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ISSN 1748-944X

### Emotional Hooligan: Post- Subcultural Research and the Histories of Britain's Football Gangs

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#### ABSTRACT

This review essay looks anew at the connection between 'deviant' football hooligan literature and contemporary football hooligan subcultures. It considers some implications for the study of male dominated hooligan subcultures and the methodologies to be employed. The essay draws on new research work into the 'low' sport journalism genre of British football hooliganism literature, involving a comprehensive collection and reading of myriad football hooligan fan memoirs as well as interviews with participants. It shows that although hooligan subcultures disappeared from the mainstream media gaze for a time during the 1990s, partly as a result of legislation introduced to curb football gang violence, militaristic police operations and draconian prison sentences in the courts but also partly because of cultural change, there remain traces of these subcultures today. The argument also incorporates the notion that the methodological work which should be undertaken is a study of the simulacrum of hooliganism, the expanding body of football hooligan literature in all of its forms manifesting itself in literary novels and the explosion of 'gangster' memoirs of older football hooligans, which might eventually lead us to better, more informed ethnographies of football hooligan subcultures. The essay further engages with debates in socio-legal studies, sociology, cultural studies and criminology on football hooliganism and modernity and provides a unique bibliography of the field.

#### KEYWORDS

Gang Memoirs - Football - Hooliganism - Masculinities  
- Subculture - Non-Postmodernity

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Once again the bookshop shelves and Amazon warehouses are heaving with more editions of football hooligan memoirs (Redhead, 2004c, 1997a). A large format A-L of Britain's Hooligan Gangs published in 2005 sold out within a year and went into a new paperback edition in pre-season 2007-8 (Lowles and Nicholls, 2007). One of the most comprehensive of these memoir (his)stories is Ian Hough's recollections (Hough, 2007) of his time with the (Fred) Perry boys of Manchester and Salford's casual gangs in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Hough is a Manchester United fan, now exiled across the world, thousands of miles from Old Trafford. This burgeoning football hooligan literature, which I have christened 'hit and tell' (Redhead, 2004c), is unashamedly partisan and boastful, recounting up to forty years of aggressive male football fandom associated with a particular British league club, music and fashion obsessions and the behaviour of its 'mob' or 'crew'. Much of it is sexist, racist and otherwise uncomfortable fare for readers with liberal, progressive views. The texts are written in the form of fan memoir. Few of them have any pretensions to academic style or journalistic convention though Hough's memoir is actually well written and can be recommended as a stylistic improvement on many of the others in the genre. These fan writings are often formulaised and couched in deliberately 'trashy' formats. Quotations and conversations are seemingly made up at will. The authors are almost always male and in their late thirties or forties, old enough to have been there, done that and bought the T shirt in the 'Golden Age' of the late 1970s and early 1980s. By virtue of their age and their subcultural practices, however, they have become self-styled oral historians and archivists of a period when post-industrial Britain, and its football culture, was undergoing fundamental 'modernisation'. Academic research can learn from these documents. But these writers, for the most part, balk at expertise, criteria for measurement and learning. Indeed academia, like the media, is the enemy, seen as partly responsible for the myriad misrepresentations of football fan culture and its history which these books perceive as a fundamental problem and consequently seek to put to rights. The books celebrate, and romanticise, a whole hooligan youth subculture of yesteryear situating football casuals in a subcultural timeline from the scuttlers of the late nineteenth century through teds, rockers, mods and skinheads in the 1950s and 1960s and suedeheads and punks first seen in the 1970s.

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This essay provides a snapshot of football hooligan literature, football hooligan subcultures and suggests some theoretical and methodological signposts for the study of subculture. It draws on new research work from the last few years into British football hooliganism literature which also rethinks my own

earlier work on rave culture (Redhead, 1993a; Redhead, 1993b) and football hooligan subcultures (McLaughlin and Redhead, 1985; Redhead, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 2000) in the light of appreciation and critique of such work in recent youth subcultural theory debates (Blackman, 2005, Hesmondalgh, 2005; Bennett, 2005; Greener and Hollands, 2006). The research work of which this essay is a part maps, through a collection and reading of football hooligan fan memoirs, the history of the 'moments' of the 'birth of casual' in the late 1970s and the coming together of the football hooligan and rave subcultures in the late 1980s/early 1990s and the later mixing of these moments. The present essay shows that although these subcultures disappeared from the mainstream media gaze for a time, there remain elements or traces of these 'real' subcultures (Wilson, 2006; Hough, 2007) today. The argument is indeed that there is a 'slight return' of the 'emotional hooligan' (1), something of a 'comeback' of football hooligan subcultures in the twenty-first century. But the argument also incorporates the notion that the methodological work to be undertaken should be a reading of the simulacrum of hooliganism, the expanding body of football hooligan literature in all of its forms manifesting itself in the recent explosion of 'gangster' memoirs of older football hooligans, in order to produce, eventually, better informed ethnographies of subcultures. From joint ongoing research work it claims that in Britain many football 'firms' today are made up of 'old boy' (2) hooligans who have returned to the fray after the 'loved up' 1990s (Slaughter, 2004; Courtney, 2002; Hough, 2007). The essay further engages with debates in socio-legal studies, sociology, cultural studies and criminology on subcultures and contains some insights for post-millennial, post-subcultural studies.

## POST-SUBCULTURAL RESEARCH

A certain rethinking of the concept of subculture, as if 3 we are now 'after subculture' (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004) or 'beyond subculture' (Huq, 2006), has taken place over the past decade (Blackman, 2006; Greener and Hollands, 2006). The now defunct Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) seminal work at the University of Birmingham in the 1970s (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979) is infrequently given its due but much of its critique of earlier work on subcultures remains pertinent. As has been pointed out (Free and Hughson, 2003), for instance, Angela McRobbie's strictures about gender blindness in subcultural research are as relevant to the 'new ethnographies' (Hughson, 1998) of football hooligan subcultures as ever they were. The origins of the concept of 'subculture' in the Chicago School criminology (Jencks, 2005, Blackman, 2006) of the early part of the twentieth century risk being erased as new generations of scholars emerge, and new

subcultures (nu-rave, emo - from emotional punk- and goth) present themselves for analysis. Nevertheless, the emergence of 'clubcultures' and 'post-subculture' (Redhead, 1997c) as new concepts and the subsequent imagining of the figure of the 'post-subculturalist' (see Muggleton in Redhead, 1997c) and the development of a sub-discipline of 'post-subcultural studies' have rapidly gained pace in the new century (Muggleton, 2000; Muggleton and Weinzierl, 2003; Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004; Greener and Hollands, 2006). A symposium held in Vienna, Austria shortly after the turn of the millennium in 2001 entitled 'Post-Subcultural Studies: New Formations within Popular Culture and their Political Impact' (Muggleton and Weinzierl, 2003: 3) helped to kick-start this new international sub-discipline which is situated at the intersection of criminology, socio-legal studies, sociology and cultural studies. Yet studies of football hooliganism have tended to eschew this sub-discipline in favour of more established views of subculture and hooliganism, however theoretically varied (Ingham, 1978; Cohen and Robins, 1978; Robins, 1984; Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1984, 1988, Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1991; Armstrong, 1998; Giulianotti, 1999; King, 2002; Frosdick and Marsh, 2005).

Significantly, then, work on football hooligan 4 subcultures has not featured in this rethinking of subculture in post-subcultural studies, though related studies of contemporary rave culture have figured strongly (Muggleton and Weinzierl, 2003: 101-117; Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004: 65-78; Wilson, 2006). Perhaps the reason for this omission is that little sustained sociological and anthropological theorising and rigorous academic ethnography of football hooligan subcultures has been conducted over the last twenty-five years. Honourable exceptions to this rule are rare (Armstrong, 1998; Robson, 2000; Sugden, 2002, Sugden, 2007; Slaughter, 2004). In many other cases it is clear that fans winding up gullible authors with hooligan stories has become almost a national pastime (see, for instance, Buford, 2001). Another reason is that the specific intertwining of football hooligan subcultures and rave culture was generally a UK phenomenon rather than an international one (Redhead, 1990, 1991, 1993a). A further reason is that football hooliganism has become something of, in Jean Baudrillard's terms (Pawlett, 2007; Merrin, 2005), a simulacrum through media simulation. The extreme form of football hooligan subculture has manifested itself in the strange 'pulp fiction' of the once underground 'football thug' writing scene. I want to suggest that one way into a realm of better informed ethnographies of contemporary football hooligan subcultures is through this simulacrum.

## HIT AND TELL

As opposed to the relative dearth of recent 5

criminological, sociological or cultural studies accounts of football hooligan subcultures, low culture amateur journalistic accounts continue to proliferate. They are now extensive in number and together form a vast library of hooligan stories in the fashionable, confessional form of sports fan memoir (Redhead, 2004c). Added to the myriad websites, blogs, e-zines and fans' forums on the internet, these memoirs can be rigorously studied for their contribution to a 'rough' popular memory studies around sport (Brabazon, 2006). They are, if appropriately employed, able to add to the pre-existing body of knowledge produced in the late 1970s and 1980s (and to some extent 1990s) about football hooligan subcultures.

There are many dozens of these published accounts 6 by so-called 'top boys', with a variety of club 'firms', 'crews' or gangs involved. There are even A-Z volumes of hooligan firms, mapped historically and geographically throughout the nation. As one book's dust jacket proclaimed, it 'covers the whole spectrum of gangs from Aberdeen to Luton Town...the Barnsley Five-O and their vicious slashing at the hands of Middlesbrough...the combined force of Dundee Utility... the riots of the Leeds Service Crew...Benny's Mob, the Main Firm, the Lunatic Fringe, the Bastard Squad – they're all here, together with numerous photos of mobs, fights and riots' (2005 first edition of Lowles and Nicholls, 2007). The majority of these 'hoolie lit' books by self-styled 'hooliologists' have been published in the short twenty-first century and are mainly about events in the era of the 1970s and 1980s, and, to some extent, the 1990s. 'Facts' about these events, and conversations during them, are seemingly treated in a cavalier way and in a completely unchronological order, though many of these texts are adorned with photographs and newscuttings kept contemporaneously by the authors in their hyper-diarising of their hooligan activities and media notoriety. The ritual stoking of the historical and geographical rivalries between fans, clubs and gangs, however, is always the aim and this purpose is more or less achieved.

As well as England (Pennant and Nicholls, 2006) the 7 following clubs are represented in the most comprehensive list that can currently be compiled from hooligan memoirs: Aberdeen (Allan, 1989; Rivers, 2005), Arsenal (Ward, 2004), Aston Villa (Brown and Brittle, 2006), Birmingham City (Gall, 2005; George, 2006), Brighton and Hove Albion (Brown and Harvey, 2001), Bristol Rovers (Brown, 2000), Burnley (Porter, 2005), Cardiff City (Jones and Rivers, 2002; Marsh, 2007; Gough, 2007), Carlisle United (Dodd and McNee, 1998), Celtic (O'Kane, 2006), Chelsea (King and Knight, 1999a, 1999b; Ward, with Hickmott, 2000; King, 2000; Ward and Henderson, 2002; Buglioni and King, 2006; Worrall, 2007), Dundee United and Dundee (McCall and Robb,

(2007), Everton (Nicholls, 2002), Hearts (Ferguson, 1987), Hibernian (Dykes and Colvin, 2007), Huddersfield Town (O'Hagan, 2007), Hull City (Tordoff, 2002), Leeds United (Gall, 2007), Liverpool (Hewitson, 2003, Allt, 2004), Luton Town (Robinson, 2005, 2007), Manchester City (Francis and Walsh, 1997), Manchester United (O'Neill, 2004, 2005; Hough, 2007), Middlesbrough (Theone, 2003; Debrick, 2005), Nottingham Forest (Clarke and King, 2005), Portsmouth (Pennant and Silvester, 2003; Beech, 2006, Payne, 2006), Rangers (Carrick, 2006), Sheffield United (Cowens, 2001; Cowens and Cronshaw, 2007), Sheffield Wednesday (Allen and Naylor, 2005, Cowens and Cronshaw, 2007), Stoke City (Chester, 2003, 2005), Swansea City (King, 2007), Tottenham Hotspur (Tanner, 2006), Watford (Brimson and Brimson, 1996b), West Ham United (Leach, 2003; Gardner, 2005, Pennant, 2002a, 2002b; Pennant and Smith, 2004) and Wolverhampton Wanderers (Shaw and King, 2005). The following crews or firms are 'represented' (or, by extension, implicated because of the club history) in these memoirs: Aberdeen Soccer Casuals (Aberdeen), Gooners and The Herd (Arsenal), The Steamers, C Crew, Villa Hardcore, Villa Youth and Villa Hardcore Apprentices (Aston Villa), Zulu Warriors, Zulu Juniors and Junior Business Boys (Birmingham City), Headhunters, North Lancing Firm, Bosun Boys and West Street (Brighton and Hove Albion), The Pirates, Tote Enders, Gas Hit Squad and Gas Youth Squad (Bristol Rovers), Suicide Squad, Suicide Section Fives and Suicide Youth Squad (Burnley), Soul Crew, Inter Valley Firm, Valley Commandos, Pure Violence Mob, Dirty Thirty, D Firm, The Young Boys, B Troop and C-Squad (Cardiff City), Border City Firm and Benders Service Crew (Carlisle United), Celtic Soccer Crew (Celtic), Shed Boot Boys, North Stand Boys, Pringle Boys, Anti Personnel Firm and Headhunters (Chelsea), Dundee Utility and Under Fives (Dundee and Dundee United), Scallies and Snorty Forty (Everton), Gorgie Boys and The Casual Soccer Firm (Hearts), Capital City Service, Young Leith Team and Baby Crew (Hibernian), Cowshed Enders, Khmer Blue, Kenmargra, The Pringles, Huddersfield Young Casuals and Huddersfield Youth Squad (Huddersfield Town), Mad Young Tigers, Kempton Enders, Hull City Pyschos, Silver Cod Squad, City Casuals and The Minority (Hull City), Leeds Service Crew, Infant Hit Squad, Intensive Care Unit, Yorkshire Republican Army and Very Young Team (Leeds United), Annie Road Crew, The Ordinary Mob, Huyton Baddies, Scallies and The Urchins (Liverpool), The Oak Road, The Harry's, Castle Bar, The Hockwell Ring, Steamers, Men in Gear, The Riffs, Bury Park Youth Posse and M12s (Luton Town), Guvnors, Young Guvnors, Cool Cats, The Borg Elite, Motorway Crew and Mayne Line Service Crew (Manchester City), Red Army, Men in Black, Cockney Reds, Perry Boys and Inter-City Jibbers (Manchester United), Frontline, Ayresome Angels, The Beer Belly

Crew, NTP and Boro Joeys (Middlesbrough), Red Dogs, Naughty Forty, Forest Executive Crew, Forest Mad Squad and Forest Young Lads (Nottingham Forest), 6.57 Crew (Portsmouth), Inter-City Firm and Her Majesty's Service (Rangers), Shoreham Republican Army, Suicide Squad, Blades Business Crew, Bramall Barmy Army and Darnall Massive (Sheffield United), East Bank Republican Army, Owls Crime Squad, Inter-City Owls and Owls Flying Squad (Sheffield Wednesday), Naughty Forty and Under Fives (Stoke City), Swansea Jacks, Jack Army, Jack Casuals, Stone Island Casuals, Swansea Youth Squad and Swansea Riot Squad (Swansea City), The Yids, N17s, Tottenham Casuals, The Paxton Boys, and Tottenham Massive (Tottenham Hotspur), Watford Boot Boys, Category C, The Watford Men, Watford Youth, Drunk and Disorderly Firm and Watford Away Raiders (Watford), Inter-City Firm, Teddy Bunter Firm, Mile End Mob and Under Fives (West Ham United) and Yam Yam Army, Bridge Boys, Subway Army and Temple Street Mafia (Wolverhampton Wanderers). On this methodology, drawing on football hooligan memoirs and extrapolating from the clubs they mention, there are 'narratives' of the existence of 143 British football hooligan gangs over the last forty years with a connection to the fans of these particular clubs. This is likely to be a considerable underestimate as many football hooligan gangs come in and out of existence very quickly or simply change their names. Another complicating factor is that 'main firms' are frequently made up from smaller gangs in the local area. For instance it has been suggested in web forums that Middlesbrough's infamous 'main firm' Frontline comprised, at least in the past, local gangs known as B-Farm Boys, Border Boot Boys, Park End Crew, Newport Gang, Dogg Mob, Stockton Firm, Stockton Wrecking Crew, Redcar Reds, Port Boys, Haverton Hill Mob, NTP (actually Netherfields, Thorntree and Park End estates mob), Block 2, Bob End Crew, Ayresome Angels, Eston Boys, and Whinney Bronx Boys.

Other volumes in this considerable football hooligan literature cover numerous other 'firms', or 'faces', or 'top boys' of single clubs, as well as namechecks of countless British professional football clubs (Ward, 1996, 1998; Brimson; 2000, Pennant and King, 2003; Pennant, 2005; Lowles, 2005; Lowles and Nicholls, 2006, 2007) often from the lower leagues. Other crews or firms listed in this 'cultural mapping' exercise, which exclude the firms which have memoirs written about them up to the time of writing, include: Section B and the Red Army Firm (Airdrie United), A Company and East Bank Boot Boys (Aldershot), Soccer Crew (Arbroath), Inter-City Tykes, BHS and Five-O (Barnsley), Darwen Mob, H Division, Tool Bar, Mill Hill Mob and Blackburn Youth (Blackburn Rovers), The Rammy, Benny's Mob, Bisons Riot Squad, The Muckers, Seaside Mafia, Blackpool Tangerine Service, The Mob and Blackpool Service Crew (Blackpool),

Mongy's Cuckoo Boys, Tonge Moor Slashers, Billy Whizz Fan Club, Horwich Casuals, The Omega and Astley Boys (Bolton Wanderers), Boscombe Casual Elite (Bournemouth), The Ointment and Bradford Section Five (Bradford City), Hounslow Mentals and TW8 Casuals (Brentford), City Service Firm, Inter City Robins and East End (Bristol City), Interchange Riot Squad and Interchange Crew (Bury), The Main Firm, Cambridge Casuals, Pringle Boys and The Young Irish (Cambridge United), B Mob (Charlton Athletic), Cheltenham Volunteer Force (Cheltenham Town), Beer Belly Crew, Chester Casual Army and The 125 (Chester City), Chesterfield Bastard Squad (Chesterfield), Colchester Riot Squad and Barsiders (Colchester United), The Legion, The Coventry Casuals and Coventry Legion Youth (Coventry City), Railway Town Firm, Crewe Youth and Gresty Road Casuals (Crewe Alexandra), The Whitehorse, The Wilton, the Nifty Fifty, Naughty Forty and Dirty Thirty/Under Fives (Crystal Palace), Sheddy Boot Boys, Bank Top 200, Wrecking Crew, Game As Fuck Association, Darlington Casuals, The Gaffa, The Townies and Under Fives (Darlington), Pot-Bellied Lunatic Army, Derby Lunatic Fringe, C Seats, C Stand, Bob Bank Lunatic Army and The Orphans (Derby County), Doncaster Defence Regiment (Doncaster Rovers), Dundee Soccer Crew (Dundee), Tannadice Trendies (Dundee United), Carnegie Soccer Service (Dunfermline Athletic) H Troop, City Hit Squad and The Sly Crew (Exeter City), Falkirk Fear (Falkirk), SW6, Thames Bank Travellers, Green Pole Boys, H Block and Fulham Youth Crew (Fulham), Gillingham Youth Firm (Gillingham), Park Street Mafia, The Nunsthorpe Lads, Ice House Lads, Scartho Lads, Grimsby Hit Squad and Cleethorpes Beach Patrol (Grimsby Town), The Casuals (Halifax Town), Pooily Till I Die, Hartlepool In The Area, Hartlepool Wrecking Crew, the Greenies, The Moose Men and Blue Order (Hartlepool United), Inter City Firm (Hereford United), Ipswich Punishment Squad and North Stand Boys (Ipswich Town), The Wise Men, Matthew and Marks Alliance, Thurnby Republican Army, Inter City Harry Firm, Braunstone Inter City Firm, Long Stop Boys, Market Traders, Baby Squad and Young Baby Squad (Leicester City), Orient Transit Firm, Iced Buns and Doughnuts (Leyton Orient), Clanford End Boys and Lincoln Transit Elite (Lincoln City), Moss Rats (Macclesfield Town), Psycho Express, SAS, Carrot Crew, The Cucumbers and Mansfield Shady Express (Mansfield Town), Halfway Liners, Nutty Turn Out, Treatment, F-Troop and Bushwhackers (Millwall), No Casuals and Portland Bill Seaside Squad (Montrose), Motherwell Saturday Service, Tufty Club, Soccer Shorties and Nu-Kru (Motherwell), The Leazes End, The Bender Squad, Mental Central, Newcastle Mainline Express and the Gremlins (Newcastle United), County Tavern Mob, Elly Boys and Northampton Affray Team (Northampton Town), C Squad, C Firm, Barclay Boot Boys, NR1, The Trawlermen, Executive Travel Club, Steins,



Magnificent Seven and Norwich Hit Squad (Norwich City), Executive Crew, The Bullwell Crew, The Lane Enders and Roadsiders (Notts County), Sewer Mob, Sholver Leathers, Crossley Skins, Werneth Mob, Glodwick and Fine Young Casuals (Oldham Athletic), The Business, South Midlands Hit Squad, Warlords, Headington Casuals, The 850, Oxford City Crew and Oxford Youth Outfit (Oxford United), Peterborough Terrace Squad, Saturday Service, Under 5s and Blue Division (Peterborough United), A38 Crew, The Central Element, Devonport Boys, We Are The Lyndhurst, Plymouth Youth Firm and Plymouth Youth Element (Plymouth Argyle), Vale Lunatic Fringe and Vale Young Casuals (Port Vale), Spotty Dog Crew, Town End Mob, Preston Para Soccer, Leyland Boys and Preston Foot Patrol (Preston North End), Ladbroke Grove Mob, Fila Mob, C Mob, The Hardcore and Naughty Forty (Queen's Park Rangers), Kirkcaldy Soccer Casuals and Kirkcaldy Baby Crew (Raith Rovers), New Inn Steamers, Berkshire Bovver Boys, Dirty Thirty and Reading Youth (Reading), East Dene Mafia, Tivoli Boot Boys, The Friday Crew, Rotherham Casuals, Rotherham Express Crew and Section 5 (Rotherham United), NN10 (Rushden and Diamonds), Fair City Firm (St Johnstone), Love Street Division (St Mirren), The Ironclad and True Irons (Scunthorpe United), English Border Front (Shrewsbury Town), Milton Mob, The Warrens, the Inside Crew, Suburban Casuals and The Ugliest Men (Southampton), Southend Bootboys, CS Crew and Southend Liberal Front (Southend United), The Hit Squad, The Company and Edgeley Volunteer Force (Stockport County), Redskins, Boss Lads, Vauxies and The Seaburn Casuals (Sunderland), Swindon Town Aggro Boys, Gussethunteers, Southsiders, South Ciders, South Side Crew and Swindon Active Service (Swindon Town), Torquay Mental Mob, Bayline Firm and Torquay Youth Squad (Torquay United), Free Library Boys and Tranmere Stanley Boys (Tranmere Rovers), Street Enders, Special Patrol Group, Barmy Army and Junction 9 (Walsall), Clubhouse Mob, Smethwick Mob and Section 5 (West Bromwich Albion), Wigan Thieves, Wall Gang, Vulture Squad and Goon Squad (Wigan Athletic), Frontline (Wrexham) and York Nomad Society (York City). On this methodology there are estimated to be 250 other firms (not 'narrativised' by football hooligan memoirs) in existence over the last forty years. The approximate total of football hooligan gangs in Britain since the watershed year of 1967-1968 (when skinheads were first emerging as a youth culture) is therefore, adding the previous 143 identified, 393. It is noteworthy that the authors of two volumes on British football hooligan gangs history (Lowles and Nicholls, 2006, 2007) claim to have interviewed 200 hundred former hooligans. The cultural mapping of football hooligan gangs for ethnographic and historical research purposes for post-subcultural studies is aided and abetted by the extensive hit and

tell literature and its oral history of football, culture and modernity.

Names, not just numbers, of the football hooligan 9 crews are themselves significant. They have often been used to confuse enemies: other firms, the media and police. They are an integral part of the argot and style, the reflexive subcultural language of football hooligans, even if the gangs are small and relatively short lived. Hyper-localised notoriety is what is sought, often down to the pub or street where the firms meet. A banner at a Liverpool home game at Anfield in the 2006-7 season read 'We are not English, We are Scouse'. One effect of this football hooligan literature surveyed in this essay is to provide an historical glossary of the oblique discourse of the football firms during the last quarter of a century, which can be aped, and adapted, by newcomers on the scene. 'Inter-city' and 'Service' refer to long gone railway provision enabling crews to travel to away games in the 1970s and 1980s. 'Scarfers' or 'shirts' denote ordinary football supporters (who often wear scarfs or shirts in club colours) as opposed to 'casuals' who are the 'well-dressed' hooligans. 'Billy whizz' is amphetamine. 'Under-fives' are junior hooligan crews. 'On their toes' means to run away. 'Toe to toe' is fighting at close quarters. 'On top' is trouble about to happen. There are also regional variations which mark out territory. 'Scally' (for casual) is used as a term of abuse outside Merseyside but a badge of pride inside (Nicholls, 2002). 'Trainees' (for training shoes) would only be used by those born on Merseyside (Hewitson, 2003). 'Woollyback' is everyone's way of describing the out-of-towners not from a large conurbation or city. 'Briefs' (tickets) and 'tom' (for jewellery, originally in cockney rhyming slang 'tomfoolery') are phrases well used in street gangs everywhere.

In the 1980s and early 1990s these hit and tell10 'football thug' authored writings appeared in underground fanzines or very limited edition, poorly distributed, hastily printed books (Redhead, 1987, 1991, 1997a). But by the late 1990s a distinctive market had been created and a number of tiny independent publishers with a finger on the pulse of the vagaries of casual culture responded by commissioning a host of new books with relatively small margins for profit. The best example of the 'hit and tell' genre are the 'true confession' writings published since 1997 by an independent venture called Milo Books based in North West England with its own internet website, but other small independent publishers, mainly shipping product to high street book and music shops, have been emerging in recent years. The most prominent apart from Milo are: John Blake Publishing, begun in the 1990s by the journalist John Blake, Headhunter Books, begun in 2004 by the former hooligan and writer Martin King, and Pennant Books, begun in 2005 by the former hooligan and

writer Cass Pennant. Milo, a small scale Lancashire publishing business, originally located in Bury and subsequently removed to Lytham St Annes and then Wrea Green, is the brainchild of journalist Peter Walsh, who, in his forties is the same age as the 'old boy' hooligans who write the memoirs that he publishes. Walsh, who was educated in Blackpool, worked as a reporter for various newspapers in his career including the Manchester Evening News, the Daily Mail, The Sun and the Coventry Evening Telegraph, and also the BBC. He has produced provocative investigative journalism on contemporary gang violence for various different media. In particular his study of the Manchester gang wars in the 1990s is an outstanding, well researched journalistic account of organised and disorganised crime in a contemporary urban setting (Walsh, 2003) which would easily qualify on quality grounds for university criminology reading lists. His publishing company has also showcased other sharp journalistic portrayals of the historical contours and current shape of the British underground economy (Barnes, Elias and Walsh, 2001; Barnes, 2000; Blaney, 2005). Walsh, the publisher, has also worked jointly with his authors in some cases, especially in the writing of the histories of Manchester United (O'Neill, 2005) and Manchester City (Francis with Walsh, 1997) football gangs. Walsh has subsequently expanded his publishing enterprise to include books on boxing, street fighters, bare-knuckle fighting, anti-fascist left wing violence and biographies of American gangsters but it is the hooligan memoirs which fill the bookshelves and gain most lurid publicity for his company. The public launches of the books are effectively gatherings of dozens of 'old boy' hooligans who twenty years ago would have been leading their firms into battle but who now swap authors' stories over a few beers. Mark 'Jasper' Chester, author of two Milo books, recalls the media moral panic over the launch of one of them, his twenty-year story of 'life with the naughty forty football firm' attached to Stoke City. Chester says (Chester, 2005: 1-3):

The initial outrage...turned to a full outcry of anger and disbelief when the authorities discovered my intended launch venue and so a media campaign against the book gained momentum. Despite once being a fiercely private person, I had spilt my guts on to the keyboard of a laptop over the previous twelve months and I now found myself toe to toe with the media, the police and Stoke City Council...The fact that I was one of those "mindless thugs" who could actually hold an intellectual conversation, instead of frothing out abuse and foul-mouthed obscenities, meant the council raised no objection...The event was

something a bit special even by our standards. The Kings Hall in its heyday was a concert venue, and that's exactly what we had, a rowdy concert. In excess of 1,300 people crammed into the venue from two in the afternoon until midnight...Between bands, DJs kept the mood moving with guest appearances from the author of *Casuals*, Phil Thornton, and Farm front man Peter Hooton. The whole place was enveloped in testosterone as ninety per cent of the congregation was male and most full-on football hooligans of all ages and experience.

As a small, hand to mouth operation, Milo has gained<sup>1</sup> from moral panic on the one hand and the mixing of music and football culture on the other. Milo Books, along with Pennant, John Blake and Headhunter Books, have rapidly become part of a 'cult' publishing category. This style has now become so familiar that it has provoked publishers to produce their own comic parodies of the genre (Fist and Baddiel, 2005; Cheetham and Eldridge, 2006) extending to contents pages – 'Chapter Fucking One', 'Chapter Fucking Two', etc.

The hit and tell genre, recounts, indeed celebrates,<sup>1</sup> hyper-violent male football fandom associated with a particular British league club and its mob, crew or firm. The rivalry between the crews or firms (the main content of the books: who did what to whom and when) is now compounded by the rivalry between the books, and authors, themselves. The books are written in the form of fan memoir but nothing could be further from the literary style and social function of the original 'soccerati' writing of Nick Hornby (Hornby, 1992) who helped to make football culture fashionable after Italia 90 (Redhead, 1991, 1997a). None of these books have any pretensions to formal style or literary protocol, though at least two (Gall, 2005, 2007) are fully authored by a female professional journalist who made contact with the Birmingham City and Leeds United gangs in question. The books adopt deliberately 'trashy' formats. It is a self-conscious punk, Do-It-Yourself 'trash aesthetic' which is pursued. Titles are long and winding. Even if the headline is snappy, the effect is a parody of a blend of tabloid journalism and hard boiled crime fiction. Quotations and conversations are made up. 'Fuck', 'cunt', 'shit' are the most common words used in all of these texts, and not just in the conversations haphazardly put into quotations. The authors are almost always male and in their late thirties or forties, the 'old boys' in Patrick Slaughter's term (Slaughter, 2004). Originally what was once referred to by Nick Hornby and his media cheerleaders as the 'new football writing' (King, 2002) steered clear of hooligan stories. But later in the 1990s and early 2000s, as '

gangster chic' British movies flooded the cinemas, a market was created for the hooligan 'hit and tell' accounts which were often 'fictionalised' - in form if not in content. These non-fiction commodities were effectively 'pulp', appearing in 'true crime' sections of bookshops and libraries rather than sport journalism shelves. They became so ubiquitous that it started to be a badge of honour for firms to refuse to cooperate with publishers to produce the authorised 'old boy' memoir of their crew. That was the only way for the contemporary mob to look distinct and different from its rivals. Leeds United hooligans were an example of this for some time but succumbed eventually to a Leeds Service Crew memoir (Gall, 2007). 'Smaller' clubs, ostensibly without well know firms, have often been covered in these texts. For example, the Brimson brothers Dougie and Eddie, in particular, have contributed numerous hit and tell accounts, initially about Watford but eventually over the years on British football hooliganism in general (Brimson and Brimson, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1998; Dougie Brimson, 1998a, 2003, 2006, 2007; Eddie Brimson, 1998b, 2001). Dougie Brimson was also responsible for the script for a football hooligan gang feature film directed by Lexi Alexander and starring Elijah Wood, originally called *The Yank* but renamed *Green Street* (after the film's fictional football firm the Green Street Elite) when released in 2005.

### REPETITIVE BEAT GENERATION

The hooligan 'fiction' category was literally accurate<sup>1</sup>: in some cases as, during the mid-late 1990s, a new breed of contemporary fiction writers, which I, with heavy irony, labelled the 'repetitive beat generation' (Redhead, 2000) emerged into the media spotlight after spending years on the literary fanzine circuit (Redhead, 2000: xi-xxviii). These novelists, again mostly of the age of the 'old boy' hooligan writers, proceeded to paint a more convincing picture of the history of modern British soccer fan culture, rave culture and its connection to hooliganism (Courtney, 2002; Redhead, 1993a, 1993b) than much formal ethnographic work by sociologists of deviance or sociology of sport or even, for that matter, journalists and undercover police involved in the 'hooligan wars' (Perryman, 2002). Cult fiction writers like John King wrote short stories and novels to fill in the gap where anthropology and sociology had once been. King's debut novel *The Football Factory* sold hundreds of thousands of copies and later became a feature film in the mid-2000s much bootlegged by former and currently active football hooligans. The 'repetitive beat generation' created what they saw, following mentors such as Alan Sillitoe, David Storey and James Kelman, as a 'new working class fiction' around soccer hooliganism and popular music culture. John King's popular culture fiction trilogy completed by his seventh novel *Skinheads* is based on the connections between popular music and white

working class youth culture from the 1970s onwards (King, 2001, 2008). The other loose football fiction trilogy (3) of novels by John King (King, 1996, 1997, 1998), alongside sections of much of the fiction, screenplays and playscripts of Irvine Welsh, gave versions of territorial male soccer fan and music culture, and casual football hooliganism, which often eclipsed those of criminologists, sociologists and cultural studies ethnographers. Irvine Welsh's fictional writing (Welsh, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2007) is full of acute observations of football casual culture and punk and rave culture, hidden references to those cultures and (along with John King) the most historically accurate examples of contemporary street language of football hooligans and clubbers (4). Welsh, correctly cited in much literature as a long time fan of Hibernian FC, was somewhat ludicrously featured in a book of interviews with 'terrace legends', the majority of whom were self-styled 'old boy' former football hooligan gang leaders writing their memoirs (Pennant and King, 2003: 267-274). This stylised language of football hooligans eventually became a televisual 'style'. Danny Dyer, a West Ham United fan in real life and star of *The Football Factory*, *The Business* and *Outlaw* (all directed by Nick Love), hosted a documentary series on football hooligan gangs (on Bravo TV) entitled *The Real Football Factories* in 2006 followed by *The Real Football Factories International* in 2007 by fronting the programmes as a knowingly 'laddish' character from *The Football Factory*. In the same period figures such as Donal MacIntyre and Ross Kemp also hosted documentary series (on Bravo and Sky TV respectively) on gangs, including football hooligan gangs, as if they were part of the milieu of 'real' gangsters. Donal MacIntyre's previous undercover TV documentary on football hooligan gangs had resulted in prosecution of one of the subjects and a controversial court case.

King and Welsh used their own extensive<sup>1</sup> participation in soccer fan cultures and football hooligan subcultures with, respectively, Chelsea and Hibernian, since the 1970s to write their formally fictional texts (5). As with John King, Welsh's non-fiction writing also draws frequently on his extensive knowledge of football fan culture. For Welsh, now 50 years of age and having played a leading role in the 'Irvine Welsh phenomenon' (Kelly, 2005; Buchanan, 2007), it is widely misunderstood that much of his writing was self-consciously a 'response to the changes' of the last twenty years and 'how they affect working class communities in general' (Redhead, 2000: 142). In John King's case, though he went to his first game in 1970 and attended for a full season initially in 1976, watching from Chelsea's infamous Shed end, he asserted to me that he was always constantly searching for a 'punk' influenced 'honesty' and 'integrity'. King

'started writing in the early 1990s and did a load and looked at it and thought "this is rubbish", you've got to think about how you're going to write and people do say fuck and cunt, I say fuck and cunt, so you've got to write it down no matter what your mum says' (Redhead, 2000: 53). King remembers especially (Redhead, 2000: 57) the 'old boys' at Chelsea's 1998 European Cup Winners Cup Final triumph where:

in Stockholm there were twenty-five thousand men there between the age of twenty-five and forty-five. There were blokes there who were our heroes, six or seven years older than us, "leaders" of the Shed, staying in the Sheraton Hotel. And a lot of those blokes have made money. They're no mugs, even though they might look back on it with a little bit of embarrassment they'll probably say they were the best days of their life.

The hooligan fiction genre has been frequently attempted but without anything like the same panache or historical accuracy as Kevin Sampson (6), John King or Irvine Welsh (Anderson, 1996; Eddie Brimson, 1998a; Dougie Brimson, 1998b, 2000). Its literary versions, added to the hit and tell memoirs, make rich starting points for academic ethnographers.

Alongside the repetitive beat generation fiction literature, the hit and tell books celebrate and romanticise football hooligan subcultures which began in the late 1970s with the development of casual youth culture (Thornton, 2003) and mutated to some extent into rave culture in the late 1980s. Designer labels and soccer have gone hand in hand since the late 1970s and early 1980s 'subcultural' moment of casual, becoming mainstream sometime in the mid 1980s and an international youth style ever since. Casual history, or history of the 'casual', in fact, is the missing key to the sociology of British soccer hooligan culture over the last forty years. Merseyside was the birthplace of what became 'casual' youth culture quickly followed by Manchester and then London, and eventually other cities. The website <http://www.80casuals.co.uk/stories.html> has contributions to the oral history of the casuals since the 1977-78 British football season by Kevin Sampson, Phil Thornton and Ian Hough. Views on casual history are on the website <http://www.80casuals.co.uk/interviews.html> including interviews with Peter Hooton, Nick Love and others by author Dave Hewitson (2003). There are also websites on casual music, football fandom and fashion (see for example <http://www.swinemagazine.co.uk>, <http://www.countylads.com> and <http://www.footballcasuals.com>). It is possible, through these various texts, to situate casuals in a

youth subcultural timeline from the scuttlers of the late nineteenth century through teds, rockers, mods and skinheads of the 1950s and 1960s and suedeheads and punks of the 1970s until they join up with ravers in the 'acid house' years of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Casuals began as a 'post-mod' (Hewitt and Baxter, 2004; Hewitt, 2000), post-skinhead subculture in the 1977-1978 football season in Britain, initially in the North of England. By the time Eugene McLaughlin and I wrote our seminal essay on what we called 'soccer's style wars' (McLaughlin and Redhead, 1985) on the eve of the 1985-1986 soccer season, several years of growth of soccer casual culture had meant that a majority of professional league soccer teams in Britain could boast their own casual firm, or very often, multiple casual firms. In the intervening twenty years many of the most active football hooligan gang members have spent considerable amounts of time in prison, convicted usually of 'football-related offences'. Football legislation, beginning with aspects of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, increased state intervention on football hooliganism and created a climate of militaristic policing and draconian prison sentences in the courts. The hit and tell memoirs often have a section of court trial and prison diaries. Increasingly, too, football hooligan subcultures overlapped in these years with a range of illegal activities in the 'underground economy' (Sugden, 2002, 2007) from using and dealing recreational drugs, through gun running and planning heists to organising ticket touting and horse racing scams. Again it is clear that the hooligan memoirs trace the common biography of men now in their forties who heavily involved themselves in the rave scene of the late 1980s and drifted into various criminal activities in the 1990s (Blaney, 2003, 2007) only to frequently return to football firms in the 2000s.

### FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM AND MODERNITY

What the hit and tell genre provides, as has been seen, is a possible cultural criminology supplement (7) for post-subcultural studies. Methodologically it allows academics to add events, stories, language and colour to a history of youth culture which was already partly written at the time in the 1970s and 1980s. It provides material for reflection and correction of previously mistaken assumptions. It adds to a 'rough' popular memory around sport studies and subcultures and further identifies 'faces' and 'top boys', however partially, so that sustained ethnographic, participant observation, work can be undertaken with 'old boy' hooligans in various contemporary firms. Lastly, it provides the possibility of repairing the gaps in contemporary knowledge of football hooligan subcultures within post-subcultural studies.

Did they think it was all over? The media? The police? 18



The football authorities? Tony O'Neill, Manchester United's so-called 'Red Army General' (O'Neill, 2004) entitled the final chapter of volume one of his memoirs this way, as if to say that football hooliganism itself was at an end. By the time Milo Books published the second volume (O'Neill, 2005) he was recovering in hospital recovering from a shooting in a Manchester pub. Perhaps it is, as BBC commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme (sampled on England/New Order's *World in Motion*) once put it, 'all over'. But sociologist of soccer culture can culturally map more accurately, through argot and style, where causal youth culture has been, and even where it might be going, if attention is paid to the discourse of the hit and tell hooligan literature reviewed in this essay. Where does this discussion of contemporary football hooligan literature and subcultures leave the general state of 'critical sociology of sport' (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002; Redhead, 2007b) and 'post-subcultural studies' - and indeed theories of subculture, youth culture and popular culture overall, an amalgam I once christened 'Popular Cultural Studies' (McRae, 2006)? In a recent series of debates, a binary division between subcultural theorists and post-subcultural theorists has appeared (Greener and Hollands, 2006; Blackman, 2006). For some theorists (Blackman, 2006; Bennett, 2006) a general 'postmodern subcultural theory' has been identified in these debates which includes 'post-subcultural' theory drawing on such theorists as Jean Baudrillard. My own past work on subculture, rave and football hooliganism has been seen to be part of this cluster of 'postmodern subcultural theory' (Hollands, 2002; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Greener and Hollands, 2006; Blackman, 2006; Bennett, 2006) where youth styles are said to be 'depthless, transitory and internally fragmented'. As part of the rethinking of my own earlier work and the connections to a more general long term project of reworking social theory and its relation to modernity (8), I have introduced the terms 'accelerated culture' (Redhead, 2004a, Redhead, 2004b, Redhead, 2006) and 'non-postmodernity' (Redhead, 2008a). The notion of 'non-postmodernity' is conceived in stark contrast to those who see postmodernity as an era (Guilianotti, 1999), in other words something to follow on, historically, from modernity. It is also in contrast to those former postmodernist theorists like Zygmunt Bauman (9) who now detect a linear move from 'solid modernity' to 'liquid modernity'. Bauman is one of a number of theorists who have adopted a linear history to explain a move within modernity - in Bauman's case, liquid modernity follows on from the previous state, solid modernity. Bauman's work, especially since he eschewed the terms postmodern, postmodernity and postmodernism, is of considerable value despite its adoption of a linear history. A good introduction to 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000) is his own short introductory book on the 'liquid' project

(Bauman, 2007). In my argument, an adequate theory of modernity (Redhead, 2005) requires a critique of linearity. A non-linear history is given by the adoption of the concept of 'accelerated culture'. Modernity has always been accelerated in this history, ever since, in the 1840s, Marx and Engels coined the idea of modernity as 'all that is solid melts into air'. The football hooligan memoir is part of this cyclical, circular non-linear history. It all comes round again. The 'moments' of the birth of casual history in the late 1970s and rave culture in the late 1980s are kept alive in the slight return of football hooligan subcultures through the hit and tell genre. Reading the often bizarre simulacrum of football hooliganism literature can help to plot the 'timeline' of British football hooliganism since the 1960s whilst simultaneously critiquing linear history.

## NOTES

1. For the 'low culture' source of the term 'slight return' see the Jimi Hendrix Experience *Electric Ladyland* double album from the late 1960s; Hendrix's 'Voodoo Chile' is accompanied on the album by another track 'Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)'. The 'low culture' roots of the figure 'emotional hooligan' is a track called 'Emotional Hooligan' on the 1990s On-U Sound album *End-of-the-Century Party* by Gary Clail, produced by Adrian Sherwood (released as a single and featured on *Top of the Pops*), the title of which was based (with my permission) on the book *The End-of-the-Century Party: Youth and Pop Towards 2000* (Redhead, 1990). The Barmy Army On-U Sound album *The English Disease*, produced by Adrian Sherwood, also from the early 1990s, features cut-ups of my field research tapes from the football terraces and face to face interviews.

2. In the mid-2000s Patrick Slaughter, at the Chelsea School, University of Brighton, conducted participation observation work inside contemporary football hooligan 'firms' (at three football clubs) with particular emphasis on the life history of what he calls the 'old boys' of these gangs.

3. See Redhead (2007a) for discussion of John King's *The Football Factory* novel (and the film of the book) in the context of New Wave writers and filmmakers of the 1950s and early 1960s. See Redhead (2000: xi-xxviii, 48-63 and 136-50) for interviews with both John King and Irvine Welsh.

4. For a while it was intended that Irvine Welsh and his film company, formed with actor Robert Carlyle, would put into production the fan memoir of Cardiff City's *Soul Crew* by Jones and Rivers (2002).

5. For analysis of 'football hooligan' representations as a genre, see the work of Emma Poulton (2006, 2007).

6. Arguably the outstanding literary fictional account of British football hooliganism is former manager of The Farm Kevin Sampson's first novel (Sampson, 1998a), set in the late 1970s around the activities of Tranmere Rovers football casuals. Sampson is also author of a number of other novels on youth culture, popular music and gangs (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006) and an excellent non-fiction 'year in the life' diary of being a Liverpool fan (1998b)

7. An earlier, more speculative version of this essay is published (Redhead 2008b) as a contribution to what I call a 'supplementary criminology' of sport subcultures for 'cultural criminology' (Redhead, 1995) in general.

8. See <http://www.steveredhead.com>.

9. See the appreciation of Bauman's life and work by Tony Blackshaw (2005).

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