you're copying them...clothes are just so expensive what we buy, and I suppose sometimes you just feel under pressure that you've got to wear, [or] buy the same clothes - 'Ralph Lauren', 'Replay' jeans, 'Paul Smith', 'Stone-Island', things like that, and 'Hugo Boss' stuff. Its ridiculous really. I mean, I think these 'Paul Smith' jeans were 50 quid or 60 quid. In a way its like when we were at school, you try and look you're best - well, we tried to look pretty smart, and if one of the lads got a nice pair of shoes, we'd all copy. Its just the way life is really and its to do with who you associate with.

Neither did informal controls over standards of dress relent in the case of everyday casual and work-place clothing. If daily apparel failed to emanate from the sporting repertoires of specific companies (i.e. Nike, Reebok, Adidas, Umbro, Mizuno, Puma), then it failed to gain peer group approval. In turn, stringent guidelines were in play as to the way in which clothes were worn. Around the club itself training tops and sweaters hung loose, tracksuit bottoms and shorts remained untied, football socks were always

rolled down, and running/training shoes were held in place only by the force of a delicately tensed lace, the stunted ends of which were not tied but tucked into the respective sides of each shoe. In this sense, sub-cultural style held considerable sway, to the point where consumer culture, 'the look' and the fashion-based expectations of various sporting industries clearly dominated trainee appearance (see also Featherstone, 1991; Hargreaves, 1987; Parker, 1996b) [3].

Of course, given that an increase in monthly wages was dependent upon the fall of one's seventeenth birthday, for many first years the upkeep of conspicuous consumption posed a myriad of problems. During the early months of the season younger trainees often found themselves in an endless and expensive chase to keep abreast of fashion whilst having limited spending power at their disposal (see chapter six). Aside from clothes, other consumer goods proved equally inaccessible. Car ownership was one aspect of consumption which categorically eluded those on YT allowance. For this reason cars marked the ultimate distinction in age-group status. Whilst enhancing the masculine peer-group kudos of those fortunate enough to have them they also provided an element of personal independence, aiding weekend trips home and helping to alleviate levels of boredom during weekday evenings.

Initially these factors did generate feelings of resentment on the part of younger trainees, particularly when their requests for lifts to various places were turned down and appeals for inclusion in evening 'joy-rides' ridiculed. But as first years soon found out, even when the conditions of increased financial income did materialize, things did not always turn out as they had

imagined. In fact so eager were many to enter the realms of 'ultimate' consumption that they made little, if any, progress in terms of disposable spending.

AP: Has getting more money made a difference to you?

Nick: Not particularly, 'cos I'm after a car an' like I've saved - I'm on like 330 [pounds] a month [after tax and lodgings deductions] 30 pound comes out in pension, 150 I've put away for a car, so I'm comin' out wi' just over what I would normally get [on YT money]. And I've also booked a holiday, so I've got to save up that money. Anyway, but hopefully, if I get my tax back this month I should be laughing, I'll get my [holiday] spending money paid for.

Steve: I mean the more money I have now, I seemed better off before, y'know what I mean, 'cos I was on a tighter budget. I mean, I've only just got 'big money' this month but like I've blown it really...I've spent double what I would usually spend.

Davey: I've got more money than when I started off, but now I've bought my car, or I'm buying my car an' that, it still works out after I've paid for that the same as I had before but its cheaper for me to get home. It still costs me 25 quid in the car, but it used to cost me 40/50 quid on the bus and the train. Its a lot cheaper but its just...so expensive and you're having to fork out money all the time, but I like it 'cos it gives you a lot of independence..

Charlie: I'm a bit more easy with money, just get rid of it as soon as I get it...Like I've been buying a lot more clothes than I used to, and spending a lot more on beer and going out...I'm just pissing away money really, y'know, just going to the garage, y'know, you can spend two quid a time just on food, or if you're going out [mid-week drinking] say you spend 10-15 quid. Clothes, y'know, if you buy two or three things a month its going to come to over a hundred quid so it does take up a lot, and I mean, I've got my car as well now, and I've got to pay my Dad back for that and that's a big financial investment...

So obvious was this relational increase in consumption that over a period of time a small number of first years began to display an altogether more objective standpoint towards the perceived benefits of 'big money', whereby the whole notion of financial privilege was put into question.

Davey: You can go and do what you want...which a lot of them do, they just go out and spend. Like Steve Williamson, he's just gone out and spent all his signing-on fee. He had something like 800-an-odd quid from his wage an' that, or he got just over a grand, and now he's down to just over 200 quid, in a month or something...

AP: What did he spend it on?

Davey: He bought some clothes and going out in the evenings. Its up to him, its his money i'n'it, but he regrets it now. He just doesn't realize how quickly it goes...Whereas I put all mine into my insurance for my car, so I mean I spent mine as well but I haven't wasted it..

For first year goalkeeper Charlie Spencer spending money appeared to have become one aspect of life he no longer felt in complete control of.

Charlie: 'Cos you've got the money, you go and spend it. I think all of us do that, with the exception of about two who look after their money in the way that they should for kids our age. 'Cos there's not many kids our age got that sort of money with signing-on fees an' stuff.

AP: Do you think its daft having that sort of money?

Charlie: It is to start off with. Like the second years had it as soon as they came here, an' I think that's made them what they are now...

AP: Which is?

Charlie: Well, they don't have to worry about the money they've got now, they just piss it away. They buy cars that they can't afford, clothes that they can't afford, holidays that they can't afford, and they end up borrowing money off their mums and dads and getting overdrafts an' stuff. They'll buy all they're clothes and a car, and insurance an' stuff, then they'll borrow off their mum and dad to go out. And there's a lot of mums and dads that are on the same sort of money as they are, and they've got commitments with it, and we've got nothing really. Why 'cos the money's there you have to spend it, I don't know. We all do it.

Despite recognizing their own naivete, many boys found it hard to curb spending habits. Coming-of-age financially brought with it a host of pressures and obligations which had to be fulfilled if peer group acceptance was to be maintained. Besides the purchase of clothes and cars, turning seventeen marked the point at which trainees were expected to associate and socialize more readily with reserve (and sometimes first) team players - to copy their behavioural trends, to frequent their social venues, to emulate their general lifestyles. No longer was it enough to simply enact the social status of first year 'skivvy', from this point on, institutional belief held that trainees should take it upon themselves to bolster their own identity via a pursuit of more 'professional' past-times (i.e. regular drinking sessions with team-mates, [hetero]sexual exploit and promiscuity, daily visits to "the bookies") all of which contradicted the clean-living intentions of club desire (cf. Wilshaw, 1970). Speaking during an end-of-season interview about the social experiences of trainees in general, second year Gary Riley described how youth team drinking habits in particular appeared to reflect this kind of masculine 'occupational inheritance'.

AP: What about things like drugs or alcohol, have you been given advice on things like that. 'Cos there seems to be this thing about drinking and footballers?

Gary: I'll be honest with you right, it is true... Its just the lifestyle. Because what you're doing, you've not got the chance to go out like people who've got normal jobs. They can go out and have a couple of pints at dinner, and a couple after work. Here, once you do decide to go out on the piss, you go out on the piss and you get pissed, and you drink like fuck. Because its so highly pressurized. Sometimes you get so depressed you just want to go out and get steamin', and you do. I mean I've been steamin' a few times up here. I don't know why it is but everybody, well, the majority of footballers, do drink heavily, I would say with a few exceptions. Especially at this club, all the young lads drink like fuck.

Smoking too, was all part of an image construction process into which the majority of trainees were keen to invest [4].

AP: When they [trainees] go out does everybody like a smoke as well?

Gary: Well a lot of them do. At weekend...there's about two people out of the whole 16(sic) of us that don't.

AP: And is that for the same reason, that you can't do it, that its restricted here?

Gary: I don't think so, its just 'cos when they're pissed they do it. I mean I do it anyhow. I do it all the time 'cos I used to smoke when I was at home. Like, I do when I go out for a drink up here, but at the weekend I do it properly again all the time...

AP: But how much of that is about identity as a footballer...Is there something 'good' about smoking alot or drinking alot?

Gary: Yeah I think it is definitely. 'Cos when we first came up here...everyone was like, "Oh you're a disgrace, get out of my room, don't talk to me", and stuff like that, as though it was something out of the ordinary. I mean now if I go out with a pack, everyone's "Oh give us one of them" - I think its just the image really...when they're having a drink I think they just

like to do it for effect. They're not enjoying it because they get up in the morning and they say "Fuckin' hell, my hands stink, my breath, I can taste it, its fuckin' horrible", and things like that. But it is definitely, yeah.

Given the competitive pressures surrounding trainee life and the resultant enthusiastic approach which individuals employed towards social endeavour (cf. Gowling, 1974), it was perhaps not surprising that alongside feelings of overall merriment other less positive consequences of nights-out emerged. Common, for example, were bouts of vomiting in the early hours of the morning, hang-overs during training, and personal vows never to do such things again. Worse still, for some, this social catalogue of smoke, drink and consumptive machismo regularly transcended the realms of fun and enjoyment and turned instead into an excuse for displays of aggression and violence which at times implicated the rest of the trainee group.

Sentiment towards such occurrences differed greatly. Whilst some regarded 'social' violence as a form of amusement, others put it down to gross immaturity. Either way, far from constituting a general trend, behaviour of this nature was predictably attributable to particular parties - namely second years Robin Hindle and Ben Tattersall - both of whom were renowned amongst the youth team group for their lack of self-control in social situations.

Colin: Like Robin, I mean he's so funny when he goes out. I mean, he's brilliant. Y'know he'll have such a laugh, and he'll 'take the mickey' out of people. But like some people take it the wrong way so he'll end up getting in a fight or getting into trouble. But that's the way he is. He doesn't do it on purpose, he just does it like having a bit of a laugh.

Jimmy: I think...they want to be noticed, sort of thing. Probably 'cos when they've been at their old school they've probably been good at everything. Y'know what I mean, they've been like 'top-man' an' that, an' they've come here an' everyone's like that. Y'know what I mean, an' I think they can't handle it. They want to be the best...they want to be when everyone says "Oh yeah, he's a good laugh", an' stuff like that. They just want to be noticed don't they...an all they want to do when they go out is get a few drinks down them and they just want to fight. Like a couple of times we've been out, all the lads, they have 3 or 4 pints and they just want to fight. Bloody stupid.

Described by first year Charlie Spencer as the team "nutcase" who always came back "smacked to bits at the weekends", Robin Hindle demonstrated his aggressive tendencies early-on in the 1993/94 season by head-butting first year Andy Higgins during an argumentative night-out in town. Sponsoring serious repercussions for all trainees, this incident not only threw Higgins' stay at Colby into question on account of his own personal discomfort, but resulted also in an official club warning for Hindle and the overall reduction of Saturday-night curfew times from 12 midnight to 10.30pm.

This type of activity was relatively uncommon in that Hindle had a more usual tendency to direct his frustrations outside the confines of the trainee group. Ben Tattersall, meanwhile, adopted a much more parochial approach. Harboursing persistent grievances with certain squad members, he was especially partial to initiating seemingly needless confrontations with fellow second year Paul Turner.

Paul: I mean, last year...Tatts and Robin, they used to have a bit to drink and they used to think they were like 'Rocky'. Like all the lads used to talk about 'em an' all the lads used to slaughter 'em 'cos they always used to start fighting everyone. An' I had a little bit of trouble



with Tatts. ~ We were up the chippy at the top of the road about half eleven and he walked past an' I goes "Oh you're really pissed", an' he goes, "Come on then, if you think I'm that pissed I'll still have you". Y'know, we were all stood there about six of us and we just laughed it off. We were all in my bedroom chatting after an' he came up like, and kicked the door open and started going, "Come on then", an' all this. So I went to see him after, and I said, "What's up", and he said, "Nothing",.. an' he goes, "Oh I can't remember hardly anything"...

With regard to general patterns of trainee consumption and behaviour, it is important to point out that although drinking trends did appear to follow professional player influence, smoking and violence in social spheres equated less obviously with instances of 'occupational inheritance'. True, trainees had witnessed the outbreak of drunken scuffles amongst professionals at internal club functions (i.e. Christmas and end-of-season parties), as they had the occasional smoking of cigars and cigarettes. But by and large these latter habits seemed to mirror the traditional expectations of working-class adolescent life and contemporary youth culture far more than the cloning of professional player conduct (see for example Willmott, 1966; Parker, 1974; Willis, 1977; Hollands, 1990; Cannan, 1996).

Yet such habits were not the only ones to feature prominently within the social lives of Colby trainees. Crucial also to individual and group outings, and to the overall establishment of masculine prowess was the pursuit and exploitation of heterosexual relations ~ a topic never far from peer-group discussion.

### Heterosexual Relations: Girlfriends, 'Groupies', 'Babes' and 'Rippers'

Girls were something of a contentious issue for Colby trainees. Getting a girlfriend was, for the majority, a relatively unproblematic task. Working out whether or not the club actually approved of such relationships, was another matter altogether.

AP: Do they ever say anything about girlfriends or anything like that?

Steve: No. I mean, it would be better if they told us whether like we could [have them],.. I mean't lads they don't know,..I mean we don't see any girls like hardly anyway, but if we did we don't know whether we'd be allowed one or not, I suppose they can't stop you havin' one, but...

AP: What, you mean in Colby?

Steve: Yeah, I mean they don't tell you. They don't sort of encourage you, but they don't discourage you, y'know what I mean. They should let you know one way or t'other I think..

Central to this state of confusion were two contrasting beliefs concerning heterosexual relations to which all trainees had been exposed either prior to, or during, their time at Colby. On the one hand, girls were located by coaches and officials as 'the root of all evil', and as facilitators of occupational failure due to their distractive potential in terms of mental and physical commitment (see also Hopcraft, 1971; Shankly, 1977; Sabo and Panepinto, 1990) [5]. On the other, 'steady' girlfriends were regarded by some as beneficial to the lives of young players in that they allegedly provided a calming social influence which necessarily reinforced notions of

discipline, loyalty, and personal responsibility (see Douglas, 1973; Gowling, 1974; Brooking, 1981; Best, 1990).

Both sides of this moral dichotomy were evident amidst trainee opinion. Revealing the existence of this latter standpoint, for instance, two boys involved in long-term relationships, Gary Riley and Davey Duke, mapped out their understanding of the common-sense rationale behind it.

Gary: I mean I think it does you the world of good having a steady girlfriend, 'cos it stops you messing around and wanting to go out all the time, and you've got something to look forward to at the weekend. That's how I see what I'm doing, 'cos I look forward to seeing my girlfriend at the weekend. Whereas if you haven't got that, you just want to go out and get loads of different girls don't you. And that's when you get yourself in trouble messing around, when you start nicking other lads girlfriends - that's when you start getting your head kicked in.

Davey: It does keep you out of trouble, y'know what I mean. It stops you goin' out with your mates an' stuff like that. But they [the club] probably don't see it that way. They just probably think you should just concentrate on your football. But I think that the ones with the girlfriends up here are the more sensible, y'know what I mean, the ones that don't go out drinkin' every night.

Because the majority of trainees professed to having girlfriends, either in and around Colby or within the vicinity of their home-towns, such inferences formed the accepted basis of general peer group belief. Of specific concern to many, however, was the way in which a more critical view of girls surfaced in and through the informal interactive messages of the work-place. A central figure in this respect was coach Terry Jackson.

Gary: He always used to say, "Oh you're going home to see Jen are you", all the time like this, and I just used to say, "Yeah I am". And he always used to give me stick about it but he just doesn't bother anymore. He's just give up now 'cos he knows he can't do anything about it... Jimmy, whose like one of his 'mates',...he's just started going out with a girl back in Scotland, and Terry gives him a bit of stick about going home and seeing her every weekend, and how he should be stopping here "reviewing his game" instead of boning his bird all the time...You can tell he doesn't like you having a girlfriend. He wants you 100% committed. Nothing else to stand in your way.

Nick: Its int' corridor, its never a sit down talk...about girlfriends. He'll [Terry] ask, "Did you give your lass one this weekend", an' things like that. An' "Oh you want to kick her out o't winda if she don't want nowt t'do wi football", an' things like that. That's what he's like wi ya about relationships. I don't think he minds us seein' girls or owt like that, its just that he 'teks the mick'...

Local boy Martin Walsh found the personal nature of such inference particularly disconcerting.

Martin: He [Terry] seems to think that if you've got a girlfriend, you're married. But my view on it is if you've got a day off or an afternoon free or something like that, you take your bird out or yougo to the cinema or something like that. Its not as if you're fuckin' married, 'Oh yeah, I'm comin' to your house every bastard day, I'm gonna make you breakfast in the morning', and things like that. He thinks you're movin' in together. He don't like it, y'know, 'cos he thinks you're just gonna think about your bird all the time.

AP: Has he said that to you?

Martin: Yeah. That's what I mean, he gets involved in your personal life and that's nothin' to do with him. If I want a girlfriend or if I don't its nothin' to do with him.

AP: Well what does he say to you?

Martin: He just said, "Oh you've got to show her whose boss", an' all this and, "You're under the thumb", an' all this shit...

To some extent these data serve to reflect little more than a genuine professional desire, on the part of Terry Jackson, to closely monitor individual levels of occupational dedication, enthusiasm and commitment, whilst outlining one of the ways in which he sought to make himself more accessible in terms of coach/trainee relations. What they fail to articulate, however, is the defining limits of club tolerance as regards girlfriends in general. An issue which I eventually took up with Jackson during interview.

AP: What about stuff like girlfriends. Does the club have a policy? Does it...mind?

Terry: Well sometimes. Its down to the individual. Sometimes we've got lads that have got very steady girlfriends. We've got young lads that haven't got any girlfriends. They're all different. As long as they know where they're priorities should be. I mean at the end of the day they're priority should be trying to make a profession in the game. I always think if they do everything they can with their football, and they work very hard during the week, then let them go out at the weekend, let them enjoy themselves - go out with their girlfriends and have an enjoyable weekend and get a little bit of relaxation which young lads need.

AP: There seems to be two schools of thought about if they have a girlfriend it might distract them or it might quieten them down?

Terry: Well, I think what suits one doesn't suit the other. We've got totally opposite lads here where some...have got girlfriends since they've been at school, and some lads that don't want that, so again its an entirely individual choice.

AP:           So there's no policy on it then?

Terry:       No. No policy at all. The only policy we have is if its getting a little bit too heavy and they're not concentrating on their football and its all the other side, then we'll crack down. But otherwise we just leave it alone to the lads. I mean at the end of the day they are young men.

Though structured around a liberal rhetoric of 'subjective choice', there are, of course, shades of official prescription here as regards the boundaries of trainee relational activity. Added to this, implicit within Jackson's more general everyday assertions was the distinctive location of women as a potentially contaminating force, against which trainee careers must be protected. Arguably, such codes were intimately linked to broader underlying assumptions concerning the way in which young footballers may well be viewed by girls as a 'good catch' on account of their affluent and prestigious occupational position. A scenario which left Colby trainees, it seemed, in continual danger of being 'trapped' within a highly charged emotional nexus of 'loose' female sexual advance and 'natural' male desire.

Amidst these pervasive, if sometimes, quite vague elements of institutional belief, were reflections of what Hollway (1984:232) has described as a "male sexual drive discourse". Portrayed as beings dominated by an innate reproductive urge, within such postulations men are defined as sexually incontinent and out of control, and thereby 'naturally' excused their frequency and method of sexual approach. Women, on the other hand, are depicted as sexual subordinates and/or objects of male desire, who, in embracing this 'object' position are thus located, Hollway (1984:232/3) goes on, as "men 'trappers' via their powers of sexual attraction".

The existence of such discursive practices at Colby, meant that player popularity and media attention were implicitly framed as hazardous aspects of 'professional' life. Public exposure was seen to create the conditions under which women might represent some kind of sexual 'attraction' to trainees, with players themselves possessing their own 'attractive' qualities in the form of occupational prestige, financial gain and social standing. Hence, whilst fostering a desire to entice female company, in accordance with the all-male peer group relations in play, club culture also engendered an inherent fear of heterosexual intimacy on the grounds of exploitative risk.

So intense were Terry Jackson's feelings towards this situation, that in addition to informal verbal manifestation, his own protective measures were occasionally displayed through explicit gesture and action.

Martin: He's [Terry] just like a kid...He can't relate to people...If we went on tour, or we went to another place, or at the ground, like if a bird walked in you'd go "Woh! Woh! Phore!", wouldn't you, "Fuckin' hell, what a bird", an' all this, an' Terry would think, 'Oh fuck', he'd go red and he couldn't talk to them...Like the insurance bird [female insurance representative] comes in, an' she's a bit of a 'sort' like, an' she's walking up an' she says, "Oh, can I see the lads about their insurance?" And he can't look her in the face and say, "Look, this is no, like place, 'cos the changing rooms are there an' everyone's walking round with their nobs out an' that - do you mind just waiting outside". He has to say, "Look, just get out!". He can't talk to her...and by doing what he does to the lads, like keeping them locked-up an' that, he doesn't get any respect. And that's why when he says things to them, they just think, 'Prick'.

AP: But maybe he thinks that if he did trust you, you'd let him down?

Martin: But he doesn't give us a chance, which he should do, 'cos there's only one way of finding out isn't there.

Insofar as popular representations of professional player demise occasionally attempt to sensationalize 'an association with women' as one possible aspect of individual downfall (see for example Best, 1990), there maybe some grounds upon which the attitudes displayed by Terry Jackson could be seen as a worthwhile consciousness raising exercise. Trainees were, however, already aware of such relational pitfalls. Martin Walsh, for example, went on to explain how, as a result of his own negative experiences, he had come to adopt a closer scrutinization of male/female relations particularly in terms of personal exploitation.

Martin: I don't just go for a bird just 'cos she's gonna sit on my cock, y'know what I mean...I'm not gonna go with some bimbo like some of the lads. I mean its just the talk i'nit. A lot of its bull-shit what they come out with...

AP: Do you think there is something about this footballer and...[interrupted]

Martin: Footballer - birds, yeah. It goes don't it - I mean you get labelled 'footballer' and just 'cos you've got money in your pocket, probably a flash car, and then some of the footballers who do let what they've got go to their heads, they do take it to their advantage...

AP: Do you find it then at your age?

Martin: At my age yeah. You get like stupid little girls an' that, but I mean the lads love it, all the slags an' that, they love it. I mean I have a laugh, I mean yeah there is birds but you've just got to be careful ain't ya. I mean 'cos you don't want nobody coming back at you, do you, to be fair. I mean, if I go somewhere like Manchester with mi mates, I'm someone else me, same as I am on this fuckin' tape. I'm Billy Bunter for all



they fuckin' know. I mean they don't give a shit do they. But round here I've got to be careful fuckin', 'cos its mi home town, an' if mi bird found out its end-of-story i'n'it. But I mean I like mi bird, an' there's plenty of other birds...but I don't use mi bird, I don't just shag her like all the other lads who just want a bird for a shag, 'cos I get on with her.

AP: And you know the same with her?

Martin: Yeah, that she's not going out with me just because I play football.

As well as demonstrating the existence of some kind of protective emotional device, Martin Walsh provides clear evidence here of the more general way in which boys at Colby both viewed and verbalized the details of their associations with girls. In accordance with other examples of male-centred working-class adolescent life, a distinct form of trainee chauvinism existed whereby girls were predominantly portrayed as being utilized purely for the sexual fulfilment which they provided (cf. Parker, 1974; Willis, 1977; Jenkins, 1983; Wood, 1984; Walker, 1988). These attitudes were accompanied by forms of male-centred jargon which sought to accurately describe the sexual and/or physical attributes of females.

Within this system of trainee categorization girls and young women were generally referred to as "birds", "tarts" or "chicks", irrespective of the depth of their associations with youth team members. The only real exception in this sense was the prefix "classy" which informally signalled some kind of professional, or socially mobile demeanour on the part of the females concerned. In turn, girls making explicit advertisements towards their sexual availability were commonly known as "slags", whilst those wishing to remain distant from intimate sexual involvement were rendered

“tight fuckers”. Likewise, just as girls who possessed ‘attractive’ facial and/or bodily features were termed “babes”, those failing to match such group-imposed standards were accorded the more derogatory label of “dogs” or “rippers” (see also Cowie and Lees, 1981).

Further connotations can also be drawn from the words of Martin Walsh as regards broader youth team attitudes towards heterosexual relations. Whilst the majority of trainees at Colby were in the position of either having a girlfriend or not, some boys adopted an intricately balanced double-standard accommodating a combination of ‘steady girlfriend’ and sexual promiscuity (see also Jenkins, 1983; Griffin, 1993). Player possession of “a bit on the side” or “a bit of spare”, it seemed, went a long way towards the individual fulfilment of institutional expectations surrounding the creation of an acceptable masculine identity.

Neil: ...most of the lads e’ll say, y’know, you say you’re a footballer and you’ll get the ‘chick’ and use her and that’s it. I mean, when I was talking to those lasses in college that lass that I fancy, she goes, “I know you’s are all footballers,” I said, “What do you mean by that,” and she wouldn’t tell me. Well what she meant was that you just go with one and then go with another, and you’re all over the place. All the women say about footballers is that they just want women and then finish with them...

AP: But is that not something other young lads do?

Neil: Well I mean they’d like to wouldn’t they, but because we’re like footballers and we’ll pull the ‘chicks’ an’ that we’ll probably get called more of a slag. Like if you go with more you get called a slag. But if you go with one or two you won’t get called that much. But footballers seem to go for loads don’t they, ‘cos of who they are.

Interesting here is Neil's use of the term 'slag' in relation to trainees themselves. He was of the unique opinion that to be known as a male 'slag' was in fact a relatively undesirable position to be in particularly with regard to one's future potential as a prospective boyfriend. Conversely, most trainees believed that the worse their reputations with girls became, the more likely they were to attract additional female company. The possible achievement of these broader aims was further reinforced by the fact that daily club training sessions were often observed not only by an array of curious adult spectators, but also by cohorts of school-aged girls known amongst youth team members as "groupies". Alongside myths of footballing virility, this highly visible female presence represented an example of the way in which trainees were a much sought-after commodity within the teenage heterosexual market-place. In fact so enthusiastic were a number of these girls that as well as regularly attending youth team fixtures, they devoutly frequented the club each weekday lunch-time in order to catch a glimpse of their trainee heroes, and/or pass-on affectionate notes, cards and small gifts to them.

Ironically, because intimate physical encounters with "groupies" were only considered a possible option if and when trainees "couldn't get a shag anywhere else", on the whole these recurrent habits merely served to recede squad feeling towards their reverent fans. Nevertheless, as far as wider social conquest was concerned such occurrences did provide some measure of the extent to which trainees status could be utilized to command female attention - an occupational benefit which individuals were only too happy to sample in terms of their own levels of social exploitation.

Nick: Like its good because you're a footballer and you've got that name of footballer which you can flash about... its being macho, y'know what I mean, that's what it is, "Oh I'm a footballer"...and you can use it to come across to people an' that..

Jimmy: They go out and say, "I'm at Colby", an' all that. When I go out it never comes into my mind to tell everyone that. It might do, if they ask you what you do I don't lie - sometimes I have 'cos its not the right time or the place - but other times you say, "I play football". Y'know what I mean, well its not worth lying is it, especially if its a nice bird, and there's a chance of a 'pull' mate, tell her [laughter]..

Colin: People put you in the same place as though you're a superstar an' its good really. I mean it might sound as though I'm being big-headed but its true,...and you'll get like you're girls an' whatever, an' they'll think you're some sort of superstar. Its great, an' you have a bit of a laugh, an' you go along with it don't you. But its good for your social life I must admit.

Whilst interview discussion with trainees raised a host of issues surrounding both the negative and positive aspects of heterosexual relations, it also facilitated an indication of the way in which sexual activity was framed within the context of wider work-place relations. In this sense, the manifestation of chauvinistic codes and attitudes within the personal lives of trainees symbolized not only the inferior social position accorded girls and girlfriends, but also the ingrained depth of male sexist practice at the club. In constituting a key aspect of identity formation amongst trainee and professional players alike, females (and their associated worth) featured as a fundamental element of everyday life in this respect. Moreover, the location of women as subordinate to men within the hierarchical bounds of hegemonic gender relations was central to the conversational rounds of the work-place, particularly in terms of the shop-floor cultural discourses employed.

### Masculinity, Humour and 'Working-Class Shop-Floor Culture'

The constituent elements of the occupational culture surrounding working-class shop-floor life have been well documented (Tolson, 1977; Clarke, 1979; Cockburn, 1983; Collinson, 1988. 1992a). Within this literature manual labour has been cited as a collective whirlpool of informal work-place relations predominantly comprising; a strict male chauvinism, a 'breadwinner'/manual production mentality, and a coarse sexist humour manufactured around practical jokes, gestures and racist/homophobic connotation (cf. Beynon, 1975; Gray, 1987; Collinson, 1988).

In accordance with these inclusive elements, the foundations of occupational culture at Colby were grounded predominantly within the realms of sexuality (and to a lesser degree ethnicity), and were made manifest in and through the intricacies of institutional language and interaction. Central, to the enactment of this cultural lifestyle was the stylized adoption of a sexually explicit and often highly derogatory vocabulary which was ideally characterized by a sharp-pointed form of delivery.

Put into practice within the context of relational work-place humour, such language took the shape of the previously well documented process of "piss taking" - or "ripping" as it was more commonly known amongst Colby Town players (cf. Willis, 1977, 1979; Clarke, 1979; Riemer, 1979; Lyman, 1987; Collinson, 1988, 1992a; Chapman, 1993). Here, in order to accumulate any kind of peer-group credibility individuals were not only required to 'take' the insults of others, but to 'give' as good as they got, thereby proving their masculine worth (see also White, 1971). To this end,

“taking the piss” was all about administering verbal “wind-ups” to the point where work-mates failed to cope with the pressures in hand and ultimately “snapped”. In separate interviews carried out towards the end of the 1993/94 season, I asked a number of trainees how they had adapted to the details of such informal methods of working practice.

Neil: You’ve got to have thick skin haven’t you. It just goes in one ear and out the other one most of the time.

AP: But did it get to you at first?

Neil: At first it did yeah. But y’know, they take the piss out of you, you take the piss out of them, that’s the only way to do it really. I really don’t mind. I mean, some can’t take it.

Adrian: Even sometimes now I get fed up with some of the lads. But y’know, you’ve got to ‘give it’ and you’ve got to ‘take it’ as well. Like when people started calling me ‘bush-head’ with my hair to begin with - ‘cos it was neither short or long - I was dying for it to grow. I still get called it now, but now its just a nickname, whereas to begin with it was personal. It doesn’t bother me now, but I struggled with it round at the ground a little...There are occasions when some people are in worse moods than others, and when somebody’s in a bad mood everybody will wind them up and they’ll get mad, but you’ve got to give and take it. But I think some people take it differently. I mean, sometimes, y’know, when its not you’re day, people wind you up, but its all part of it isn’t it. Everybody gives it out, you’ve got to try you’re best to take it.

Later:

Gary: Everyone just gets ‘ripped’ [ridiculed] to bits off one another. You’ve got to get on with that and not take things to heart really.

AP: Do you think that’s all part of football?

Gary: Definitely. Everywhere you go, its got to be the same. Its just a 'ripping society'. Everything - you get the rip took out of you for everything.

AP: How do you cope with that personally?

Gary: I didn't used to cope with it very well at all really at first, but I'm not so bothered now. I used to get dead mad and start lamping [hitting] people all over the place... Somebody would just say something daft which you would laugh about now, and I just used to get really daft and say, "Let's have a fight then". But now you just get used to it and laugh it off, and call somebody else a name back.

As well as being centred around the details of verbal comment, practical jokes were also a regular feature of trainee life in both occupational and social settings. Whilst in digs, the ransacking of beds and the hiding of personal possessions were favoured habits, common in the work-place was the random dousing of trainee underwear with 'Ralgex' and the filling of shoes with talcum powder. At the same time, urinating in temporarily abandoned cups of morning tea was not unheard of, nor were mock changing-room battles using tea, sugar, talcum powder, and/or antiseptic cream as ammunition.

As regards the everyday use of sexual connotation, women, sexual fantasy and derogatory sexist comment were elements around which trainee "piss-takes", "wind-ups" and practical jokes were often constructed. To this end, highly spurious stories existed regarding a host of female figures visibly recognizable to the trainee group as a whole (see also chapter five). Everyone 'knew', for example, that the "bird" who came into the club to sell insurance had "fucked all the first team" during the previous season. Likewise, the alleged promiscuous exploits of the female staff in the club

restaurant and laundry were “common knowledge”. On a more personal level, sexual fantasy often underpinned ‘humorous’ conjecture towards familial relations. Particularly popular in this respect were verbal attacks on girlfriends, mothers and/or other female relatives.

Gary: We have big slanging matches...where people’s mothers come into them. As you well know, mothers and girlfriends are a popular target...I mean, some of the things people come out with up here are outrageous. I mean, if you were back at school and someone said it you’d smack ‘em. I mean, you’d be having big fights about it an’ everything, ‘cos people just come up to you an’ say, “Oh you’re mum’s a fat slag mate”, an’ you’re like, that [gestures state of shock]. An’ if someone had said it to you for no reason at all in a different job or at school or something there’d be big brawls an’ everything. But I think that’s just a way of life really in football.

Of course, contrary to this latter inference, Colby Town should not be seen as an institutional isolate in terms of its facilitation of such a matriarchal sexist tone (see for example Lyman, 1987). Neither should it be regarded as an environment where “piss-taking” and other forms of humour necessarily followed an entirely predictable pattern. In addition to actual focus, style of comment also varied between drawn-out story, established joke, and more credible “one-liners”. Perhaps most surprising of all, however, was the severity with which these supposedly humorous remarks were often administered.

This morning conversation in the YT changing-room centered on Charlie’s sexual appetite and exploits. As we talk he tells us about the girl he ‘pulled’ at the United reserve team match. He gives all the preliminaries then ends-up saying he kissed her under the back of the stands. [Simon]: “You’d have been fuckin’ dead if someone had’ve caught you”. [Charlie]: “I was horny as fuck last night, I couldn’t give a shit”. [Simon]: “Yeah, but to be fair, she was fuckin’ mingin’” [not particularly attractive]. [Charlie]:



“Yeah, but I wouldn’t have said no to a blow-job”. [Simon]: “You’d let anybody give you a blow-job”. [Charlie]: “I’d let mi own mum give me a blow-job and you haven’t seen her...fat slut”.

(Fieldnotes, 12.01.94).

[YT changing-room prior to morning training session].  
[Neil]: “Last night I dreamt mi’ mum was up here for some reason”. [Pete]: “What an’ all the lads were shaggin’ her”.  
[Neil]: “Yeah, an’ I was shaggin’ her as well”. [Charlie]: “So you were shaggin’ her, an’ all the lads were, and your dad was sat in the corner givin’ it one’o’them [gestures masturbation] with the other finger up his arse?” [Neil]: “Yeah, he was. [Charlie]: “What an’ then that baby was here that your sister’s just had, and your dad was shaggin’ the baby as well?” [Neil]: “That’s just sick that is. There’s something wrong with you. Sick bastard”.

(Fieldnotes, 21.01.94).

Whilst women, heterosexual exploit and masturbation were all frequent topics of daily conversation at Colby, shop-floor culture also displayed a range of more negative verbal traits around which the formation of masculine identity took place. Most apparent in this respect were inferences towards issues of homosexuality and ethnicity. In terms of the hierarchical masculine structure in place at the club, alongside females and their related social standing, individuals of ethnic minority decent and/or homosexual tendency were vehemently regarded as inferior to the hegemonic trainee ideals in situ.

In the case of ethnicity, squad relations were particularly conducive to verbal chastisement in that all trainees were white. The most obvious manifestations of racist behaviour by trainees took place during day-release at Walton-Grange. Here a number of first years regularly made reference to members of both Asian and Black student groups as “niggers”, “woggs”,

“coons”, “black bastards” and/or “Joe Daki’s (Paki’s)” In this sense, boys of alternative ethnicities appeared to be regarded as some kind of masculine threat who irritated the majority of trainees by the way in which they adopted a casual, laid-back lifestyle demeanor and communicated more effectively with a range of female students.

[Walton-Grange College: Lunch-Time]. Sat in the canteen at dinner Steve Williamson begins to air his thoughts on people of different ethnicities, and to assess mine. [Steve]: “I hate woggs, they walk round as if they own this fuckin’ place. Are you racist Andy?” [AP]: “No, not really, I don’t mind who people are or where they come from”. [Steve]: “I am. I’m racist. I hate paki’s, they think they own this fuckin’ place. There’s fuckin’ loads of ‘em where I come from at ‘ome”.

(Fieldnotes, 03.02.94).

Homosexuality too proved an equally problematic notion for trainees to accept. Heterosexual standards amongst youth team members were straightforward. Males failing to enact the basic physical and verbal masculine expectations of footballing life - excessive drinking, sporting prowess and the vehement pursuit of women and sex - necessarily received a barrage of criticism as regards their “queer bastard” potential (see also Curry, 1991).

However, in relation to both these areas, contradictions in trainee behaviour did emerge. Despite their social attitudes towards issues of ethnicity, for instance, trainees spoke highly of Black college class-mates and the small number of senior Black players on contract at Colby. Rather than being regarded in a negative sense these individuals were admired for their contemporary dress-sense and for the commonly accepted fact that they were “quick fuckers” to play against. Ironically, even amidst these

observations there was evidence of dated racist assumption concerning the supposed physical attributes of Black sportsmen (see Lashley, 1980; Cashmore, 1982; Williams, 1994). Nonetheless, a kind of social/occupational double standard was clearly apparent here the likes of which was similarly evident where issues of homosexuality were concerned. For whilst being gay was completely anathema to trainee logic, discussion of national 'AIDS day' and wider sexual issues did provide some grounds upon which individuals began to reconsider their opinions towards such matters.

Back at the digs we watch MTV with the latest Madonna video. [Simon]: "I mean how can anybody be fuckin' gay with women like that about? My mum says that they're born with women's attitudes, that's why they're like that". We continue to discuss Channel 4's AIDS-day programmes. [Simon]: "It makes me fuckin' sick just thinkin' about it". I put it to Simon that footballers do things which other people might consider far from heterosexual. [AP]: "I mean, we all walk round naked, and get in the bath together, maybe people would think that was strange?" [Simon]: "Yeah, they might. I mean, you wouldn't go home to your mates an' talk about wankin' would you - I suppose it's different when lads live together". [Gary]: "I mean they say 1 in 5 is gay!" [Simon]: "So fuckin' 3 of them in that changing-room is fuckin' queer! I bet Turner is, he's always touchin' your dick an' that. An' Neil, he just sits there an' stares at your prick sometimes". [Gary] "Yeah, and he's always kissin' you an' that.."

(Fieldnotes, 15.12.93).

Such data provide clear confirmation that alongside issues of consumption and personal wealth, heterosexuality and homophobia were (on the surface at least) key aspects of masculine construction at Colby Town, and lifestyle elements crucial to the basis upon which trainee rite de passage took place. But that is not to say that trainee identities were indistinguishable. Rather, from my own observations, and in sum, three broad categories of masculine formation were generally apparent amongst youth team members. Firstly, a

‘Careerist’ masculine approach could be seen to be adopted by a number of individuals who placed official institutional demand over and above issues of social importance [6]. Secondly, and for the majority of trainees, a ‘Conformist’ masculinity was evident whereby social and official lifestyle values were accorded equal consideration. Third, and finally, a minority of boys chose to negate club stipulations and, in embracing too soon the liberties of ‘professional progression’, attempted to live-out something of a ‘Bad-Boy’ professional player image. In doing so these trainees not only ostracized themselves from the trainee group at times, but necessarily confirmed their lack of commitment to club values thus, severely jeopardizing their entitlement to managerial favour and seriously hindering their chances of occupational success.

### Conclusion

This chapter has mapped out the key issues around which trainee masculinities were constructed at Colby Town. Within it I have pointed out that in constituting some kind of overall rite de passage the two year Youth Training period at the club was, in itself, a pivotal stage in the masculine development of the individuals concerned. Specifically, I have suggested that whilst YT has traditionally represented a transitional phase between school and work, within the context of Colby it also played host to a mid-term transition which saw all boys progress from trainee to ‘professional’ contractual conditions (see chapter two). This stage of occupational maturation, I have inferred, was a time when, as a consequence of increased monetary reward, trainee interest was often diverted away from the

institutional ideals of identity construction and more readily towards the social/unofficial aspects of club culture.

This change of priority was one of psychological and financial investment. Once trainees had both the confidence and the monetary freedom to express their personal desires they did so via lifestyle areas which they regarded as crucial to professional player status - sexual endeavour, conspicuous consumption and socializing. That these areas were considered appropriate, was implicitly linked, I have argued, to a process of 'occupational inheritance', whereby trainees carefully observed and adhered to the social habits of professionals, thus readily resisting the domestic inferiority of early institutional life and further anticipating their complete socialization into that full-time occupational role.

## Notes

- [1] See also Williams (1994) for insight into masculine discourses in and around non-league football.
- [2] For further discussion concerning the adaptation of Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony to issues of masculinity see Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985), Connell (1987), Parker (1992) and Jefferson (1994a).
- [3] For more detailed accounts of the relationship between football, fashion and youth culture see Redhead (1991) and Giulianotti (1993).
- [4] Some trainees did admit to having "experimented with" or "tried" substances such as "dope" (smoking cannabis) and/or "E" (Ecstasy) in the company of friends both during, and prior to, their time at Colby. These experiences had been largely confined to isolated incidents "at home", none of which had recurred or persisted to any significant degree. For more on the extent to which incidences of drug and alcohol abuse are on the increase amongst professional footballers, both young and old, see the 1994 BBC television and radio sports series On The Line. For greater insight into the problems of alcohol, drug and gambling abuse within the context of professional footballing life see Merson (1996).
- [5] For a more in-depth analysis of control and desexualization within organizations see Burrell (1984).
- [6] This 'careerist' masculine orientation should be seen as broadly related to the more structured and calculated instances of trainee 'careerism' outlined in chapter four.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Aspirations, Expectations and Reality: 'Taken-On' Or 'Bombed-Out'

You can be a good lad and still be told, at 17 or 18, that you're not going to make it, maybe on the opinion of just one person. It's as well to be prepared. I have seen arrogant apprentices who think they have arrived because they have been taken on by a big club. They just don't realize that they are struggling for survival.

(Coppell, quoted in Barclay, 1983:13).

There's quite a percentage that won't make it, its like any other football club, there's quite a few that won't make the standard required. Some go out of it - out of the game completely when they've finished. Some go and play lower division football. It all depends how they feel having been told, y'know, the living for them isn't at this football club.

(Terry Jackson, Colby Town youth team coach, 1994).

Whilst the unofficial hyper-masculine norms of sub-cultural relations carried significant behavioural value for trainees at Colby Town, ultimately it was their negotiation of official demand concerning personal maturity and footballing ability that determined whether or not they would go on to 'make the grade' as practising professionals. Adhering to peer group values was one thing, but meeting the physical and psychological pre-requisites of managerial expectation was something much more central to professional progression and much more difficult to achieve. This chapter takes a detailed look at the intricacies of 'official' club policy concerning issues of trainee destiny and explores the criteria upon which occupational ascendancy was based. It outlines also how trainees attempted to assess their

own footballing fate by interpreting a series of institutional signs, events and occurrences considered by them as clear indicators of whether the end of the 1993/94 season would bring contractual extension (being 'taken-on') or career termination (being 'bombed-out'). Insight into the consequences of these diverse occupational probabilities is provided by data which portray the personal tensions, frustrations and anxieties accompanying individual circumstance.

### Industrial 'Wastage': Structure or Agency?

Though high rates of labour 'wastage' have traditionally been cited as an issue of structural concern within professional football, particularly in relation to the occupational plight of young players (see chapter one), career termination has also been linked to a series of altogether more personal and subjective factors concerning the way in which degrees of player ability, performance and maturity are ultimately assessed at club level. Revolving around a general discourse of individual deficit, such postulations have located the differing physical and psychological development rates of apprentice footballers as a key area of contention in relation to why some succeed and others do not. Resulting evidence implies that successful trainees are likely to be those who, in the eyes of managerial/coaching staff, learn to cope with, and apply themselves more readily to the competitive 'pressures' of the professional game, and who demonstrate continued improvement in terms of footballing ability, the development of physical and mental 'character' and the nurturing of institutionally appropriate 'attitudes', (see Gowling, 1974; O'Grady, 1974; Croall, 1976a).



Generalizing from the results of his own research findings, Wilshaw (1970:33) for example, has highlighted how the club officials he talked to frequently attributed career demise amongst apprentice players to a personal lack of “skill”, “effort” and determination. Laycock (1979:59) too, has argued that a general “failure to fulfil promise”, and a lack of “application” and “physical development” are often regarded as significant contributory factors to occupational failure amongst young players by professional club staff.

In his more recent study of football Youth Traineeship, Roderick (1990) has presented quantitative evidence to suggest that modern-day trainees are well aware of the need to develop and construct such characteristics in order to avoid club rejection. In the collective opinion of the individuals featured within his work, next to overall footballing “ability”, issues of “attitude” and “character” were seen as tantamount to professional progression (Roderick, 1990:47). Reinforcing these declarations, Garland (1993:78) proclaims that in addition to “hard work and an acceptance of discipline”, “commitment” and “positive attitude” were the most important facets of footballing life for the trainees consulted during his investigations.

Mirroring the format and ambiguity of such sentiment, similar criteria structured official perceptions of ‘professionalism’ at Colby Town. When offering his own opinions towards the pre-requisites of career progression, coach Terry Jackson, for instance, often talked of the need for trainees to possess certain individual “qualities” such as the right “make-up” and “character”, and frequently emphasised the need for players to develop a “good professional attitude”. Whilst these terms and conditions provided a

more general picture of the route to occupational success, they did have their limitations. For in sponsoring a highly subjective and indefinite tone they failed to indicate the exact bounds of promotional assurance.

Formal methods of trainee assessment were equally ambiguous. Jackson's written comments in trainee Assessment and Record of Achievement log-books, for example, often displayed a repetitive, if not cursory, descriptive pattern, with indiscriminate phrases such as "good progress made", "works hard in training", "good attitude" and "continues to improve", predominating [1]. In this sense, the climate surrounding the achievement of professional status at Colby remained somewhat vague, to the point where, even when pressed, Jackson seemed unable to present an accurate portrayal of the key occupational concepts in play.

Terry: They've got to have a certain type of 'quality'. Whether its 'quality' in his passing, whether its 'quality' in his crossing, whether its 'quality' in his control, whether he can tackle. Whether they've got some basic ingredient that you can work with and hopefully make them better at, and hopefully help them achieve a certain level of individual performance. Obviously the 'character' as well is important. For us anyway.

AP: What, personality?

Terry: Yeah, its very important that he's got the right 'make-up' and the right background.

AP: Do school records matter, or family background?

Terry: Not really, if the lad can play he can play, and you take him on that basis. I mean hopefully you can help him while he's here on any of those situations...

AP: ...and also you talk about 'attitude' a lot. What do you mean by that?

Terry: Well its, different people have got different mannerisms and different ways an' that... And its up to us when we get our players - and young players especially, to guide them in the correct way. And young players should never ever have a bad 'attitude' towards the game, 'cos at the end of the day they're on trial at your club and they've only got a short period of time to prove themselves.

AP: So... bad 'attitude' is all about...?

Terry: Well, its that he's not doing his job how he should do.

Evident over time, through Jackson's daily conversational inferences, was that despite the indeterminate atmosphere surrounding career advancement, a number of underlying club expectancies were operational in accordance with which the development of trainee virtue was continually evaluated. To this end, official notions of 'background' and 'character' represented an institutional demand for the demonstration of self-control, tolerance, and strength of temperament in the face of occupational adversity (i.e. serious injury, managerial authoritarianism, loss of form and/or exclusion from team selection), (see chapters two and three). At the same time, comment towards personal 'attitude' was often used to alert and remind trainees that they were expected to display a humble appreciation of their privileged, if tenuous, occupational position, a high regard for their professional counterparts, and an intense desire to conform to club norms (see also chapter three).

Central for Jackson within all of this was the persistent location of YT status as the epitome of institutional subordination. A stance adopted to combat

individual misconceptions of 'professional' inevitability, and to facilitate a more competitive atmosphere amongst the trainee group as a whole.

Adrian: Terry says to us... "Y'know, you've done nothing in football, you haven't achieved a thing". And in one sense he's wrong, 'cos we have done well in football to be where we are now, but at the same time he's saying that we've not done a thing as a professional, y'know, we're right at the bottom of the ladder. We're nowhere. All this is like having a trial to be a professional, you've just got to put your lot in all the time...

In acceptance of such concerns trainees adopted a verbal policing of peer group attitudes. If any member of the youth team squad displayed signs of over confidence as regards their entitlement to professional progression they were immediately branded "big time" by their team-mates, and thereafter referred to within trainee circles as someone who was always "givin' it the big'un". Jackson too, reserved the right to chastise individuals on similar grounds. A case in point was that of Charlie Spencer who, having found himself named as goalkeeping substitute for the Colby first team after only a few months at the club, appeared to develop a somewhat 'inappropriate' attitude towards his colleagues and his everyday menial work.

Charlie: He [Jackson] started saying stuff like, "D'ya know what these are?" I says, "Yeah, they're feet". He says, "You've gotta keep your feet on the ground" an' all this... An' then we were trainin' in the afternoon an' he had a massive chat to me about how just 'cos I'd been in the first team I should still want to train with the youth team, an' how I don't wanna start gettin' too big for my boots an' all this. Y'know, an' he didn't actually say me, but he was saying how lads that have been with the first team can sort of...y'know, [do that]. An' I was on the verge of saying do you mean me, y'know, if you're gonna say something to me just say it...

Because such methods of verbal reinforcement existed, “big time” trainee attitudes rarely surfaced within either occupational or social settings at Colby. By and large, such feelings and inferences were regarded by youth team members as anathema to both career advancement and the cohesive requirements of intra-group relations. Instead, the majority of boys opted for an altogether more unassuming career strategy which, through an adherence to the practices of keeping “your head down”, “your nose clean” and “your mouth shut”, allowed them to negotiate the trials of traineeship on a less confrontational basis both at a managerial and peer group level.

Jackson’s inferences towards the development of individual ‘humility’, ‘character’, ‘make-up’ and ‘attitude’, did then represent some kind of behavioural yard-stick against which trainees could assess the strength of their own occupational position. But they offered little in terms of concrete evidence to either support or reject individual hopes of professional acceptance. Admittedly, there were trainees who were expected to gain an extended contract without question. Those whose place in the youth team was regarded as sacrosanct, and who were commonly looked upon as squad ‘favourites’ (see chapter four). For the majority, however, being ‘taken-on’ was a much less certain affair and one which stimulated individuals to look to variety of alternative institutional events, occurrences and circumstances for substantive clues regarding their occupational destiny.

#### Looking For Clues: Trainee Interpretations of Career Progress

Whilst discussing the occupational aspirations of the individuals featured within his study of Youth Training in professional football, Garland

(1993:70-72) has highlighted how, in the light of official ambiguity, players looked to interpret a range of everyday club occurrences in order to gain some understanding of their own occupational destiny. Summarizing the results of questionnaire and interview data, what Garland (1993:71) concludes is that because “few tangible signs” of likely contractual outcome were on offer to his respondents during the course of indenture many reverted to “hanging onto the encouraging words of club officials”, and conducting informal processes of self-evaluation via peer group comparison, in the hope of informally gauging their own chances of contractual probability.

Although relatively implicit, similar methods of comparative assessment were evident amongst trainees at Colby. Individuals readily admitted, that because official judgements on player potential were so few and far between, alternative sources of encouragement and confidence regarding occupational fortune had to be found. For some the downfall of team-mates was crucial in this respect despite friendship espousals at a social level. A number of trainees gained heart, for example, when players who occupied their favoured team position received severe “bollockin’s” from Terry Jackson during games or in training, or were excluded from team selection altogether on account of below-par performances. For others a constant scrutiny of trainee, amateur and professional player intake at the club was imperative, in that through such practices individuals could remain informed as to levels of positional competition and the likely nature of future player demand (see also Dunphy, 1976).

Whilst these pursuits were common, they represented only a sample of wider career progress assessment procedures. Throughout the research period all trainees continually sought to accurately interpret a whole range of additional verbal and symbolic signs in order to grasp some indication of their immediate occupational fate. For those second years serving two-year contractual agreements only, this type of activity intensified towards the latter stages of the 1993/94 season. This was perhaps not surprising given that with deadlines for managerial decisions on trainee futures fast approaching (30 April 1994), it was they who, in theory at least, would have to face club officials first as regards issues of career destiny [2].

Yet these trainees were not alone in their uncertainty. Other second years were equally sceptical as to the security of their own occupational positions, full-well knowing that on completion of their initial two year YT programme management personnel at Colby were at liberty to dispose of their services (in exchange for financial compensation) if they so wished. Moreover, such activity stimulated a number of first years to consider their own futures, and the likelihood of how they would cope with the pressures of career progression twelve months on. Consequently, from Christmas 1993 onwards, a high percentage of the Colby Town youth team became increasingly anxious over the possibility of career termination, and began to look back over their time at the club in order to anticipate the probable outcome of managerial decision regarding their fate.

One issue which was central to these retrospective analyses, and which caused a number of older trainees to feel bitter about their experiences at Colby, was the way in which individual career profiles appeared to have

declined over the YT period. Many second years talked, for instance, of the glamorous reputations they had left behind in the amateur orbits of 'Schoolboy' football, and how, having once been renowned "at home" for their prodigious teenage talents, they now found themselves struggling for survival at a club no longer interested in exploiting their potential.

Goalkeeper Gary Riley was one such individual who, during a dressing room conversation at the end of March 1994, typified more widespread concerns regarding the limits of career opportunity by stating that; "we were all legends all over the fuckin' place before we came here, an' then you don't get a game for a year". Reminiscing as to whether or not coming to Colby had been the right decision in terms of his own career aims, Tony Chadwick also expressed frustration towards the lack of actual match practice he had received during the course of traineeship.

AP:           Do you think you should have gone somewhere else or..?

Tony          I don't know...last year when I was a first year I wouldn't have minded leavin' 'cos I were just upset that I weren't playin' football. 'Cos I'd played since I were six year old - every season, played so many games. And then, like, for the most important year of your life, when you join a club - a professional club - an' I start two games. I'm thinkin' well, what have I let mi'self in for really.

Without doubt, part of the problem here was that from an early age the majority of second, and indeed first year trainees, had not only been outwardly encouraged in their footballing pursuits by parents, teachers, and amateur managers alike, but also regularly convinced of their potential as professional players. Whilst discussing their early footballing progress, many cited the way in which they had often featured in local newspaper



articles covering 'School', 'District', 'Town', 'City' and/or 'County' games thereby experiencing some small measure of footballing fame. In the case of full-back Gareth Procter it was well known within the club that his acceptance of YT terms at Colby had even gained national press coverage on account of the fact that, in his own words, he was considered at that time to be "the best defender in [English] youth...or some'at". A number of boys also told of how, throughout the years prior to club entry, various agencies within the professional game had frequently contacted them as a consequence of the fact that they were widely regarded within amateur sporting circles as "natural" or "born" footballers, seemingly bound for the lucrative and glamorous ranks of professionalism.

The extent to which such speculation may in fact be detrimental to the construction of career aspirations amongst young players has not gone unnoticed. Wilshaw (1970:25), for example, has pointed out that, in terms of schoolboy recruitment, the "continually pestering" behaviour of professional club scouts may often prove unhelpful in this respect. Similarly, Croall (1976a, 1976b) has highlighted how the synonymous use of both verbal and financial incentive by professional clubs may represent a significantly influential factor as regards the over development of career expectancy at apprenticeship/trainee level [3].

For many boys at Colby, other experiences of pre-trainee life had been equally influential in increasing schoolboy levels of self-esteem and contributing to the more pervasive aura of disappointment and failure now in place. Crucial here was the favourable way in which boys had been treated under the highly selective aegis of Colby youth development policy.

During their initial years at the club trainees had grown used to the vast amount of “attention” and “perks” bestowed upon them. Amongst the range of teams which individuals had visited on trial, Colby had primarily emerged as the most appealing because of its “homely” and “generous” atmosphere. Talk of schoolboy ‘sweetners’ such as free tracksuits, bags, boots, coats and tickets for games proliferated during interviews. In turn, trainees commented on the way in which parents and relatives had been “treated” to “all-expenses-paid weekends”, in and around Colby at the time they signed as Youth Trainees. Trips which included “five-star” levels of hospitality, invites to major first team fixtures, and ‘behind-the scenes’ glimpses of club life.

Because officials had adopted these more conventional methods of familial treatment and not reverted to the depths of under-hand monetary reward to boost trainee interest, many boys saw the club as having “done things right” as regards the overall process of signing-on and recruitment.

Damien: We used to come down here and they used to treat you well. They used to put mi dad up in hotels an’ that, an’ take you for meal an’ stuff... When I first signed they brought mi sisters down to see the club an’ that, and mi mam. Like, they were good to mi parents an’ that...

Colin: I came here one day and I wasn’t actually going to sign, and I couldn’t believe what a friendly atmosphere it was. It was totally different to everywhere else I’d been. It was really nice and I just signed. Totally spur of the moment stuff. And by the time I’d got home my mum had got a massive bunch of flowers - chocolates, an’ everything. So like, I mean, they did it right...and they just introduced me to all the players, an’ like, I’d had that nowhere else. Y’know, it shocked me, an’ I thought like, well, bloody ‘ell if they’re like this now what they gonna’ be like when I’ve signed...

Amidst such excitement and captivating charm, where then did individual perceptions of glamour go? When, and how, did notions of career progression turn sour? As far as most trainees were concerned these more positive images of professional life were dashed soon after arrival at Colby. As Colin Jones, Damien Blackwell and others went on to explain, having committed themselves to the club contractually, they suddenly found that levels of individual attention decreased.

Nick: You always used to get these little perks, like, "Oh its your birthday, here's a tracksuit". But as it works, and you move further up from schoolboy to apprentice...they seem to treat you worse. I think that's how it is 'cos when I was a schoolboy player and I hadn't signed here...you used to get 'loved' an' that. They used to give you tracksuits an' that. They used to give you coats an' bags an' t-shirts an' things like that. All these little things that sway you to sign for this club. But once you'd signed, things like that disappeared. You got them the odd-time-or-two when you needed 'em, 'cos everyone had to have a tracksuit. But like even when we were in the under-16's [final schoolboy year prior to YT] we didn't used to get all the expenses. We were supposed to get paid expenses for mi dad to come up here. It cost him twenty quid but he only got a tenner, y'know what I mean, things like that, they just all ran out. An' like now, you do get things now an' that but I don't think you get treated as good as you used to.

Colin: ...Once you've signed y'see, you're just a number. Y'know, not somebody they want to get anymore, you're actually there. They've got you. You get here as a YTS player and you start you're first training session and you're no different to anyone else. They're not even interested in what you're doing.

Damien: Once you've signed then that's it really, you're not the 'Golden Boy'. Like, when you sign they make it out to be all, "Oh sign here you'll be looked after an' that". I'm not saying that when you sign they just throw you on the scrap-heap its just that you think you're gonna get a lot of attention an' you don't really. Its just like you're just the same as anybody else.

Little wonder then that many trainees looked back on their experiences of Colby 'youth development' as highly misleading and unfair. Growing accustomed to lavish treatment as schoolboy players had made the transition to professional life that much more difficult, particularly given the sharp reduction in levels of individual praise and adulation. Neither did the highly competitive atmosphere of trainee status help in this respect, or the threat to occupational survival which its collective dynamics now posed.

Speaking from his own observations and experiences within the professional game, Gowling (1974: 155-167) has suggested that alongside more general problems of homesickness and loneliness, such transitional pressures constitute some of the most taxing features of trainee life, the suitable negotiation of which, he argues, requires young players to develop a high degree of psychological adjustment and "maturity" towards occupational circumstance. Paradoxically, in the case of Colby Town, there are grounds upon which Terry Jackson's attitude towards the suppression of trainee over-confidence might be regarded as part of that maturation process. In attempting to curb levels of self-assurance there is a sense in which Jackson's warnings can be seen as a means of protection from, and preparation for, such deflationary forces and the eventual possibility of career termination (see also chapter three).

These things considered, however, pre-YT life was not the only aspect of trainee experience which raised cause for concern as regards the construction of false career aspirations. Additionally, the YT period itself was considered by some boys as equally contentious. Illustrative in this respect were the individual experiences of centre-forward Simon Gregory

and goalkeeper Gary Riley, two of the four second year boys serving shorter two-year trainee agreements. As regards managerial diplomacy, Gregory, in particular, showed immense disillusionment with what he described as the “two-faced-ness of everybody at the club”. Of specific concern for him was the lack, and fluctuating nature, of official club comment towards trainee career progress.

Simon: Its just the fuckin’ bull-shit they feed you. All of them. They just feed you so much bull-shit and build your hopes up, and then just cut them down like that [gestures downward with vertical swipe of hand]. Y’know what I mean, its a fuckin’ joke.

Later:

Simon: When you’re doing well they’re nice to you and when you’re injured, or you’re not doing so well they don’t speak to you. They just blank [ignore] you. I mean I suppose Mick’s [Mick Lynch, first team coach] not so bad, but I mean, you can still see it in him. I mean all the blokes, they should be open and honest with you, I mean, ‘cos they were footballers themselves. I mean, they should look at it and think, ‘Well, I’d want to be told what I’m doing wrong, an’ I’d want to be doing this an’ that’. Whether they were treated like that as players I don’t know, but they should look at it and think, ‘Well, I want to be an honest coach’. And that’s what I think makes a good coach.

AP: But in what way do you want them to be honest? Do you want rid of this ‘friends’ one minute, and not the next?

Simon: Well basically I want them to tell you where you stand, ‘cos I mean, you don’t know whether you’re doing well or not ‘til they ask you to sign again. I mean you just don’t know. I mean, I can see why they don’t tell you, ‘cos you’d probably ‘take your foot off the pedal’ a bit, but I mean, you’ve got to know how you’re doing...

Interesting here are Gregory's remarks concerning the possible reasons for 'official' secrecy and contradiction. What he suggests is that far from being a matter of trainee importance, the withholding of information by management was in fact based upon wider motives concerning team (and coaching) success. Of course, for Goffman (1961) such secretive managerial activity is not uncommon in terms of 'total' institutional practice. He outlines, for instance, how, in the case of his own fieldwork, the withholding of information by institutional staff - "especially about the staff's plans for inmates", and "decisions taken regarding...[their] fate" - was used to reinforce a controlled 'distance' between themselves and their charges (Goffman, 1961:19/20). Whether or not such reasoning informed or structured staff behaviour to any significant degree at Colby Town is hard to say. A more likely factor, it seemed, was the maintenance of trainee performance.

Admittedly, Gregory's case was one of relative complexity, given that during the course of traineeship he had suffered a number of lengthy lay-offs through recurring leg injuries, and, as a consequence, had found official indications of occupational progress difficult to come by. Nevertheless, he was not alone in airing such grievances. Fellow team-mate Gary Riley displayed similar feelings on account of the way in which he felt he had been mistreated in relation to contradictions in career assessment.

For Riley too, the latter stages of the 1993/94 season had proved particularly distressing. Like Gregory, and indeed, like the majority of youth team players, he had arrived at Colby with a prolific footballing reputation and had signed as a Youth Trainee despite successfully attending trials at a

number of other top professional clubs. Due to the second year 'preference' policy operated by Terry Jackson in relation to youth team selection, Riley spent his first season at Colby awaiting his playing 'turn' behind first-choice trainee keeper Jez Brown. At the beginning of year two (the 1993/94 season), his career development was further thwarted by injuries to his right hand and left shoulder, both of which gave newly acquired goalkeeper Charlie Spencer an unexpected opportunity to display his footballing potential.

As a consequence of injuries and domestic complications involving first and reserve team players, the culmination of this scenario was that by mid November 1993 Spencer found himself selected for senior team duty - a factor which further exacerbated Riley's situation. On regaining his youth team place shortly after Christmas 1993, additional injuries followed for Riley, but intermittently he recovered well enough to maintain his position as a 'first choice' youth team player and managed also to make several appearances at reserve team level. Spencer, meanwhile, remained in form, and had clearly made an impression during his run of senior games. Hence, with managerial deadlines in sight, Spencer in favour, and the probability of contractual extension diminishing fast, in late February 1994 Gary Riley decided to seek information from club officials as to their overall opinions of his footballing form, and the likelihood of professional acceptance.

Gary: Quite a bit ago when Brownny [Jez Brown] was here, the other keeper, I didn't think at that time that I'd get a contract. But then when Sammy Dyer [reserve team goalkeeper] got injured [again] and I was playing in the reserves an' everything, and doing well in the reserves...things, y'know, [got better]. And then they sold Brownny...and then Terry and Len Drinkwater were saying to me - the first time I went to see Len

Drinkwater he said, "Oh, yeah, you've got a very good chance of getting a contract". And then I've been blinding [playing well] for a month, and...before I'd even been playing that well he said I had a very good chance...

Because in previous years it had been the norm at Colby for officials to offer successful trainees three-year professional contracts, rightly or not, Gary Riley automatically assumed that these comments inferred a similar outcome. In early March 1994, however, after trying to arrange a meeting with Assistant Manager Len Drinkwater for over two weeks, Riley was eventually summoned to Drinkwater's office only to be told that despite his assumptions, the most the club could offer him were professional terms spanning a further twelve months.

Besides being disappointed, Riley was unprepared to accept such an offer on the grounds that in his opinion, it lacked any real commitment on the part of the club, or signs of professional and financial stability for himself. Moreover, he regarded it as something of an insult given the service he had provided, and the level of over-expectation he felt he had been 'allowed' to develop in previous weeks and months.

Gary: [Before] Terry was saying things like, "Oh Browny's gone now Riles, the doors open if you do well", an' all this. And then I was flyin' [playing well]. As soon as people started saying this to me I was flyin', in all the matches I played, and with the first team in training an' stuff. Everyone's telling me how well I've done. An' then I get offered a one year contract. Its defeating the object really 'cos they got me so hyped up. I've been trying really hard doing daft things in training like gettin' kicked in the head an' stuff like that...an' then they give me a kick in the teeth. I thought that was well out of order.



So unhappy, in fact, was Riley that he strongly contested this decision with the officials concerned.

Gary: He [Len Drinkwater, Assistant Manager] just kept saying things like, "Oh we don't think you want it enough. You come across sometimes like you're just there to pass the time", an' things like this, which is a load of rubbish. And then he started saying that maybe I should go to university 'cos I seemed more interested in doing my 'A' Levels than playing football, which I wasn't happy about at all so we ended up havin' a bit of a set-too...I said to him, "Why don't you think I'm interested enough?", and he started saying, "Well you never ask to go up to the training ground in the afternoon's". Nobody else at the whole club does, and even if you did, Terry would say no, 'cos Damien asked once if he could go up and do some tackling practice, and Terry said, "There's no point 'cos you'll never be able to tackle..." And he [Len] said, "Well, we're not 100% certain that you'll be a top-class goalkeeper",... and he kept coming back to the same point about 'A' Levels, and doing a degree at university an' stuff like that.

AP: What was he saying exactly about that?

Gary: Well, he said, I think if you've got the ability to go to university, you should go...But I said, "I don't want to do that, that's a back-up, I want to play football". And he said, "Oh well, if you go to university we'll set you up with a nice non-league side on a Saturday". And I said, "I don't want to do that either, I want to play football professionally"...At the end of the day, if they turned round and if they offered me a three-year contract now with loads of money, I'd tell them to get stuffed...

AP: Why?

Gary: 'Cos I don't want to stop here now. Not now I've seen that side of them, 'cos they really did annoy me, and I did think he was a right shit-head at times, 'cos he was annoying me and he was spiteful as well sometimes. Y'know, to get out of the predicament he was in when he was asked a question he would say something, an' he said that I'm not bubbly enough like Charlie, the first year goalkeeper, and that I'm not

around the management as much as he is, an' all this. In other words, if you arse lick you get a contract - if you're 'liked'. If you're not, you don't. That's the impression I got.

Not surprisingly, such disappointment ultimately triggered a certain amount of ill-feeling on Riley's part. Compounding this was the fact that on being belatedly invited by Drinkwater to assist in the decision-making task, Terry Jackson arrived at the scene only to contradict much of what had already been put forward from a managerial viewpoint. This consequently left Drinkwater with the responsibility of admitting that, despite the contractual offer being made, in reality he had not attended enough of the appropriate youth or reserve team fixtures to make any informed comment on Riley's future.

Gary:      Len had said something about me not being good enough an' all this, and then Terry came in and said, "Oh well over the last month and a half, since he's been involved with the first team and the reserves, he's been playing better than he ever has done since he's been here"...And Len sort of sounded a bit shocked, and went, "Oh", like that. And then he said, "One thing is, I haven't seen you enough. You've played for the reserves a few times but I haven't been there". "On Tuesday", he said, "I've heard that you had a good game, but I wasn't there to see it". But the Gaffer [Manager, Jack Sutton] was there. There's always somebody there...so it all just came across as a big sham to me.

What made matters worse for Riley was that any overt showing of discontent at this point may have jeopardized his chances of being recommended by Drinkwater and Jackson for employment elsewhere. Moreover, because he was now in the process of searching for another club, subsequent weeks required not only the maintenance of, but also an

improvement in, previous standards of performance and overall attitude.

Ironically, with “the pressures of being bombed” reduced, these objectives were readily achieved. Problematic still, though, was the whole process of gaining an alternative career offer.

Gary: Nobody's gonna' take someone on with only eight weeks of the season left...No other club's gonna say, “Yeah, come here now and we'll sign you for next season”, which is gonna be like three months now with the mid-summer break an everything. In that time, you haven't got a club to train with or anything. You've got to do everything yourself. And in that time you might just have lost interest in it 'cos you're gutted about getting kicked out. And by the time, the time comes for you to go for this trial you're gonna be three stone over weight, an alcoholic, and not give a shit really aren't you? I think we should get told around Christmas time. I think it should be made law or something or do it in a certain amount of games. I think if you play a certain amount of games before Christmas [in YT year two] I think you should get told at Christmas time, 'cos they've obviously seen enough of you to know whether you're good enough or not.

Despite initial levels of disappointment and anger, Gary Riley was at least able to draw some benefits from this situation. The fact that he was unprepared to accept proposed conditions of employment meant that, if nothing else, his future would not be at Colby. This was more than could be said for the three remaining second years occupying similar contractual positions to his own. For them, uncertainty remained, as did speculative fears, debates and assumptions concerning who the next second year to be ‘bombed’ would be. With such prospects in mind it was time for those concerned to consider more seriously some alternative avenues of occupational pursuit.

### Reasons To Be Fearful: Life 'At', or Life 'After' Colby?

In the main, debates and discussions regarding individual futures were a strictly positive affair amongst trainees at Colby. Rarely was any explicit recognition given towards issues of occupational uncertainty or insecurity. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, on a social level trainees felt that such inference would be met with ridicule as a personal admittance of inadequate footballing ability. Secondly, in an institutional sense, signs of career pessimism automatically opposed the 'positive' psychological requirements of club life, and thus cast doubt over individual levels of commitment towards occupational progression.

During the latter stages of the 1993/94 season, however, elements of negativity did become apparent amidst trainee thoughts and feelings regarding contractual extension. Consequently, life 'after' (as opposed to life 'at') Colby emerged as an increasingly common consideration for a number of both first and second year boys. Typical in terms of initial reaction to the possibility of professional rejection was that footballing careers would simply continue elsewhere. Such beliefs revolved primarily around the assumption that because Colby was such a large and reputable club, other smaller clubs would be only too eager to sign players deemed surplus to requirements. Staking a verbal claim towards his own long-term security with a number of equally creditable teams, Gareth Procter, for instance, stated that, "I've still had a lot of offers... after I'd signed here that said, 'Oh you can come back here anytime',... an' that I'd be welcome". Saving that, he continued, "I could always go lower down [to play lower league football]".

Likewise, Ben Tattersall described how he would “just try and get another club straight away” by attempting to contact scouts who might get him “a trial or whatever” elsewhere. Anticipating the day when they too might face such occupational pressures, first years Davey Duke and Nick Douglas adopted similar outlooks. The prospect of playing in a lower standard of football did not seem to bother Duke who acknowledged that if alternative professional opportunities did not materialize he would be happy to see out his playing days “...in the Vauxhall Conference [non-league football]”.

Douglas, meanwhile, had his sights firmly fixed on professional success and seemed more content to rely on Colby’s historical reputation.

Nick:       The other clubs that ‘ave been to see you appreciate it if you tell them you’ve signed for Colby, an’ usually most of ‘em say, “Well, if it don’t work out then I’ll ‘ave a look at you an’ see how you are”. Also you’re local scout, he will probably try to find you somewhere else...

Insofar as Colby was nationally renowned for its youth development policies, there were some grounds upon which such levels of optimism could be based. Furthermore, trainees knew that even if professional acceptance was not gained, club officials would support their search for alternative employment by offering advice on how to advertise their services, and practically aiding their plight by circulating letters to other clubs informing them of player availability. In addition, Colby officials instructed their own network of scouts and footballing contacts within both amateur and professional spheres as to their intentions regarding player ‘release’, thereby broadening the possibility of trainee placement at the end of each season.

What many boys failed to realize, however, was that with the majority of professional clubs following suit in terms of end-of-season staff 'clear-outs', the footballing labour market as a whole became particularly tight at this time of year. Having spent a lifetime in and around the professional game, and having witnessed almost a decade of trainee intake, graduation and rejection at Colby, Bill and Bev Sommerfield seemed well placed to offer their opinions on the realities of occupational expectancy.

AP: They seem to think that because they're at Colby Town, its a doddle getting on somewhere else.

Bill: Yeah, but its not, 'cos you've got to think that there's another ninety-odd clubs in the same boat, and they all release them [players] at the end of the season. There's more pro's now on the scrapheap because they can't get clubs, never mind this age group at 18. Its difficult. I think deep-down they appreciate that. I think they realize that. But I just think at times, I wish they'd work a bit harder and think about it seriously.

Bev: [Its always] "Oh, I'm an apprentice in the First Division, so I've got a better chance if I don't make it here to get a job in the Second Division or the Third Division". Now that's what you'd think, but it don't work like that. I mean, you think, at the end of every season how many young lads are going straight onto the end of a dole queue. I mean, you know how big some of the squads are, and that's like the professional squads, never mind the apprentices. I mean, you think how many. An' it don't work that just because you've been playing in the First Division, y'know for the youth or the reserve team, that you're going to qualify to play elsewhere. Its all about opinions at the end of the day - who thinks you're any good. Or being in the right place at the right time.

Whilst by the end of the 1993/94 season such negative conjecture had come to represent the predominant form of trainee feeling in relation to institutional destiny, there were a small number of boys who maintained an

altogether more positive approach towards issues of career development.

Unique in this respect were youth team Captain Jimmy Briggs, his Vice-Captain Martin Walsh and second year (first-choice) centre-forward Paul Turner, all of whom, by early 1994, had fought off stiff competition to establish themselves as Terry Jackson's key 'favourites' (see chapter four).

Whether or not at some point these individuals had been secretly assured of their futures is unclear. Nevertheless, what was striking about their views on footballing progression was that whilst other trainees adopted a somewhat speculative aura, they spoke confidently about issues of ambition and success, and in many ways seemed to regard traineeship at Colby as a mere stepping stone to other things rather than a possible end in itself.

Jimmy: ...I've got another year on my contract, sort of thing, an' next year I want to be playing nearly every reserve team game, 'cos I've got to. Y'know what I mean. An' if I'm not, then I'll have to go an' have a chat about it, y'know what I mean. I wouldn't mind going on loan to...a lower club, y'know what I mean, where I would be playin' first team football. It would be gettin' me great experience, better than sittin' here just doin' nothin'...I think I could play first team football. You've got to be confident in yourself haven't you. I watch the games that they play and I think to myself 'I can do what they're doin', even better', y'know what I mean.

Paul: If I got taken on, really in the first year I'd just want to get a regular [place] in the reserves...If not, I'd push myself hopefully in the second year. I mean, normally they'd only give you a three year [professional] contract and if say in your second year you're not in the reserves, you're times up really isn't it. I mean hopefully, I'll get a regular in the reserves and if you get a regular in the reserves you've got to keep pushing and playing well when the Gaffer's [Manager, Jack Sutton's] lookin' at you and then look for a place in the first team as well.

For Martin Walsh, even the prospect of first team football at Colby was not enough to accommodate his highly structured plans concerning long-term career progression.

Martin: Well, obviously, my ambition is to break into the first team. I mean I just want to do well for mi'self, y'know. But in the long-term obviously every kids dream is to play for England i'n'it? An' I wanna play for England.

AP: I mean, do you see yourself staying here?

Martin: Yeah, I would have thought,... Well they're the onlypeople that know, but I think I'm pretty confident.

AP: I mean if I said to you like in 5 years time would you still want to be at Colby, say you were in the first team, or would you want to look elsewhere..?

Martin: I'd want to play in Italy. I'd wanna break into the first team here hopefully in the next two years, I mean as quickly as possible... an' I'd want to establish mi'self in the game until I were about...twenty. I mean it depends really how well you do. I mean you can't really say. If I did really well then I'd want to play on a bigger stage...I'd love to go to United for the bigger stage, for the better players. I mean money comes into it a bit but just 'cos they've got the better players...I mean you're gonna improve. I mean, if you're playin' with class players then you're gonna be a class player, aren't you, in time.

In part, some of these ambitions had already begun to take shape, in that in terms of the trainee group as a whole, Briggs, Walsh and Turner were amongst the most familiar with reserve team selection. Having said that, even this seemingly more secure occupational position was not without its drawbacks. Just as feelings of uncertainty and rejection dogged the institutional lives of the trainee majority, equally problematic for the more successful were issues of stagnation and developmental frustration.



Again, prior perceptions and images of life at Colby were partly to blame for this. As well as receiving much acclaim for its methods of 'youth development', over a number of years the club had also gained something of a reputation for allowing a high proportion of its youth team players to graduate through to first team status. When deciding on which professional club to join, over half the trainee cohort admitted that besides its 'homely' qualities, one of the main reasons why they chose Colby was because of its "youth system" or "youth set-up" and the way in which management always tried to "bring young players through".

Although during the 1993/94 season the make-up of the Colby Town first team squad still bore some evidence of such practice, by and large this once popular trend appeared to be in decline. Whilst an investment in 'youth' was still a valued aspect of senior professional club policy, success now seemed to be sought more through national and international transfer market activity than the promotion of 'home-grown' talent - much to the distress of some.

Paul: Sometimes I wish I'd have gone to a smaller club, 'cos hopefully I would have progressed more there,y'know, perhaps been in the reserves more regularly, or whatever, but that's the chance you take isn't it...I don't think its as good as I originally thought it would have been, 'cos when I looked at it I thought, 'Oh there's loads of players coming through', which they have, fair enough. I mean, I just thought, y'know, a lot more emphasis would be based on us, that there'd be a lot more chances of the first team coach looking at you but there's not...I mean, there's a lot of players getting in the first team now at lower clubs andyou just think, 'Well, it could have been me, couldn't it'.

Jimmy: The only bad thing is I don't think that I've been given my chance. Not being big-headed or nothing, but I think I should have been given more of a chance - not first team - but more reserve team. I've played not

even double figures games yet [for the reserves]  
y'know what I mean, I haven't even played ten games,  
yet some blokes I know are in the first team, fair  
enough at lower clubs, but their still gettin' the  
experience. But you just have to get on with it really,  
and wait for your chance, as they say. It does get you  
down a bit, y'know what I mean, you think, y'know,  
you could be doin' just as well as anyone else is doin',  
you just don't get given the chance.

These comments provide stark contrast to those of other trainees who feared for their occupational survival. These were the words of a selection of individuals for whom traineeship at Colby had represented a beneficial and successful experience rather than a pre-cursor to institutional rejection. Despite its drawbacks, indenture had served a positive and protective purpose for them. It had provided a glimpse of life in the public eye, exposure to institutional practice, and a taste of competition within a controlled youthful environment. Moreover, it had highlighted some of the relational pitfalls and pressures of footballing life. Having weathered Colby's stringently selective process of initial recruitment, and having successfully negotiated the 'test' of institutional servitude, these trainees had risen above their occupational counterparts to claim the rewards of professional acceptance. Next stop for them was contractual stability and the fame, prestige and fortune of which they had always dreamed. Before that, however, they would have the onerous task of translating their recurring pattern of youth team success into the world of adult football, amidst the much celebrated and highly glamorized occupational conditions of the big-time.

## Conclusion

Whilst methods of strict behavioural control and work-place routine clearly defined the contractual conditions and official demands of traineeship at Colby Town, explicit inferences towards issues of career destiny and professional progression were, in the opinion of trainees, less forthcoming. Pinpointing the ways in which trainees themselves overcame the lack and/or ambiguity of managerial assessment at Colby this chapter has highlighted how individuals sought to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own occupational position by relying upon informal systems of verbal and symbolic interpretation.

Opposing this vague and imprecise aura, this chapter has also identified how a series of more implicit institutional expectations did exist around which official trainee assessment was heavily structured at Colby. Central to such processes was Terry Jackson's continual promotion of YT as an extended 'trial' footballing period. The adoption of this overall outlook, I have inferred, was designed not only to reinforce notions of occupational appreciation, tolerance and resilience, but, to promote further, images of institutional conformity, obedience and discipline.

A recurring theme here has been that of contradiction. Contradiction between what trainees assumed in terms of career development once at the club, and what they actually experienced. In this respect the reality of trainee expectancy must be questioned, particularly in relation to previous levels of schoolboy adulation and fame. As far as the over-inflation of individual hopes is concerned, there are elements of club practice which must also receive serious consideration. Indeed, whilst it is clear from

trainee testament that Colby Town officials did not partake in the illegal use of financial incentive to attract YT signings, there is evidence to suggest that the club's overall policy of recruitment and youth development did have its 'psychological' shortcomings.

## Notes

- [1] Whilst Pole (1993) has shown how Record of Achievement negotiations within school settings may be informed by common 'descriptors', methods of assessment and recording at Colby Town did not appear to involve the use of such pre-determined means. (See also Hargreaves et al., 1988).
- [2] The FFE & VTS Assessment and Record of Achievement states that clubs must inform individual trainees of their proposed contractual intentions "not less than two months before the end of the player's traineeship" (FFE & VTS, 1993c:8).
- [3] For further insight into issues of financial irregularity within amateur and professional football in Britain see, Bennet (1990), Crowther (1993) and Melling (1994).

## CONCLUSION

### Football YT, Colby Town and Vocational Policy

Through a close examination of the experiences of one group of professional football Youth Trainees, this study has raised a number of questions and issues about the impact new vocational policy has upon those who are selected to undertake its occupational conditions within the football industry. Its central finding is that YT at Colby Town witnessed the creation of a series of tensions and contradictions around which trainee identities, work-place relations and personal career aspirations were constructed.

Whilst recognising the limitations of this research in terms of its representative value, in this concluding chapter, I summarize the key tensions and contradictions identified, and illustrate how their existence raises a number of further questions and issues in relation to YT provision at Colby Town, and towards the football industry's more widespread adoption of contemporary vocational policy.

### YT Principles and Colby Town Practice

Since its inception in the early 1980s YT(S) has claimed to offer working-class school-leavers a 'permanent bridge to work' -a means by which they might gain relevant, useful, 'transferable' employment skills through high quality programmes of vocational and educational training. Accordingly, it has sought to replenish Britain's ailing manufacturing resources by restructuring conventional notions of servitude, by subsidizing youth

employment, and by subsequently allowing young people to 'price' themselves back into a competitive labour market (see chapter one).

Professional football relies heavily on the recruitment of young workers. Amidst the economic pressures of more recent years the industry as a whole, it seems, has been eager to buy into YT(S) provision, and the financial benefits involved therein. Three main advantages have been cited in relation to football's adoption of YT(S). Firstly, the scheme has been heralded as the saviour of 'youth development' for many clubs on account of its ability to reduce financial pressure. Secondly, YT(S) has been widely praised for the fact that Government (now TEC) subsidy has given more young players the chance to enter the professional game than previous apprenticeship arrangements would allow. Thirdly, and again in relation to prior practice, YT(S) has come to be recognized as the provider of a more structured and comprehensive form of football apprenticeship, particularly in the sense that vocational/educational attendance is a mandatory element of the experiences it promotes.

Like the majority of English professional League clubs, and like a host of institutions within wider occupational spheres, Colby Town has taken full advantage of these benefits. At the same time, this study highlights how club practice contradicted some of the conventional principles, aims and objectives upon which contemporary new vocational policy has been based. On what grounds did these contradictions take place?

In relation to the re-structuring of trainee labour, the direct spin-offs of YT implementation for levels of national growth and economic recovery are understandably negligible as far as professional football is concerned.

Nevertheless, for clubs to adopt YT policy as a comprehensive method of training, signs of vocational congruity with wider practice should, it would seem, be evident. On the face of it, trainee activity at Colby Town did adhere to broader industrial trends, in that genuine work experience was gained by youth team members and reinforced by regular college attendance. But aside from this, evidence of YT principles in practice was scarce. In terms of 'skill' input, for example, trainees were rarely schooled in relation to the perfection of footballing ability or technique. What is more, structured tuition regarding tactical knowledge and game-plan application was severely lacking.

That daily 'training' primarily constituted a regime of physical fitness and small sided games, stimulated some concern even amongst trainees as regards their prior expectations of what Youth Training would be like. Individuals often commented on the undifferentiated nature of daily routine, and the feelings of boredom and monotony this created. Only twice, throughout the whole duration of my time at Colby, did I witness a coaching session between Terry Jackson and any one of his trainee cohort. Similarly, on only five separate occasions did I see structured coaching/skill practices take place.

There were historical and sub-cultural connections to consider here, in that Colby had long since been renowned throughout the professional game for its highly unstructured and informal methods of training, both at youth and senior team level. Yet, in terms of young player development, it is pertinent to consider the extent to which these practices might be legitimately justified within the over-arching context of State subsidized Youth Training.



After all, though the monitoring of YT at Colby was regularly carried out by senior FFE & VTS staff members, these three-monthly, half-day visits did not appear to go much further than a series of cursory checks towards the administrative upkeep of trainee Records of Achievement. Practices which ignored the detailed inspection of club coaching/training procedure.

Club staff appeared equally ignorant to FFE & VTS recommendations stipulating that in conjunction with 'on' and 'off-the job training' trainees should also fulfil alternative 'industry related' work experience placements. This integral aspect of YT provision had been initiated at the club during the early stages of the previous (1992/93) season, when a number of trainees were allocated a variety of administrative roles in and around the ground itself (i.e. club shop, reception, offices), for one half day each week. When the time came, however, for administrative staff to gain certification in order to assess trainee performance within these areas, such measures collapsed, never to be re-instated.

The rationale upon which the operationalization of YT at Colby was structured failed to accommodate the maintenance of such procedure. What mattered most for those in positions of authority was not that trainees received a comprehensive and relevant vocational training package, but that a steady stream of young players continued to emerge from youth team status to support and supplement senior squad needs. In this respect, YT stipulations concerning college attendance, work experience and general training requirements were seen more in terms of their disruptive impact on weekly routine than their importance as broader aspects of trainee experience. Moreover, trainees themselves, it seemed, were perceived more

readily in terms of their lucrative potential as future club assets than their own needs in relation to issues of personal and professional development. This 'club-centred' (as opposed to trainee-centred) training outlook was further reinforced by the highly instrumental nature of institutional relations and the 'official' construction of career aspiration.

### Career Development, Institutional Relations and Working-Class Culture

As we have seen in chapter eight, for many boys at Colby trainee life provided a stark contrast to prior experiences of club involvement. So much of what individuals had encountered as schoolboy players was contradicted by managerial practice at the YT stage. To go from schoolboy stardom to the regimented obscurity of trainee status was too much for some. In turn, levels of confidence frequently diminished, performances waned, feelings of insecurity grew, and personal motivation decreased. This contradiction was most clearly illustrated by the way in which trainee career aspirations and expectations changed over time. Whilst 'youth development' officials had 'promised' individuals much in order to attract their signature as schoolboy players, many found these claims to be unsubstantiated and highly spurious once at the club.

The occupational and social conditions under which the contrasting circumstances of 'pre' and 'post' club entry occurred gave rise to three major trainee concerns - subordination, authoritarianism and restriction - each of which, whilst being inter-connected, held their own tensions as regards the dynamics of everyday life.

Previous chapters have illustrated how many trainees were uncomfortable with the way in which institutional relations and methods of communication were structured. It was as if they felt that such behaviour was unique to their personal situation and occupational circumstance. What they did not see, was that in reality the relational complexities of football club culture at Colby (i.e. authoritarianism, subordination, instances of humiliation) were typical of all-male, working-class 'shop-floor' locales and practices (see chapter two). Like those of the military recruit (see Dornbusch 1955; Zurcher 1967; Hockey 1986; Langley 1994) and the manual worker (see Willis 1977, 1979; Riemer 1979; Cockburn, 1983; Collinson, 1992a), these experiences constituted the rite de passage of industrial membership. Promoting specific images of women, alcoholic consumption, education and money, notions of subordination and physical labour represented the very symbols, textures and emotional feelings around which individual masculine identities have traditionally been constructed within these working environs (see chapter seven).

Trainee reaction to these conditions was to generate a series of relevant coping strategies. Using techniques of 'impression management' the majority quickly learned to present themselves to club staff as submissive, compliant workers, whilst at the same time partaking in both physical and verbal methods of peer group resistance (see chapters four and six). By structuring their behaviour around a range of institutionally accepted discourses and values - toughness, competitiveness, aggression, physical and mental integrity, work hard/play hard, will-to-win - trainees confirmed their place within club culture [1]. Through their adoption of derogatory verbal codes, language too featured as a means by which individuals could

enact their adaptation to industrial practice and construct their identities in accordance with the masculine norms in play (see chapter seven). These strategies not only facilitated the portrayal of an outward desire to conform to club standards, but in addition, offered proof that trainees were prepared to invest personally in the tough, physical character of manual labour and were therefore worthy of 'professional' consideration and acceptance. What trainees did on a daily basis has to be recognized as their way of living out working-class identity, transition and culture. This was their interpretation of, and contribution to, the existence and continuation of that culture and their presence within it. This was working-classness at work.

The restrictive consequences of subordination and authoritarianism additionally spilled over into social life. Here the lavish surroundings of club hostel provision and the high standard of domestic treatment overall did not compensate for a lack of trainee freedom and the inter-relational tensions incurred. Ironically, although various members of club staff were quick to impose their own rules on certain trainee past-times, little was offered in terms of help or advice towards the more constructive enactment of social activity [2].

That is not to say that club officials did not attempt to understand the social temptations involved. Rather, they merely found it difficult to translate this understanding into a more rational and educative form of communication. Fortunately for them, the social endeavours of trainees were relatively moderate, with drinking and smoking primarily representing the limits of bodily abuse. Yet, although club staff regularly warned and chastised individuals about the ways in which excessive socializing might hinder

occupational progress (i.e. by becoming too seriously involved with girls or by smoking or drinking too much - see chapter seven), they categorically failed to spell out to any significant degree the health and dependency risks which alcohol, nicotine or other available drugs posed. Furthermore, whilst recognizing the amount of spare-time and money individuals had at their disposal, they declined the opportunity to advise on matters of monetary investment, spending, and/or general levels of financial consumption (see chapter six) [3].

### Football YT and The PFA/FFE & VTS

What does all this mean for the professional game as a whole and its recruitment policies? What do these findings have to offer the football industry in terms of how it might re-think its deployment of YT? This study shows that questions remain as to how much the implementation of Youth Training has actually changed the face of football 'apprenticeship' over time.

Certainly, within the context of Colby Town the importance of menial chores and subordinate duty appeared commensurate with previous apprenticeship arrangements, particularly in terms of their priority over the development of footballing skill (see chapter one). It would be naive to assume that football traineeship is alone in its adoption of subordinate relational practice. Yet, at the same time, we must consider the extent to which an obsessive pre-occupation with obedience, subservience and conformity over-shadowed and impinged upon the professional development of trainees at Colby, both in terms of the time this took up and

the level of behavioural restriction it enforced. Moreover, the club's cursory adoption of YT policy provides evidence to suggest that in this case State incentive was in fact being utilized as little more than a financial supplement to the continued 'screening' of youth talent.

Where, might we ask, are the FFE & VTS within all of this? Whilst conventional practices of hierarchical club control and conformity appear to go unchallenged, the FFE & VTS do at least, it seems, engender a strong commitment to clamping down on the misuse and abuse of YT policy by closely monitoring educational provision and attendance at colleges of Further Education. In addition, individual clubs are periodically assessed in relation to their administrative fulfilment of YT procedure.

The wider problem appears not to be located within governing body methods of educational scrutiny nor with their drive to increase industrial accountability. For all their shortcomings, it is clear that the FFE & VTS do harbour a genuine desire to increase the standard and efficiency of traineeship within football and to bring all clubs into line with new vocational procedure for the benefit of the game's young entrants. What hinders this process is the differential power relations between the FFE & VTS and the clubs themselves. For those clubs in positions of relative affluence like Colby Town, YT provision and TEC funding no longer dictate the scope of youth development. Such institutions are under no obligation to maintain their acceptance of, or adherence to, YT policy simply because money is of little object to them. For this reason only the bare essentials of educational and vocational provision are encouraged and accommodated by club officials. If these arrangements clash too intrusively with the routines

of pre-match training or the scheduling of specific fixtures they are discarded. Likewise, the aims of the FFE & VTS towards promoting the value of educational achievement and work experience alternatives amongst young players are forcefully diluted amidst the 'anti-academic' conventions of professional club culture (see chapter five).

Of course, because this work is primarily concerned with the everyday routines of one particular club, its contribution to the overall examination of YT implementation within professional football is limited. Further research is needed in order that some form of analytic comparison can be made of the way in which YT has come to shape, re-structure and/or impinge upon traditional working practice within both football and other professional sports settings. Such ventures may also facilitate an assessment of the extent to which notions of 'youth training', 'educational development' and 'alternative career strategy' are in fact promoted within other sporting locales, and the hierarchical prioritization of their fulfilment at both governing body and institutional level.

Whilst FFE & VTS endeavours towards the improvement of educational/vocational awareness continue, and whilst within the context of the broader industrial stage new forms of youth training/modern apprenticeship emerge, what remains important within professional football is success, which, in turn, spawns economic gain. Financial stability means that clubs have the choice to operate their youth training systems independently of governing body policy, or with the minimum of co-operation. Indeed, it was around this intricate balance of obligation fulfilment and financial assured-ness that YT at Colby continued. Hence, the

conditions under which age-old traditions of institutional insularity, autonomy and indenture were reproduced, over and above the rhetorical aims of the new vocationalism - all courtesy of State subsidy. Funny old game.



## Notes

- [1] For further insight into the construction of masculine discourse in and through professional sporting practice see Jefferson (1994b).
- [2] Hughes (1991) has highlighted how, of late, some clubs have preferred to 'socially educate' their young players by way of 'crash-course' residential experience, rather than attempting to accommodate this process amidst the routines of institutional life.
- [3] By comparison, in his study of 140 football youth trainees from 14 different professional league clubs, Roderick (1991) found that 54.4% had been given advice regarding money/earnings, 56.1% had been "warned about the consequences of soft and hard drug abuse", and 91.8% had received some sort of "instructions concerning alcohol consumption".

## APPENDIX A

### Staying On-Side on the Inside: Researching Youth Training in Professional Football

[F]ootball clubs are jealously guarded worlds. Like Governments, clubs are interested in good publicity or no publicity at all. They are, therefore, quite suspicious of social researchers, and of press and broadcasting journalists whose interests lie in anything other than the straight report or the novelty item.

(Tomlinson, 1983:151).

Most players don't trust the specialist writers. Hunter Davies, who spent a year with Spurs and wrote about the club in a way they probably thought was going to be a public relations job and which he made a warts-an-all close-up behind the scenes, knows from experience, or should know, how much they despise and dismiss all the outside experts.

(Doogan, 1980:6).

The strangest thing of all is that no one has done a similar book since. Perhaps I ruined the pitch for everyone else. The word got round that I had done a hatchet job, been nasty about them, revealed things which they preferred to keep secret, so perhaps other clubs have been determined to keep nosy writers out of their dressing rooms. Whatever the reason, a similar book, with similar access, has not appeared.

(Davies, 1985:Introduction).

For anyone even remotely involved with the inner workings of professional football these quotations tell a familiar tale. They tell of the game's insularity, its secrecy, its closure. In so doing, they serve also to

contextualize the investigative climate within which the fieldwork for this study was carried out. For all the modern-day media coverage they command, English professional football clubs remain highly restrictive organizations, particularly in terms of who they allow inside their institutional bounds. This chapter traces my route to (and subsequent experiences of) 'insider' status at Colby Town. It charts the complexities and detailed developments of this research project from its conceptual beginnings to its written completion. It provides chronological insight into how issues of institutional access, data collection, data analysis and data dissemination were managed, whilst emphasizing the continuous and inter-related nature of the research process as a whole (cf. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Burgess, 1991).

In keeping with more recent trends to place person and circumstance at the heart, rather than the periphery, of sociological research, biography too is located as a central concept here (see also Bell and Newby, 1977; Bell and Encel, 1978; Roberts, 1981; Bell and Roberts, 1984; Burgess, 1984, 1992; Walford, 1989, 1991). To this end, some of the personal and political tensions, anxieties and dilemmas of postgraduate research are considered, as are issues of gender identity and class culture particularly in relation to the establishment of researcher/respondent associations and the development of intimate interactive rapport.

### Research Origins: Biographical Beginnings

From an early age football was a way of life for me. It was all part of growing up. All part of mid 1960s Lancashire working-class-ness.

Occasionally I was taken, by my father, to see Burnley play at home against top-flight opposition, a weekend treat which allowed me to sample the masculine delights of spectatorship - the cheers, boo's and chants of the crowd, the bustling crush of the turnstiles and terraces, the lingering smell of smouldering tobacco, cheap beer and Bovril - experiences which engendered personal dreams of footballing stardom (see also Hornby, 1992).

As time went by my associations within the game gradually increased. I played football for my respective school teams and, in my teenage years, became involved in Sunday League Boys' Club fixtures. Whilst between the ages of 16 and 22, shop-floor factory work dominated my daily (and sometimes nightly) life, I spent most weekends and evenings during this time either training or playing for a variety of 'non-league' adult football teams. In turn, these pursuits continued in alternative environs, when, after six years as an Engineer, I left my biographical roots to pursue a period of Physical Education teacher training.

Together with past experience, wider exposure to the amateur game allowed me to think more seriously about the impact football had on different peoples lives. I was intrigued by the participatory clientele which non-league football attracted. A substantial proportion of my fellow players (including student peers) were young men who boasted some kind of historical connection with the professional game, and who aspired forcefully to images of career resurrection. People who had been discarded by League clubs at an early age, and whose existence now followed conventional patterns of paid work and/or the pursuit of academic qualifications.

What struck me most within all of this was how common personal experiences of, and affiliations to, professional football were. Granted, my observations were limited, but I began to consider their implications more thoroughly. How many other boyhood dreams had been shattered by professional footballing rejection? What had happened to these people - where had they gone? What of the vast army of players, young and old, who were 'released' into the labour market by professional clubs each season without qualifications or alternative career experience? Where did they go?

As a result of these thoughts, the aims and objectives of the present project came into view. By way of preparing a research proposal in the Spring of 1992 for full-time ESRC postgraduate funding, my attention began to focus specifically on the plight of young players, and in particular the educational and vocational provision offered to them by professional football's Youth Training (YT) programme. Further questions came to mind. What kinds of vocational and educational opportunities were made available to footballing recruits? How were these organised, arranged, administered, structured, monitored? To what extent did vocational provision equip these individuals with transferable skills of use outside the football industry? Questions pertaining to the ambitions and aspirations of trainees were also constructed.

Having gained funding (from October, 1992), and having initiated the research process further, by early 1993 I had arrived at a provisional, if lengthy, 'research question';

Given the traditionally high drop-out rate of players from professional football, and given also the relatively non-transferable nature of apprentice/professional footballing 'skills', what kind of educational/vocational provision is being made available by governing bodies within the game in order that football trainees might develop alternative occupational career strategies?

What I needed now was some form of organizational access by means of which I could investigate these foregoing questions and issues.

### Gaining Access to Professional Football: Preliminary Enquiries

Gaining access to professional football was never going to be easy. Aware of the insular nature of the industry as a whole, and the likely reaction to my pleas for co-operation, prior to the official start of the research period, I had already attempted to pursue several contacts within the professional game. My endeavours began with a letter in January 1992 to the Professional Footballer's Association (PFA), whom I knew to have historical connections with the organization and administration of professional football apprenticeship in England. They confirmed the extent of their involvement through a subsidiary body, The Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society (FFE & VTS), and invited me to discuss my research plans further with their Chief Education Officer, Harry Walker. I eagerly accepted this invitation, regarding it as a opportunity to assess more closely the possibilities of research entry, and to establish a potentially advantageous footing in terms of access to archival and historical data regarding football apprenticeship. Next stop, PFA headquarters.

### Initial Access: First Impressions

I was neither surprised nor perturbed by the reception I received at PFA/FFE & VTS head office on the morning of Monday 16 March 1992. Harry Walker was, for me, the human epitome of ex-professional football. A quintessential model of the brash, jargon-ridden sporting executive who had found it hard to make the transition from the training ground to the boardroom. Nor was I put off by Walker's repeated proclamations about the apparently futile nature of the research I had in mind; "I get loads of people like you coming to me wanting to do studies on football, an' I tell 'em all the same, there's nothing you can tell me about professional football that I don't already know". I fought hard to gain the confidence of my host by attempting to play down my supposed academic status and by searching for areas of common interest upon which my research might be based. Walker, however, remained unimpressed, ultimately implying that even if I did gain access to a professional club I would never be "accepted" by the apprentices concerned simply because I had not been a professional player myself.

Despite these negative connotations, my plight for access continued. During the following month I contacted Tony Fallows, the Head of a Leisure Studies Department at a large West Midlands college of Further Education, in order to gain permission to participate in the educational activities of the professional football trainees which the college boasted as part of its student population. If direct entry into the club setting was going to prove as problematic as Harry Walker had suggested then perhaps the best method of access was as a teacher or participant classroom observer within the confines of YT day-release.

Having come across as quite friendly during initial telephone conversations, Fallows was clearly ill at ease when we eventually met to discuss the methodological details of my research plans. He appeared particularly concerned with the problems which my college presence might cause in relation to the dynamics of classroom interaction. He described how, in his experience, football trainees were “a strange, unpredictable breed” who were often extremely difficult to teach on account of their high levels of self-confidence. My ‘outside’ interest in them, he claimed, may well stimulate manifestations of over confidence further increasing instances of “playing-up” in class and exacerbating already existing tensions in staff/student relations.

In many ways I accepted these remarks as valid in that they correlated favourably with comments made by Harry Walker during our meeting some weeks earlier. Discussing the intricacies of educational provision, Walker had, at that time, talked of how, in many cases, Further Education teachers had to be “hand-picked” for FFE & VTS approved courses due to the “hostile psychological attitudes” often displayed by trainees as a consequence of their socialization into the “togetherness and success” aspects of club life (see chapter four). Negotiations with Tony Fallows were then effectively over. Hence, it was time, once again, to seek alternative routes of organizational entry.

#### Access Alternatives: Academic Networks and The PFA Re-Visited

After these initial set-backs it was January 1993 before the search for access regained momentum. By this time my supervisor and I had agreed that given



past experience it was perhaps wise to exclude senior PFA/FFE & VTS personnel from direct research negotiations and to pursue instead a number of contacts within Higher Education who were notoriously familiar with the inner workings of the football industry. It was through one member of this academic network that I was subsequently introduced to Gerry Gregg, a PFA representative who, via his own Higher Educational commitments, was well acquainted with the methodological complexities of postgraduate research.

The first time I met Gerry Gregg was in February 1993. Accustomed to problems of organizational access within professional football as a consequence of past occupational experience, he displayed a genuine interest in my research and a sincere desire to help out. Gregg agreed to promote my intentions by way of his daily associations in and around various professional Football League clubs. Furthermore, he put my fears of PFA interference at ease by assuring me that his involvement with my project would not raise any cause for concern amongst his colleagues at Head Office.

In the following months, the possibility of access to a number of professional clubs came and went. During the latter stages of the 1992/93 footballing season many of the teams with whom Gregg was acquainted suffered heavily in terms of divisional relegation, to the point where, because of the pressures and insecurities involved, it became difficult for even him to maintain close PFA working relations let alone promote my own interests. For me, time was of the essence, especially since pre-(1993/94) season training for recruits and existing trainees was likely to begin in early July 1993. It was imperative that research access was gained prior to this point so that the beginning of the data collection and participant

observation period coincided with the arrival of the new trainee cohort.

Needless to say, with few foreseeable signs of institutional entry on offer, by the end of June 1993 the anxieties and stresses of securing research access had become a prominent feature of everyday life (see also James, 1984; Hughes, 1992).

On Friday 3 July I made my customary weekly (and by this time somewhat obligatory) phone call to Gerry Gregg. He reported that whilst in casual conversation with a member of staff at Colby Town Football Club a number of days earlier, he had mentioned my work and unexpectedly gained an invitation to discuss it further on the following Monday morning with the club's Youth Development Officer Phil Denning and youth team coach Terry Jackson. Gregg emphasised strongly the elitist attitude of staff at Colby and served prior notice of possible rebuff. However, he also talked of the way in which some of the staff with which we would be dealing "owed him a favour" on account of the fact that he, as their PFA representative, was in the process of resolving a number of internal club problems, and that this may feature as an influential negotiating factor.

Our meeting at Colby Town on Monday 5 July 1993 was extremely brief. After a substantial journey by car, during which time Gregg and I radically revised the framing of my research project several times over, we arrived at Colby to be met by our two hosts. Over coffee in the club's Matchroom Restaurant an amicable twenty-minute chat ensued in which time Gregg continually reminded Jackson and Denning of the micro-political issues he was "taking care of" on their behalf. In turn, he introduced me as "Andrew, a college student" who was doing "an essay" on "what it's like to be an

apprentice footballer". "What just looking at, like, their reactions to it?" asked Jackson. "Well, reactions, feelings, aspirations", replied Gregg, "He just wants to watch training and do a few interviews".

In the hope of facilitating continued access I briefly outlined the in-depth nature of my research and expressed the need to establish personal relationships with trainees over a period of time. I talked also of the way in which I wanted to enter the club for "one day each week initially" to experience at first-hand "what it was like to be a trainee footballer", gradually building my attendance up to three or maybe even four days per week. After a few short deliberations, which involved my verbal agreement that the research was "just for the first couple of months of the new season", and a reminder from Jackson and Denning that my plans would have to be "O.K'd by the Gaffer" (Colby Town Manager, Jack Sutton and/or Assistant Manager, Len Drinkwater), access was confirmed. Jackson's only premise was that I would not seek club entry immediately, but allow trainee arrivals "a few days to settle-in".

Whilst I was delighted with our coup, on leaving Colby I expressed to Gregg my need to enter the club straight away. He advised against this and suggested that in the interests of securing and maintaining my position I should wait until the trainee pre-season tour of Ireland was over in mid-August. On contacting my supervisor that night, he was of the opinion that I ignore Gregg's advice and press the club for immediate access thereby facilitating observation of trainee re/arrival. This I reluctantly did via a phone call to Terry Jackson the following day, at which time club entry was re-negotiated for Friday 9 July 1993.

### Game-On: First Days In The Field

Three main aspects of daily life dominated my early experiences of Colby Town; a lack of personal space, an abundance of time, and a fear of non-acceptance. Together these issues compounded feelings of ‘outsider’ status, and strongly reinforced notions of personal insecurity (see also Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955; Sanders, 1980; Gans, 1982). In terms of space, data recording was my greatest worry. I had so much to write down, yet so few places to do so discretely. Because of the relatively limited bounds of the indoor working environment at the club (see chapter two) I felt virtually on-top of my subjects without a suitable area of retreat. Even that classic ethnographic enclave ‘the toilets’ failed to provide sufficient privacy due to their highly proximate dressing-room position. In any case, visits to such areas at Colby were regarded as something of a communal affair, during which time one was expected to maintain communication with colleagues of a similar lavatorial disposition. It is pertinent to consider also that hiding a notebook and pen in and around the scarcity of footballing attire is not easy. I could not afford to arouse suspicion by scribbling on, or disguising, bits of paper here and there. So I refrained from note-taking altogether whilst within the confines of the club and did it instead on my way too and from the research setting (cf. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

Time was equally problematic. A typical trainee day involved much time-wasting - in between chores, awaiting instruction, wandering aimlessly, chatting. At the outset of my research, I stood with coach Terry Jackson at the head of the main club corridor talking, surveying and questioning activity, whilst trainees sat in their respective dressing-rooms. As a ‘visitor’ I

changed separately to playing staff in a room reserved for club officials. These signs of supposed 'officialdom' made it difficult for me to directly invade trainee territory and break into their rounds of conversation. I was well aware that associating too closely with Jackson (talking with him, eating with him at lunch, and accompanying him to and from the training ground) merely made matters worse. Thus, by day three I began to fragment these associations and force myself to enter into casual interaction with a number of trainees. Jackson himself promoted such exploits encouraging me to "get in with the lads", seemingly in the hope of shedding my constant shadow.

Part of the problem as regards the construction of 'friendships' was that initially I harboured serious concerns over relational rejection. Like Gans (1982:58), I lacked "...the personal security to banish rejection fears, to feel free to observe fully and to take in as much data as possible". Such feelings were exacerbated by two specific events. The first surrounded a misunderstanding over personal appearance. On my initial day at Colby I arrived with an assortment of training kit (two pairs of shorts, two pairs of boots, a pair of training shoes, two pairs of socks, various training tops and t-shirts and an outdoor 'wet' training suit) all of which had been roughly selected in accordance with my knowledge of club colours. What I did not know on making this calculated choice was that in line with the strict week-day working practices of the club only professional players were allowed to don the constituents of Colby's main colour scheme. Trainees, in their inferiority, being distinguishable by their totally contrasting outfits.

After lunch we changed, and it was back to the monastery like atmosphere of chores and continuous walking between

rooms. I asked Terry if I could join in the training this afternoon and he said, "Yes. No problem". Then they all looked at me when I changed into my kit. How was I to know I wasn't supposed to have first team colours on?

(Fieldnotes, 09.07.93).

Such instances of misunderstanding, norm violation and 'inappropriate behaviour', Sanders (1980:162-165) argues, are commonplace during the early stages of fieldwork and provide an indication of the degree to which caution must be taken when "minimally socialized" researchers enter new settings. I had taken some cautionary measures by including an assortment of kit in my bag, but this was not enough given my blind unawareness of club dress codes. It was not until some time later that I realised the kind of impact such symbolic behaviour could have on individual attitudes, particularly in relation to notions of occupational 'threat'. Through conversations with a number of trainees, it transpired over the following months that although I had assumed youth team squad members would immediately realize that I was some ten years older than themselves, and therefore in no way interested in (or for that matter physically capable of) competing with them for contractual security, this seemed not to be the case. Of course, my capabilities in training soon rectified this initial misconception. Yet, given common-sense institutional perceptions compelling trainees to view all 'outsiders' as a source of occupational threat, one can imagine their thoughts when on day-one the 'new-boy' from the university turned out in first team kit.

Neither were trainees alone in their adoption of 'researcher wariness'. Terry Jackson too, it seemed, held similar concerns particularly in relation to my academic status. Sensing this I attempted to dispel such fears from the start.

As we arrive at the training ground Terry begins to introduce me to the apprentices as they put their boots on. "Just to let you know lads, this is Andrew, and err..." He asks me to introduce myself as he doesn't know what else to say. I tell them who I am and to call me 'Andy' to avoid formality. Terry then sets them off on a run and I try to put him at ease by playing down my educational background, telling him of my time in industry etc. "Well to tell you the truth Andy, I don't know anything about university or education, I'm fuckin' thick as two planks".

(Fieldnotes, 09.07.93).

Purely in the name of trust, I had decided prior to club entry that I would be open with my respondents about my teaching/educational background, even though I had some idea of the disregard with which people within the professional game held towards 'academic' issues (see chapter five). I was aware that such aspects of life-history might render me aloof and distanced in the eyes of players and staff, but felt it might also enhance my relationships with trainees given their assumed affinity with sport and physical education in school.

Within days of my attempts to diffuse Jackson's apparent discomfort I sensed that such educational tensions had eased slightly, particularly as my participation in day-to-day activities increased. But just when I thought it was safe to relax, on day five of my fieldwork these tensions re-emerged when Colby's Education Officer, Ron Wild, arrived to brief trainees on the arrangements for forthcoming college courses.

After closing a meeting at which Jackson, myself and all 19 trainees were made aware of the educational choices on offer for the 1993/94 season, Wild immediately approached me espousing prior knowledge of my research (courtesy of Gerry Gregg of the PFA), and began an intensive

assessment of my methodological plans. Insisting that I viewed his newly acquired 'club' office, Wild proceeded to offer me his assistance in anyway he could and then suggested that we discuss my work further over lunch in the Matchroom Restaurant. Such friendliness was a welcome break from the relatively cold response which I had received from the majority of players and staff since my arrival. I was, however, conscious of the lack of respect which Wild commanded from people within the club, and the educational/authoritative image which my relations with him may promote.

After the meeting with everyone has finished Ron Wild talks with me. He seems interested and shows me his new office. We eat lunch and talk, then I 'cover' myself with the boys and Terry. I don't want them to think I'm anything to do with the education here, or even that I'm on Wild's side - that would render me part of the 'authority' and worthless in terms of the kudos that education carries. I tell them that Wild gave me a hard time at lunch about my work and that he asked me all sorts of questions about what I was doing, many of which I couldn't answer.

(Fieldnotes, 31.08.93).

There is no doubt that in order to re-assert myself in the eyes of Terry Jackson and the trainee populace at Colby I exaggerated the events surrounding my interaction with Ron Wild. In short, I lied. There are a multitude of ethical issues to consider here both at a personal and professional level (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Burgess, 1991; Fine, 1993). Yet as a beginning researcher eager to secure institutional acceptance I felt the need to prioritize my long-term research interests over and above such issues. Moreover, this situation arose at a time when it was imperative that I clarified my role clearly to those concerned and established just whose 'side' I was on, particularly in relation to the whole concept of education. What I needed in return was for my respondents to give me the



chance to understand further their occupational circumstance, and to reciprocate my attempts to build positive, and genuinely supportive personal relationships. A need which was, at times, flatly denied.

Personal Relations and Data Collection: Breaking Out of Depression and Into 'Togetherness'

[F]or us to be field researchers, we have to be the kind of people who can put up with constant and dedicated hard work, loneliness, powerlessness, and confusion, and, quite possibly, some suffering at the hands of those being studied.

(Lee, 1992:140).

Despite the amicable approach which he displayed early on, it was clear from the start that Terry Jackson's reservations about my presence at Colby Town went much further than his concerns over matters of educational background. Throughout the research period I frequently got the feeling that he perceived me as some kind of PFA and/or university 'spy'. A point reinforced by his constant stipulation that prior to my weekly re-entry into the club (on the agreed day of Wednesday), I should phone him at home to confirm that "everything was OK" for me to go in.

From the second month of fieldwork onwards Jackson's attitude towards me deteriorated markedly. He began to treat me less favourably. He was less welcoming when I arrived at the club, less forthcoming with eye contact during conversation, and less willing to assist my needs. The Colby Town first team had made a poor start to the new season, and with staff fearing for the security of their own jobs, Jackson, it seemed, chose to vent his anxieties on me - the 'outsider'. He regularly made comments, gestures and

inferences to trainees indicating his discomfort with my attendance, which, unbeknown to him, were relayed directly back to me. He frequently addressed me in a demeaning fashion in front of youth team players, discouraged them from talking too, or about me, and at times completely ignored my existence. During youth team fixtures he even resorted to restricting my access to team-talks and preventing me from sitting on 'the bench' with team substitutes, as I once had.

[Saturday morning youth team game v Rebben Rovers] I get the drinks and the chewing gum from the changing rooms and help Nick Douglas carry the drinks box to the dug-out. As we get there Terry acknowledges my presence for the first time. "Don't think you can sit in there Andy, 'cos you can't. In fact you should be round the back of that fuckin' barrier with everyone else. You shouldn't even be round this side [of the pitch]".

(Fieldnotes, 13.11.93).

As the days and weeks went by I made regular fieldnote entries about the way in which my relations with Jackson were becoming more strained. Such personal anxieties were not helped by early morning departures, long days in the field, late nights, and seemingly endless train journeys, the cumulative implications of which inevitably surfaced at home. I often recalled to my wife (and to myself) how, on my first meeting with Jackson, I had espoused the desire to sample "what it was like to be a trainee footballer - to actually become one for a season". At times I longed to retract those words, and to tell him that he had no right to speak to me the way he did. Of course, in reality, nothing could stop him. I had given him license to do just that. The only way to avoid such treatment was to walk away from the whole situation, which, on occasion, I was close to doing. But if

my research aims were to be achieved I had to persevere. I had to learn to tolerate personal indignation and emotional stress, to carry on regardless (see also Cannon, 1992; Lee, 1992). Jackson's favour was of vast importance to me. His gatekeeping power and potential meant that he, more than anyone else, could quite simply demolish my research plans if at any time I overstepped the relational bounds in play. I bit my lip and towed the line. It was "total participation" or nothing (Gans, 1982).

As promised, I maintained my Tuesday night phone calls to Terry Jackson seeking permission for club re-entry, a process which became increasingly difficult to carry out as his intolerance of my presence grew. I reached the point at which this weekly ritual literally made me sweat. I hoped desperately for his answer-phone to engage, thereby rescuing me from direct conversation with either his partner or himself. At least this way I could not be denied further access without notice, which is what I feared would happen every time I called once my initial "two months" at the club were up. And where would that leave me? How would I carry out interviews with trainees? How would I get the data I needed? How would I fulfill my supervisor's expectations?

Ironically, my continued access was never seriously questioned. Not, that is, until early March 1994, when under instruction from "the Gaffer" (Colby Town Manager, Jack Sutton), Jackson confronted me as to how long I had "got to go at the club". Secure in the knowledge that by this time I had enough data to complete my project, I calmly re-negotiated my position with him, finalizing the termination of my research within the remaining weeks of the regular season. In this respect, it would be true to say that I did

become part of the furniture at Colby, and that I became well-known to a range of people within the club. I was even asked to sign autographs by supporters on several occasions after training sessions but declined politely on the grounds of mistaken identity.

What was helpful was that whilst my relations with Jackson faltered, those with trainees flourished. This process was helped by my instructed move, in early October 1993, from the managerial changing area into the YT dressing-room. Over time, trainees offered verbal encouragement and support towards the relational tensions which I experienced. Again, this aided my endeavours to break into the clique of group 'togetherness', and to feel at least partially accepted as 'one of the lads'.

These levels of acceptance were made manifest in several ways. Trainees regularly encouraged and supported my efforts, for instance, during training sessions and practice games, even when to have me on their side meant morning-long bouts of extra press-ups and sprints for loosing. In addition, they accepted me as one of their number outside work. Relations were enhanced too by the fact that as a former industrial apprentice I was well versed in the details and complexities of working-class, shop-floor talk, and therefore able to accommodate the quick-fire 'give' and 'take' of insulting "wind-ups" and "piss-takes" (see chapter seven). Against all initial expectations (particularly those of the PFA), it was not my relations with trainees which were ever a problem, only those with their coach. A situation which deteriorated further with the start of tape-recorded interviews.

## Talking Man-To-Man: Interview Negotiation, Researcher Rapport and Gender Identity

Throughout the research period I never fully came to terms with Terry Jackson's relational idiosyncrasies. Yet alongside their many drawbacks some benefits were evident. For one thing, in hardening to his interactional approach I became more forthright in terms of the way in which I carried out my research, despite the contradictions this posed in relation to my existing persona (see Lee, 1992). By Christmas 1993, for example, I had begun to risk the continuation of access in the name of an increased analytical presence. I began to ask more questions, seek more answers, probe more deeply into club affairs, and generally 'snoop' around to a greater degree.

By this time too, I had built strong relations with Bill and Bev Sommerfield, the trainee hostel proprietors at Colby, a factor which also served to increase levels of investigative confidence. It was they who, against Jackson's wishes, allowed me to carry out interviews with trainees at the club hostel, and who granted me license to socialize (and on occasions eat) there outside working hours. Jackson was unhappy about this breach of club privacy. To avoid direct conflict, I did not inform him of my initial entry into trainee residence in mid October 1993, although my admittance at that time was cleared by Bev Sommerfield. After checking the details of my research intentions and my contacts with Jackson and other club officials she agreed that I could fulfil my interview requirements in the upstairs bedrooms of trainees.

This arrangement worked well until later that month when Jackson learned of my daily hostel attendance. Consequently, he spent the morning of Friday 29 October 1993 discretely checking with a number of trainees as to whether they had witnessed my presence at the hostel. Their affirmative, if innocent, reactions created yet more tension between Jackson and myself, levels of which were made manifest by the fact that he failed to address the whole issue with me. Recognizing the potential dangers of this silence, on leaving the club that afternoon, I confronted Jackson about the matter in hand, offering sincere apologies for my intrusive behaviour. I stated also that I would be making a verbal apology to Bill and Bev Sommerfield later that day, a suggestion which Jackson calmly endorsed by saying that I should, "go and see Bev and tell her you won't be going there again". To say that I had my back to the wall at this point would be something of an understatement. If I could not interview trainees in the privacy of their own rooms, where could I do it? I did have the option of using Ron Wild's office, but I was sceptical as to the effects this might have on the quality of the data gathered, particularly since it was situated next door to the office of Jack Sutton, the Colby Town Manager.

Realizing my position of relative powerlessness, I went immediately to the club hostel and apologised profusely to Bev Sommerfield for any trouble I had caused. Astonishingly, her reaction was not to condone Jackson's feelings, but to over-rule him. She stated that I was welcome to continue my daily visits providing I interviewed trainees in a specified ground-floor bedroom, and that I made her aware of my likely times of arrival. On returning home that evening I contacted Jackson to relay the details of this conversation. He expressed immense concern over the outcome, but because

authority for hostel entry rested ultimately in the hands of the Sommerfields, he was rendered helpless in his fight to deter my access and was thus forced to respect their decision.

Venue secured, the stage was set for interviewing to continue, but Jackson's queries were far from over. Within a matter of weeks his suspicions had surfaced once more. Over lunch at Walton-Grange college in mid November 1993, first year Captain Adrian Thornton described to me how, after a recent interview, Jackson had "quizzed" him about the questions I had asked. I found this most odd. Even more disconcerting was that because of Jackson's inquisitiveness other trainees were beginning to question whether or not their friendly involvement with me was in fact jeopardizing their chances of professional acceptance. I could ill afford this kind of rift to materialize further, thus, on returning home that evening I prepared a fabricated list of relatively benign interview questions which, on the following day, I presented to Jackson in order to quell his fears.

At lunch in the restaurant the lads ask me when I am going to see Terry about the 'questions' dilemma. When they have all gone, after 'jobs', I go to his office whilst he's getting the kit sorted out for tomorrow's game. I address the issue with him, and he attempts to clarify what I'm doing. "What is it that you're actually asking them and doing with them in the interviews Andy?" I tell him a load of 'rubbish' about research for the PFA and Gerry Gregg and give him the modified list of questions. He seemingly buys it, and hides them in the corner of the room. I tell him I need to interview him at some point and he agrees... and I push him as to whether he has a problem with me being around: "No problem". From his failure to look at me throughout, I know he's lying. I clear my conscience, but obviously not his.

(Fieldnotes, 12.11.93).

Again, there are ethical issues to consider here. Lying had become something of a habit for me by now - something of a necessity. But with the research in full-flow, the maintenance of access and Jackson's good-will remained more important to me than the methodological complexities of data collection, to the point where my concern for project continuation far outweighed issues of personal or academic conscience.

As for interviews themselves, my fragmented relations with Jackson undoubtedly worked to the overall good. Insofar as his derogatory behaviour towards me accurately mirrored his daily treatment of many trainees, it became apparent that a kind of 'commonality' existed between my experiences of institutional life and theirs. Trainee recognition of this 'shared experience' surfaced during interviews through the way in which the vast majority readily trusted me with their thoughts, feelings and troubles particularly regarding their coach. Like those respondents who, during the course of Finch's (1984) research, seemingly found solace in the details of her own biographical experiences as a 'clergy wife', it was as if my endurance of Jackson's verbal harassment and humiliation led trainees to empathize and subsequently 'side' with me in terms of the information they volunteered, negating notions of 'insider' loyalty in favour of interactional researcher support. In addition, my own biographical experiences of working-class culture and industrial apprenticeship appeared to stimulate and increase this relational resonance (cf. Hobbs, 1988), as did more general attempts to open up aspects of my private life to trainee enquiry (see Burgess, 1991; Hughes, 1992).



It was upon this basis of mutual 'commonality' that I was able to build more meaningful relationships with trainees. I knew only too well the chores and pressures of subservient work - 'skivvying', domesticity, being ordered about - so I thought nothing of helping to collect footballs and marker cones, carry equipment too and from the training ground, and clean and tidy up at the club. These were all ways in which I could participate in an occupationally appropriate and matter-of-fact manner. All ways through which acceptance, trust and rapport could be more readily established.

Admittedly, for some trainees, interviews located me as little more than a 'sympathetic' or 'listening ear', but I did not discourage this (see also Finch, 1984). One of the things I noticed during the initial stages of the research was that because of their structural position (in terms of the way in which they were away from home and surrounded by a pervasive authoritarian football club culture), trainees had little objective input into their lives, and few 'outside' parties to which they could turn. The masculine codes and practices of their environment did not allow much room for intimate discussion of issues such as homesickness, or missing one's girlfriend (see chapter six) [1]. Nor could worries over career failure or serious injury be vented easily. Even Bill and Bev Sommerfield were seen by many as 'authority' figures, who should not be fully trusted with personal problems in case they "grassed you up" to senior officials within the club itself.

Because of this lack of verbal outlet and a reluctance amongst many individuals to share matters of intimacy, I attempted to take on the role of trainee confidant. To this end (and also because I was genuinely concerned about their well-being), I constantly made myself available to trainees for

further interviews, informal chats, and/or social meetings outside of the club environment, an offer which, despite the considerable distances involved, included open invitations to our family home. In order to maintain levels of respondent trust and acceptance, a balanced gender identity was carefully negotiated. I had to be seen as 'man enough' to 'hold my own' amidst the verbal and physical cut and thrust of the work-place, whilst at the same time adopting an approachable, comforting demeanor within the context of interview and other private settings.

It became clear through the contrasting behaviours displayed, that as far as trainees were concerned private interview sessions were for intimate, serious and personal talk - relating to issues such as homesickness, loneliness, contractual doubt and failure, and/or poor relations with Terry Jackson - whereas group activity facilitated the construction and enactment of masculine bravado only. This was confirmed by the way in which "wind-ups", "piss-takes" and derogatory forms of interaction/humour did not surface during tape-recorded interviews, except in the one instance when a group session took place towards the end of the fieldwork where respondents obviously felt compelled to inflate their masculine prowess in the presence of each other (see also Willis, 1979; McKeganey and Bloor, 1991).

Of course, within all of this it would be easy to negate the extent to which my own gender identity did in fact influence and shape the research process as a whole - a subject which, whilst high on the more recent methodological agendas of many female (and primarily feminist) sociologists (see for example Oakley, 1981; Cunningham-Burley, 1984; Finch, 1984; Scott,

1984), appears to have escaped the attention of their male counterparts (McKeganey and Bloor, 1991; Hearn, 1993). This analytical silence, McKeganey and Bloor (1991:196) declare, merely conveys the on-going degree to which male researchers fail;

...to view gender as an important determinant of their access to research settings, their research roles within settings, and other important aspects of the research process...

All of which, it seems, provides further evidence to suggest that, like a host of alternative academic environs, sociology remains prone to what David Morgan (1981, 1992), and others, have perceptively identified as a broader problem of 'academic machismo' (see also Oakley, 1981; Bell and Roberts, 1984).

As for me, maleness was something of a research imperative. Failure to meet this biological criteria would have undoubtedly limited my access to the inner sanctums of Colby Town. Biographically speaking I had grown up in an era which rendered football a predominantly 'boyhood' pastime, a factor which additionally aided my plight given that I was relatively familiar with the physical and psychological requirements of the game. But being male and being a researcher did have its drawbacks, particularly in relation to the pro-feminist standpoint which, in more recent years, I have chosen to adopt. The afternoon viewing of pornographic videos in the confines of the Colby trainee hostel, for example, posed a myriad of moral problems for me (see chapter six), to the point where at risk of losing trainee favour, on several occasions I left the rooms within which such activities were taking place. Trainee/female relations were equally problematic. Because the

derogatory masculine codes of club life were openly transposed onto more public arenas, my associations with trainees often caused me a great deal of concern. I found the highly sexist behaviours of some individuals towards female members of staff at Walton-Grange college extremely difficult to deal with (see chapter five). In the same way, more general advances by trainees towards females of their own age, stimulated their own kinds of problems.

[Walton-Grange college refectory: lunch-time]. At lunch the trainee group 'rip' Neil and Davey about their continued interest in one particular girl - Karen Bishop. They call her over and Steve Williamson warms-up with a few questions. "What's your name?", "Have you got a boyfriend?", "How old is he?". She replies "Karen", "Yes", and "23" respectively. Karen explains that she is training to be a Beauty Therapist. Williamson continues to question, not waiting for answers. "D'ya massage?", "D'ya use all't creams?", "Can I come to yer 'ouse for one, I'll bring mi own cream?". At this point Karen attempts to create some kind of resistance by answering back despite the nature of questioning. [Steve] "What's your oldest boyfriend?". [Karen] "30". [Steve] "When did y'lose your virginity?". [Karen] "14". [Steve] "D'ya like dicks?". [Karen] "Its the way they use them that matters". [Steve] "D'ya like flowers?". [Karen] "Yes". [Steve] "Come and get your 'tu-lips' round this then" (points to, and grips, his own penis through his clothing - raucous laughter from group). As the answers come back Steve becomes more irate. Wanting to keep-up his image with the lads he becomes cynical and nasty but tries to disguise his obvious frustration with laughter. His expression says it all - concern, embarrassment, annoyance. [Steve] "If I come round for a massage will your boyfriend be there?". [Karen] "He might be". [Steve] "I'll have to watch him fuckin' you then". [Karen] "You'll go blind". [Steve] Its time you took that fake tan off an'all". [Karen] "You're so immature". [Steve] Are you anorexic?". [Karen] "Why?". [Steve] "'Cos you're so thin. Y'look it". [Karen] "That's well out of order. You can tell you're 17 can't you?..."

(Fieldnotes, 14.04.94).

Again, there were vestiges of my own experiences as an industrial apprentice here. But things had changed for me. I was now a researcher with a personal commitment to the feminist cause who, to all intents and purposes, found himself party to an extremely aggressive masculine onslaught. How could I reconcile these contradictions? How was I to deal with the relational practicalities involved? My very presence amongst trainees surely indicated a degree of hyper-masculine collusion? In the event I waited until the end of the lunch-time period and, as the trainee cohort went on their way to lessons, made my way back to Karen Bishop in order to apologise for the whole affair on behalf of myself and the others involved. I learnt much from this experience. It raised my awareness not just towards the complexities of participant observation, but also towards issues of masculine collusion within wider research settings (see also Hearn, 1993). Serious questions emerged. Had empathy/sympathy with trainee identity given way to hegemonic masculine edification on my part? Had I compromised my personal and academic principles towards issues of gender in the hope of gathering more data or maintaining access? If so, how often had I fallen foul of 'thesis obsession' in this respect? In terms of my approach to interviews it was all rather late in the day for such questions, but from this point on I came to scrutinize my own behaviour much more thoroughly. The only consolation to be gained was that I had at least reached a point of heightened personal awareness with regard to my own gender identity both as a person and as a researcher - a methodological asset which would proceed to influence my overall outlook during the remainder of the research period, and indeed, life beyond.

### Data Analysis and Writing-Up: The Implications of Personal Circumstance

Like the negotiation of access, data analysis was an on-going process throughout the research period, and one which continually informed and structured the principles and practices of data collection (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Bryman and Burgess, 1994). As information was gathered from interviews transcriptions were immediately made and an accurate contextualization of respondent comment and/or gesture carried out. Alongside interview data, observations within the field were utilized to identify key conceptual themes and issues around which subsequent theoretical inferences were generated (see Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Likewise, the simultaneous coding of transcript and fieldnotes followed a continuous pattern thereby allowing a cumulative picture of the research environment to develop.

Whilst my analysis of data was on-going the viewpoint from which it was carried out altered markedly during the writing period. Once away from Colby Town it became easier for me to detach myself from the relational tensions which had dominated my fieldwork experiences, and which had flavoured earlier analytical assumptions and interpretations. Having said that, it would be naive to pretend that my relationship with Terry Jackson did not have some kind of contaminating effect in terms of either data collection, analysis or presentation (see Fine, 1993).

Of course, issues of researcher 'distance' did have their shortcomings. Feelings of isolation, for example, were frequent during the initial months of writing, particularly in terms of the way in which my days were now devoid of the excitement and activity of 'doing' research, and the

camaraderie of 'togetherness'. I worried also as to whether I had collected all the data I would need, and whether what I had got would allow me to pursue the empirical themes I had in mind (see also James, 1984)

Researcher 'distance' proved equally demanding in relation to the actual practicalities of thesis writing. Like Collinson (1992b) I found that working from home was, in itself, something of trial, given the unpredictable distractions it frequently presented.

The whole notion of academic home-working appeared to indicate to friends and neighbours that I was "on holiday" most of the time, that my research was now over, that I just went to 'college when I felt like it', and that I was constantly available for a "chat" or a "coffee". With my wife in full-time work, I was regularly described by associates, both old and new, as "a kept-man", a fact of which, according to some, I should have been ashamed. In turn, the usual jibes towards "perennial" studentship, and the "waste of tax payers money" this incurred, had to be endured.

As Collinson (1992b:116) has pointed out, whilst such "interruptions and negative social definitions" act as "barriers" to the writing-up process, they also illustrate and compound the extent to which domestic labour is trivialized within our society. What is more, Collinson (1992b) goes on, such occurrences serve as a constant reminder of the "hugely complex gendered assumptions, relations and practices" which structure occupational settings. In this sense, both my prior experiences in the field regarding the significance of my own gender identity and my temporary position as 'researcher/domestic-homeworker', acted as a positive influence on the writing process, in that not only did they allow me to experience and

appreciate, to some degree, the gender-ridden nature of common-sense assumption, but as a consequence, I was able to adopt an altogether more objective viewpoint towards the highly contrasting hyper-masculine occupational procedures in place at Colby Town.

### Conclusions

I have been concerned in this chapter to present a subjective analysis of what it was like for me to carry out sociological research into professional football Youth Traineeship. I have attempted to illustrate how although various 'phases' of research can be identified (i.e. access, data collection, data analysis, data dissemination), in reality the constituent elements of this overall process should be seen as continuous and on-going.

I have demonstrated the way in which the complexities of researcher/respondent relations may inform and structure the collection and analysis of data, and the extent to which levels of personal anxiety might also effect these practices. Conversely, I have illustrated how experiences within the field may serve to influence one's own biographical outlook, particularly in relation to issues of gender identity. In this sense, a central concern has been to dismiss previously pervasive and positivistic notions concerning the apoliticized nature of research and to acknowledge instead the importance of locating the researcher as an active agent within the research process as a whole.



### Notes

- [1] For further insight into problems of intimate male disclosure within the context of sociological research see Brannan and Collard (1982), McKee and O'Brien (1983) and Cunningham-Burley (1984).

## APPENDIX B

### Rules for Colby Town Lodge.

Breakfast will be between 8.00am and 9.30am.

Dinner will be at 4.45pm.

Supper can be served up to 9.30pm.

No one is allowed in the kitchen after 10.00pm.

Anyone arriving after these times will not be served.

\*\*\*\*\*

No food or Take-Away to be brought into the lodge

bedrooms or T.V. lounge - AT ANY TIME.

\*\*\*\*\*

It is your responsibility to make your own bed and to keep your room tidy at  
all times.

\*\*\*\*\*

ALL players must be in no later than 10.30pm Sunday to Friday

unless it is the night before the match

when you **MUST** be in by 10.00pm.

ALL players must be in no later than midnight on Saturdays.

ALL players must be in their **OWN** bedroom by 11.00pm.

\*\*\*\*\*

ANYONE staying away from the hostel **MUST** have prior permission  
from Bill and Bev.

NO VISITORS allowed unless prior permission is obtained.

NO ALCOHOL allowed on premises at ALL TIMES.

NOBODY to be using the PAYPHONE after 11.00pm.

\*\*\*\*\*

ANY PLAYER CAUGHT BREAKING THESE RULES WILL BE FINED.

## APPENDIX C

### TRAINEE CONTRACT

AN AGREEMENT made the ..... day of ..... 19 .....

between (name) .....

of (address) .....

.....

the Secretary/Manager/Chairman of and acting pursuant to Resolution and Authority for and on behalf of .....

Football Club Limited (hereinafter referred to as "the Club") of the one part and

(name) .....

of (address) .....

.....

A Football Player (hereinafter referred to as "the Player") of the other part..

WHEREBY it is agreed as follows:—

1. This Agreement shall remain in force until ..... or such date as determined by extension provided for by the Youth Training rules in the event of sickness or injury.  
(NOTE. For 16 year old school leavers, the period shall be two calendar years; for 17 year old school leavers it shall be one calendar year and for non-school leavers the period shall represent the balance of two years for 16 year olds and the balance of one year for 17 year olds.)
2. The Player will participate in the Youth Training programme irrespective of whether the Club's qualification is approved by the Manpower Services Commission.
3. The Player agrees to play to the best of his ability in all football matches in which he is selected to play for the Club and to attend at any reasonable place for the purpose of training in accordance with instructions given by any duly authorised official of the Club.
4. The Player agrees to attend all matches in which the Club is engaged when directed by any duly authorised official of the Club.
5. The Player shall play football solely for the Club or as authorised by the Club or as required under the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association and the Club's League. The Player undertakes to adhere to the Laws of the Game of Association Football in all matches in which he participates.
6. The Player agrees to observe the Rules of the Club at all times. The Club and the Player shall observe and be subject to the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association and the Club's League. In the case of conflict such Rules and Regulations shall take precedence over this Agreement and over the Rules of the Club.
7. The Club undertakes to provide the Player at the earliest opportunity with copies of all relevant Football Association Rules, League Regulations, the Club Rules for players and any relevant insurance policy applicable to the Player and to provide him with any subsequent amendments to all of the above.
8. The Player shall not without the written consent of the Club participate professionally in any other sporting or athletic activity. The Player shall at all times have due regard for the necessity of his maintaining a high standard of physical fitness and agrees not to indulge in any sport, activity or practice that might endanger such fitness. The Player shall not infringe any provision in this regard in any policy of insurance taken out for his benefit or for the benefit of the Club.

9. Any incapacity or sickness shall be reported by the Player to the Club immediately and the Club shall keep a record of any incapacity. The Player shall submit promptly to such medical and dental examinations as the Club may reasonably require and shall undergo, at no expense to himself, such treatment as may be prescribed by the medical or dental advisers of the Club in order to restore the Player to fitness. The Club shall arrange promptly such prescribed treatment and shall ensure such treatment is undertaken and completed without expense to the Player notwithstanding that this Agreement expires after such treatment is prescribed.
10. It is hereby agreed by the Player that if he shall at any time be absent from his duties by reason of sickness or injury he shall, during such absence, be entitled to receive only the difference between the weekly wage he was receiving at the time of his sickness or injury and the amount of State Benefit he receives, and for the purpose of this Clause his wages or Training Allowance shall be deemed to accrue from day to day.
11. In the event that the Player shall suffer permanent incapacity the Club shall be entitled to serve notice upon the Player terminating the Agreement or Traineeship. The Player's minimum entitlement shall be to receive 3 months' notice provided that the parties shall be able to negotiate a longer period of notice if they so wish.
- The notice may be served at any time after:—
- (a) the date on which the Player is declared permanently totally disabled in a case where the Player suffers incapacity within the terms of the League Personal Accident Insurance Scheme; or
  - (b) in any other case, the date on which the incapacity is established by independent medical examination.
12. (a) The Player shall not reside at any place which the Club deems unsuitable for the performance of his duties under this Agreement.
- (b) The Player shall not without the previous consent of the Club be engaged either directly or indirectly in any trade, business or occupation other than in his employment hereunder.
13. The Club agrees to make provision for the Player to continue his education or pursue vocational training should the Player and/or his parent or guardian so desire. The Club agrees to give the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society particulars of any such courses undertaken by the Player.
14. The Player shall permit the Club to photograph him as a member of the squad of players and staff of the Club provided that such photographs are for use only as the official photographs of the Club. The Player may save as otherwise mutually agreed and subject to the overriding obligation contained in the Rules of The Football Association not to bring the game of Association Football into disrepute, contribute to the public media in a responsible manner. The Player shall, whenever circumstances permit, give to the Club reasonable notice of his intention to make such contributions to the public media in order to allow representations to be made to him on behalf of the Club if it so desires.
15. (a) The Player shall not induce or attempt to induce any other Player employed by or registered by the Club, or by any other Club, to leave that employment or cease to be registered for any reason whatsoever.
- (b) The Club and the Player shall arrange all contracts of service between themselves and shall make no payment to any other person or agent in this respect.
16. No payment shall be made or received by either the Player or the Club to or from any person or organisation whatsoever as an inducement to win, lose or draw a match except for such payments to be made by the Club to the Player as are specifically provided for in the Schedule to this Agreement.
17. If the Player shall be guilty of serious or persistent misconduct or serious or persistent breach of the Rules or of the terms and conditions of this Agreement the Club may on giving fourteen days' notice to the Player terminate this Agreement in accordance with the Rules of The Football Association and the Regulations of the Club's League and statutory provisions of Industrial Regulations and the Club shall notify the Player in writing of the full reasons for the action taken with a copy being sent to The Football Association and the Club's League. Such action shall be subject to the Player's right of appeal (exercisable within seven days of the receipt by the Player of such notice and notification of reasons from the Club) as follows:—
- (a) he may appeal to the Management Committee who shall hear the appeal within fourteen days of receipt of the notice of appeal;
  - (b) either the Club or the Player may appeal against the decision of the Management Committee to the League Appeals Committee and such further appeal shall be made within seven days of the receipt of the Management Committee's decision and shall be heard within fourteen days of receipt of the notice of the further appeal.
- Any such termination shall be subject to the rights of the parties provided for in the Regulations of the Club's League. The Club may at its discretion waive its rights under this Clause and take action under the provision of Clause 19.

18. (a) A Player who is registered as a Trainee may apply to his Club for cancellation of registration during his Traineeship, in which case he cannot subsequently sign as a Trainee or as a player under written contract for a Club until after a lapse of two years except with the consent of the Club for which he was registered as a Trainee, or on payment of a compensation fee by any Club for which he signs to the Club for which he was registered as a Trainee. The amount of such fee shall be agreed between the two Clubs concerned or by The League Appeals Committee on the application of either of such Clubs or of the Player.  
(b) If the Club is guilty of serious or persistent breach of the terms and conditions of this Agreement the Player may on giving fourteen days' written notice to the Club terminate this Agreement. The Player shall forward a copy of such notice to the Club's League and to The Football Association. The Club shall have a right of appeal as set out in Clause 17 (a) *mutatis mutandis* (exercisable within seven days of the receipt by the Club of such notice from the Player) and the Club or the Player as the case may be shall have a further right of appeal as set out in Clause 17 (b).
19. If the Player is guilty of misconduct or a breach of any of the training or disciplinary rules or lawful instructions of the Club or of any of the provisions of this Agreement the Club may either impose a fine not exceeding two weeks' basic wages or order the Player not to attend at the Club for a period not exceeding fourteen days. The Club shall inform the Player in writing of the action taken with a copy being sent to The Football Association and the Club's League and the full reasons for it and this information shall be recorded in a register held at the Club. The Player shall have a right of appeal as set out in Clause 17 (a) (exercisable within seven days of the receipt by the Player of such written notification from the Club) and the Club or the Player as the case may be shall have a further right of appeal as set out in Clause 17 (b) of this Agreement. Any penalty imposed by the Club upon the Player shall not become operative until the appeals procedures have been exhausted.
20. In the event of any grievance in connection with his employment under this Agreement the following procedures shall be available to the Player in the order set out:—
  - (a) the grievance shall be brought informally to the notice of the Manager of the Club in the first instance,
  - (b) formal notice of the grievance may be given in writing to the Manager of the Club,
  - (c) if the grievance is not settled to the Player's satisfaction within fourteen days thereafter formal notice of the grievance may be given in writing to the Secretary of the Club so that it may be considered by the Board of Directors or Committee of the Club or by any duly authorised committee or sub-committee thereof. The matter shall thereupon be dealt with by the Board or Committee at its next convenient meeting and in any event within four weeks of receipt of the notice,
  - (d) if the grievance is not settled by the Club to the Player's satisfaction the Player shall have a right of appeal as set out in Clause 17 (a) (exercisable within seven days of the Club notifying the Player of the decision of the Board or Committee) and the Club or the Player as the case may be shall have a further right of appeal as set out in Clause 17 (b) of this Agreement.
21. The Player may if he so desires be represented at any personal hearing of an appeal under this Agreement by an official or member of the Professional Footballers' Association.
22. Upon the execution of this Agreement the Club shall effect the registration of the Player with The Football Association and the Club's League in accordance with their Rules and Regulations.
23. The remuneration of the Player shall be not less than the minimum provided by the Youth Training and shall be set out in a schedule attached to this Agreement and signed by the parties. The Schedule shall include all remuneration to which the Player is or may be entitled. In the event of any dispute the remuneration set out in the Schedule shall be conclusively deemed to be the full entitlement to the Player.
24. The Player shall be entitled to a minimum of four weeks' paid holiday per year, such holiday to be taken at a time which the Club shall determine. The Player shall not participate in professional football during his holiday.
25. Reference herein to Rules or Regulations of the Club's League, The Football Association, the Club or any other body shall be treated as a reference to those Rules or Regulations as from time to time amended.

# SCHEDULE

- a) The Player's Traineeship with the Club began on the.....19.....
- b) Employment with a previous employer shall not count as part of the Player's continuous period of Traineeship unless in compliance with Youth Training regulations.
- c) The Player shall become or continue to be and during the continuance of his Traineeship hereunder shall remain a member of the League Players' Benefit Scheme (and a member of the..... Pension Scheme) and as such (in the latter case shall be liable to make such contributions and in each case) shall be entitled to such benefits and subject to such conditions as are set out in the definitive Trust Deed or Rules of the Scheme.
- d) A contracting out certificate is not in force in respect of the Player's Traineeship under this Agreement.
- e) Basic Wage.

In consideration of the observance by the said Player of the terms, provisions and conditions of the Traineeship, the Club agrees that it shall pay to the Player in accordance with the Youth Training rate currently in force and as amended during the currency of the agreement. The current rate is as follows:—

£..... per week from ..... to.....

£..... per week from ..... to.....

- f) Travel expenses and lodging allowance will be paid by the Club in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society.
- g) Any other provisions:-

As Witness the hands of the said parties the day and year first aforesaid.

Signed by the said ..... (Player)

and.....  
in the presence of the Parent or Guardian of the Player (Secretary/Manager/Chairman)

(Signature).....

(Occupation) .....

(Address) .....

.....

## Appendix D

### Where Are They Now?: Colby Trainee Post-YT Destinations

The fieldwork for this research project was completed in May 1994, but since that time the Colby 'trainee' cohort have been regularly contacted in order that their occupational progress could be monitored. As a result of telephone calls, letters and informal meetings, the following data has been gathered with regard to individual post-YT destinations.

Charlie Spencer (Goalkeeper). After a prosperous first trainee year Charlie Spencer went onto become Colby Town's first choice youth team goalkeeper during the 1994/95 season. When his YT period expired in June 1995 he signed a two-year professional contract with the club. He has since made a significant number of appearances as reserve team, and first team substitute, goalkeeper. These opportunities have allowed him to travel extensively as part of senior squad tours and official fixtures. Charlie did, however, fail to achieve his BTEC qualification at Walton-Grange college.

Steven Williamson (Defender). On completion of his YT contract in June 1995 Steven Williamson was 'released' by Colby Town. He failed to complete his City and Guilds/NVQ college course at Walton-Grange but has since worked as a school caretaker and a factory labourer in his home town. He is currently pursuing a Fitness Instructors course at night-school and plays football for a local Sunday-League pub side.

Neil Morrissey (Defender). Neil Morrissey was 'released' by Colby Town at the end of his YT period in June 1995. He attended trials with various lower league clubs but failed to secure any kind of playing contract. Having failed also in his City and Guilds/NVQ endeavours at Walton-Grange he has since returned to full-time Further Education in his home town.

Pete Mills (Defender). In terms of youth team appearances, Pete Mills was the most successful first year trainee at Colby during the 1993/94 season. After an equally prosperous second trainee year he signed a two-year professional contract with the club. During 1995/96 pre-season friendly games he made his debut for the Colby Town first team and featured in a number of reserve and under-21 fixtures throughout that year. Pete managed to pass his BTEC qualification at Walton-Grange but failed to gain success from his 'A' Level Geography studies.

Nick Douglas (Midfield). Nick Douglas was 'released' by Colby at the end of his YT period in June 1995. He still strongly aspires to a life within professional football and remains hopeful of trial opportunities with other clubs. He has worked in an ice-cream factory and as a building site labourer since leaving the club and says these experiences of the 'real-world' have done him good. In May 1995 Nick gained a grade 'D' pass from his 'A' Level Art course at Brownes College.

Andy Higgins (Forward). A cruciate knee ligament injury in October 1993 dramatically affected Andy Higgins's progress as a Youth Trainee at Colby Town. He thus spent the remainder of his first trainee year on the sidelines, and though he did make a short comeback during the 1994/95 season adequate levels of fitness and form were never fully regained. He was



subsequently 'released' at the end of his trainee period in June 1995, and, having failed to complete his City and Guilds/NVQ course at Walton-Grange college has since returned to full-time Further Education in his home town.

Davey Duke (Forward). Of all the trainees who failed in their attempts to secure a professional contract at Colby Town Davey Duke was probably the worst hit. After 'release' in June 1995 Davey had extensive trials with lower league clubs but failed to gain any kind of playing contract. A brief spell in full-time Further Education followed, as did a short period of unemployment. He then took up office work for a major credit card company, where he remains. Davey did gain success in his pursuit of BTEC qualifications at Walton-Grange.

Adrian Thornton (Forward). At the end of his YT term in June 1995 Adrian Thornton signed a one-year professional contract at Colby. Plagued by injury during the 1995/96 season and by the interactional dynamics of changing reserve team management his professional future then took a turn for the worse. Against all the odds, however, he was offered a further one-year professional contract in June 1996 which he duly signed. Adrian gained a pass his BTEC qualification at Walton-Grange.

Gary Riley (Goalkeeper). Gary Riley was 'released' by Colby Town in June 1994. Whilst he left the club under rather acrimonious circumstances he had at least managed to gain a pass his 'A' Level Business Studies course. He went on to sign a one-year professional contract with a lower league club, during which time he made a number of reserve and first team appearances. His contract there has since been extended.

Jimmy Briggs (Defender). After a successful career as Colby Town youth team Captain Jimmy Briggs picked-up several injuries during the 1994/95 season and suffered a loss of form. At the end of his initial 'trainee' period with the club he signed a one-year professional contract in June 1995. Finding it hard to make the transition from youth to under-21 and reserve team football Jimmy never really established himself as a senior player and in April 1996 was eventually 'released' by Colby. Shortly after he secured an alternative professional contract with a lower league club where his father resides as part of the management team, and where he has since gained first team experience. Jimmy left Colby without fully completing his City and Guilds qualification in Leisure Studies.

Robin Hindle (Defender). At the end of his initial 'trainee' agreement in June 1995 Robin Hindle was 'released' by Colby Town. He attended trials with a number of lower league clubs but failed to gain a professional contract. Though he did not experience academic success with Ron Wild's Thursday afternoon City and Guilds Leisure Studies group Robin has since found work as a landscape gardener and a painter and decorator, and pursues his footballing dreams with a non-league side near his home town.

Colin Jones (Defender). Having been 'released' by Colby in June 1995 Colin Jones sought employment with various lower league clubs. Failing in his bid to obtain a professional contract with any one of these he has since turned his attentions to non-league football whilst working as a delivery driver for a regional Electricity Board. He too left Colby Town without completing his City and Guilds qualification in Leisure Studies, but plans to re-enter full-time education at some point in the future.

Gareth Procter (Defender). Gareth Procter was 'released' by Colby Town in April 1995. He then signed a one-year professional deal with a lower league club which did not work out as he would have wished. Since May 1996 he has been attending another league club on trial and, despite the fact that he now has no monetary income, hopes to be offered another professional contract during the 1996/97 season. Gareth did not pass the 'A' Level Art course which he undertook at Brownes College in Colby.

Martin Walsh (Midfield). Martin Walsh completed his initial contractual period at Colby in June 1995, at which time he accepted another two-year professional deal. He has since become a regular in the club's under-21 and reserve teams. Martin remains hopeful of first team success and an International career. Like many of his counterparts, however, he did not gain any academic qualifications as a trainee.

Damien Blackwell (Midfield). Damien Blackwell attended trials at a number of lower league clubs after being 'released' by Colby Town in June 1995. He was unsuccessful in gaining a professional contract elsewhere and has since spent much of his time out of work. Though his exact whereabouts at present are unknown, latest reports suggest that he has taken up seasonal bar-work in a Spanish holiday resort. Damien failed to gain his 'A' Level Art qualification from Brownes College.

Ben Tattersall (Midfield). Having successfully completed his two-year trainee term at Colby, in June 1994 Ben Tattersall subsequently signed a one-year professional contract with the club. After a prosperous 1994/95 season in under-21 and reserve team football he was offered another two-year professional contract in June 1995 which he duly accepted. Like team-

mate Martin Walsh he has since become an under-21 and reserve team regular. Ben did not gain his 'A' Level Art qualification from Brownes College.

Simon Gregory (Forward). Despite suffering recurring leg injuries during his two-year trainee period at Colby, in June 1994 Simon Gregory was offered a one-year professional contract with the club. Muscular and knee ligament trouble continued to hamper his progress during the 1994/95 season and in March of 1995 he was eventually 'released'. Once fit (courtesy of Colby Town medical provision), Simon did attend several lower league clubs on trial but did not gain a professional contract. He has since taken up work in the family Engineering business and has decided to concentrate his efforts on non-league football for the time being. Simon failed to complete the City and Guilds qualification in Leisure Studies which he pursued whilst at Colby, but hopes to go on to study sports related subjects in full-time education in the near future.

Paul Turner (Forward). After a successful second trainee year, Paul Turner signed a two-year professional contract at Colby Town in June 1994. During the 1994/95 season he continued to flourish making a number of under-21 and reserve team appearances before being struck down by injury. He spent the summer of 1995 regaining fitness whilst playing for an established league side in North America. On return, his progress has been good, recently earning him another two-year professional deal with the club. In the meantime he has gained a pass in 'A' Level Business Studies.

Tony Chadwick (Forward). Tony Chadwick completed the terms of his initial 'trainee' period at Colby in June 1995 without gaining his City and Guilds

qualification in Leisure Studies. As a consequence of a dramatic improvement in form towards the end of the 1994/95 season, he was then offered a two-year professional contract with the club which he subsequently accepted. During the 1995/96 season Tony appeared in a significant number of under-21 and reserve team games and made his first team debut whilst on tour with the senior side. He was included in the first team squad on a number of occasions for league fixtures throughout the remainder of that season and has since toured with them again both at home and abroad. Despite having some injury problems of late, he continues to do well.

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