

# **Club, Community and Coal: A Case Study of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club in the 1980s**

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**August, 2015**

## **Acknowledgements**

Over the past year I have been overwhelmed by the support and guidance by many people associated with Dunfermline Athletic Football Club. From an initial, exploratory post on fans' forum dafc.net in late July, 2014, I was immediately contacted by Donald Adamson and Jason Barber, who offered to help. Through Jason I was able to interview Jim Leishman and Ian Westwater, and Donald provided me with a high level of information about the club, in addition to the links with coal mining. I cannot thank Donald and Jason enough for their assistance.

The following people have also provided help and information along the way: Gordon Baird, Alan Bairner, Kenny Cowan, Joe Graham, Jim Leishman, Duncan Simpson, John Simpson, and Ian

Westwater. Every single person is a credit to themselves and to Dunfermline Athletic Football Club for giving up their free time to help me with this dissertation. I would also like to apologise to the staff at the temporary library at St Margaret's House for my inability to work the microfiche readers, and to thank them for their help.

At DMU, Matt Taylor has been very helpful in terms of the structure of the dissertation, and Neil Carter provided initial guidance.

Lastly, I would like to thank my Father, Frank Canavan, for being a constant inspiration to complete this project. Since his death in 2009, I have visited Dunfermline every year, taking in a Pars match as a personal tribute. My Dad was a miner who was born in Dunfermline, and despite living in Coventry for most of his life, his love for the Pars remained. Whilst my first footballing love will always be Coventry City, there is an unbreakable bond between Dunfermline Athletic Football Club and myself. This dissertation is dedicated to my Father's everlasting memory.

James Canavan, August 2015.

## **Introduction**

Dunfermline Athletic Football Club is a story of great romanticism, from its inception in 1885 to the present day. A club which began due to a dispute with the cricket club in which the football team originated, its links with the local community were entrenched as early as 1921, when the first supporters' club of its kind in Scotland helped save the club from liquidation by paying off its debts. In 2013, the club was once again faced with liquidation, but once again the sense of collective identity and shared common roots associated with community theories allowed the supporters to take over the running of the club. In between these events, the club's halcyon days of the 1960s saw two Scottish Cup victories, under the stewardship of both Jock Stein and George Farm, as well as numerous European adventures. However, after

this success came a period of sharp decline that saw the club return to part-time status in 1976. Attendances had plummeted to just over 1000 spectators until the appointment of Jim Leishman in 1983.

A club with roots to coal mining, both in terms of the geographical location and the history of the club, the 1980s seemed like a fascinating period of study. Fife is referred to as the mining kingdom, but in the aftermath of Leishman's appointment, mining communities were decimated by Thatcher's government. The miners' strike of March 1984 to March 1985 is an area of interest, in particular to what extent there was a link between this event and the local football club. In addition, the concept of community is a term that has been argued over for decades, with the term being seen as a buzzword, a concept that should be abandoned altogether, an ideology of fiction, and a term that is entrenched within football clubs' supporters. Therefore, the difficulty of truly defining community whilst at the same time linking it to both the history of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club, the history of coal mining, and the miners' strike, is one that needs to be explored.

Scottish football is often seen through the prism of the Old Firm, with all the disputes surrounding sectarianism and bigotry, and the wrongly perceived anti-English nature of the supporters of the national team, the Tartan Army. Provincial clubs such as Dunfermline Athletic are not even an afterthought, either from the media or from academics. Whilst community in relation to football clubs is not a new study, with notable works from Charles Korr and Adam Brown, the nature of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club, in addition to the links with an industry that was dying at a time when the club was being brought back to life, is an area that should be explored further.

This thesis will look at the background literature regarding the concept of community, analysing and evaluating the complex and contradictory ideologies of the term, both from historians and sociologists, before linking this to the history of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club, the history of mining in Fife and the fragile nature of community within this, before establishing to what extent there was a link between Dunfermline Athletic Football Club, coal mining, and the local community during the 1980s, particularly in relation to the miners' strike. In terms of methodology, the differing concepts of community can be explored using numerous academic texts, such as significant work from Brown et al and Pahl, but as this is a relatively recent period of history, primary sources such as interviews, newspapers and fanzines are crucial. In terms of interviews, a mixture of supporters, players and the manager from the time is a relevant choice, because of the different perspectives that one may have regarding the concept of community, and whether there is a sense of retrospective community that is not reflected in the primary sources of newspapers and fanzines. Within the supporters, a professor, and those with a rich knowledge of the club's history were specifically sought out. This is an important area of study as it encapsulates sport and a key event in modern British history, and one that should provoke further debate.

## **Chapter One – Previous Literature.**

The term community is often an ambiguous one that can easily be misinterpreted or placed within the incorrect historical or sociological context. One of the harshest critics of the idiom is the sociologist Bauman, who argued that the 'very idea of

community is fiction'.<sup>1</sup> To link this to a footballing perspective, he further suggests that matches 'have become events in which people temporarily unite as communities, only to go back to their individualised lives at the end of the game'.<sup>2</sup> Continuing a sociologist perspective, Tonnies argues that, rather than existing as an interim social construct, football has 'served to establish and strengthen friendship groups and community involvement outside of the match'.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will seek to discuss both the historical and sociological literature surrounding the impression of community, in addition to analysing work regarding mining within both the town of Dunfermline and Fife as a county. Whilst the prior literature about Dunfermline Athletic Football Club is minimal, they will also be reviewed in reference to the wider dissertation topic.

Away from the pertinent writings surrounding both national identity and a sense of ethnic identity within a framework of duality, the relationship between football and community has been explored, with varying degrees of success. Kuhn challenges notions of football being largely a working-class sport, suggesting that

The class character of football changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. When the game was being formed, football was predominantly played by the middle and upper-classes. Through the introduction of professional teams in the 1880s, however, football became increasingly attractive for workers.<sup>4</sup>

Kuhn further states that, whilst the middle and upper classes 'arrogantly snubbed the professionalism of the game, the working classes embraced it as an early form of social ascent'.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the notion of working class communities striving to raise

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1 R. Holt, Sport and the British: A Modern History, 1989, 306.

2 Ibid., 306.

3 F. Tonnies, Community and Association, 1974, 54.

4 G. Kuhn, Soccer vs The State: Tackling Football and Radical Politics, 2010, 15.

5 Ibid., 16.

personal aspirations exist, but one may label this as an both an idea of working class football community, and a disparate collective of individuals with a shared personal goal of playing professionally, further highlighting complexities with community as a concept.

The work of academics Mason and Holt further provides a high degree of relevance, in terms of the inter-changeable link between football, identity and community. For Holt, 'football clubs are historically one of the principal agents through which collective social identities are reinforced.'<sup>6</sup> Mason argues that

Football often contributes to an individual's sense of identity with a belonging to a group or collectivity. It can be district, village, town, city or country, it can be class or colour.<sup>7</sup>

However, at this juncture one must raise the question of whether the individual sense of identity is somewhat dependent upon a collective sense of shared opposition? One may argue that a sense of Scottish footballing identity is stronger with England as a visual symbol of opposition, and likewise with Celtic and Rangers. For Dunfermline Athletic, in which footballing rivalry primarily lies within a wider facet of community identity within the kingdom of Fife, Nairn's internalisation of duality theory exists. A fan can have dual identities of Dunfermline and Fife, yet see another team from the county as a fixed symbol of shared opposition.

The concept of geographical community is explored by sociologist Adam Brown. Brown et al argue that football clubs helped to sustain 'close, affective communities that were under threat during modernity'.<sup>8</sup> This relates to a view that supporters mainly live in geographical proximity to the club, establishing an intrinsic

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6 Holt, *Sport and the British*, 167.

7 T. Mason (ed), *Sport in Britain: A Social History*, 1989, 118.

8 A. Brown, T. Crabbe, G. Mellor, Introduction: football and community – practical and theoretical considerations in *Soccer & Society*, April 2008, 304.

fragment between the two. However, 'from the 1930s onwards football supporter communities were not drawn exclusively from the immediate neighbourhoods of football clubs'.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, autonomous communities based around based around a choice to engage in a particular football club were established. Brown further argues that, by the late 1950s there existed a growth of 'out of town supporters at successful football clubs who did not live in the city'.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, in the late 1950s attendances at Scotland's two most successful clubs, Celtic and Rangers, had declined, with no significant rise amongst other successful clubs of the time period, such as Heart of Midlothian, Aberdeen, or Clyde.<sup>11</sup> The caveat to this surrounds the idea of supporter and whether it can be solely defined by paid admission to the stadium. Fellow sociologist Bauman expanded upon his view of community being an idea of fiction by suggesting that

Football matches have become events around which people temporarily unite as communities, only to go back to their individualised lives at the end of the game...supporting a football club allows supporters to indulge in their 'lust' for community without ever impacting upon the actual roots of their insecurity.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast, Bairner offers a minor critique of Bauman, highlighting that the 'very deep friendship groups initially established through football have persisted outside frameworks of the game'.<sup>13</sup> Thus, rather than the idea of community being fixed, a counter argument lies in the sense of communities existing as fluid social constructs not merely restricted by geographical or sporting boundaries. One could argue that

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9 Ibid., 304.

10 Ibid., 306.

11 D. Ross, The Roar of the Crowd: Following Scottish Football Down the Years, 2005, 94.

12 Z. Bauman, The Individualised Society, 2000, 88.

13 Brown et al, Introduction – football and community, 306.

community lies within a collective mind-set, be this in a political or footballing paradigm. In addition, Jarvie describes the idea of *communitarianism* – the ‘advocacy of a social order in which individuals are bound together by common values that foster close communal bonds. One may respond to this by querying whether football underpins common values or whether it is simply the vehicle for imagined communities to flourish, yet Jarvie further states that

The contribution that sport can make to community has been a common theme within historical, sociological and political thinking about sport...For some, the term has been used as a synonym for the people or society of the state and as a synonym for the private sector and competition.<sup>14</sup>

However, Andrews argues that the theorisation surrounding community as a concept is a flawed one, stating that ‘deliberations over the meaning of community have become complex and divisive...that some authors have suggested that we abandon the concept altogether.’<sup>15</sup> Whilst Andrews’ work centres on the transformation of community within an Australian sporting sphere, the term itself is not fixed to a set geographical area. Brown admits that ‘it is important that community continues to be argued with and wrestled over.’<sup>16</sup> For Cohen, there is the idea of a ‘symbolic community’, with the rejection of all attempts to ‘reduce communities to spatial categories (or any other forms of reductionism).’<sup>17</sup> Instead, Cohen focuses on symbols as a primary means for community involvement. Therefore, although one may argue that the football club is a potent and fixed visual symbol to define

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<sup>14</sup> Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society*, 160.

<sup>15</sup> D. Andrews, *Transformation of Community in the Australian Football League* in *Football Studies* 1, 1998, 107.

<sup>16</sup> A. Brown, T. Crabbe, G. Mellor, T. Blackshaw, and C. Stone, *Football and Its Communities: Final Report*, May 2006, 309.

<sup>17</sup> A. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, 1985, 146.

community boundaries, they are symbols within the context of a geographical and national boundary. Cohen further argues that 'symbols are not fixed entities that can only be interpreted in set, predetermined ways.'<sup>18</sup> Whilst Cohen allows us to infer the fluidity of football communities, he also provides a theory which enables us to see communal symbols as contested phenomena which can mean different things to different people in different historical periods. The obvious example of this is the relationship between crowd figures and changing success. In the 1983-84 season, Dunfermline's average attendance was 1090, whereas by 1990 it was 10,989, the largest in the club's history.<sup>19</sup> As will be further explored, this was the result of a multitude of factors, yet strongly highlighting Cohen's theory of football clubs as contested phenomena. A further community theory is the concept of *communitas* – the symbolic revival of collective identity for particular groups. Linking back to the tenfold increase in Dunfermline's attendances between 1983 and 1990, one could state that this was a symbolic revival of collective identity amongst fans of the club and amongst the wider population of Dunfermline and West Fife. The sense of revival relates back to the club's golden era of the 1960s. However, despite two Scottish Cup victories, a further final defeat, and successful European campaigns, the highest average attendance was 10,191 in 1961, the year of the first cup victory.<sup>20</sup> As Turner advocates, *communitas* occurs between normal moments, and thus leads to an anti-structural type of bonding, marginal to real life.<sup>21</sup> However,

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18 Ibid., 147.

19 Ross, *The Roar of the Crowd*, 102-4.

20 Ibid., 99.

21 V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 1969, 26.

Brown challenges this, stating that 'being a member of a football club's supporter community is not a linked or marginal experience.'<sup>22</sup>

Whilst there is the argument that community is not a fixed social construct, Jarvie argues that

A genuine community is, therefore, often distinguished by the bonds of comradeship, loyalty and duty. Some of these terms are often readily used to describe the notion of particular sporting communities, be they local fans, places, national supporters or groups of people who wear a badge of allegiance to a particular sport.<sup>23</sup>

This may highlight identity as a surrogate term for community, and raises further questions about how community can truly be defined. Whilst Andrews suggests abandoning the concept altogether, Jarvie highlights that community usually 'has deeper implications, suggesting a social group or neighbourhood, town, region, group of workers or other group, within which there are strong ties and a collective identity.'<sup>24</sup> On the surface at least, both football and mining lend themselves to this ideology, but there are wider flaws within the idea of deeper implications of community. For example, Mason clearly affirms that

Football in Britain has been a man's game in the literal sense: a game for men...the FA council made it quite clear in 1921 that they thought it unsuitable for women, who should not be encouraged to play.<sup>25</sup>

On this point alone, Jarvie's idea of a sense of collective identity within a town or region could be seen as in itself a sense exclusive and divisive. One may state that a true community cannot fully exist if women were historically excluded. Whilst there

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22 Brown et al, 2006, 308.

23 Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society*, 167.

24 *Ibid.*, 167.

25 Mason, *Sport in Britain*, 178.

was no ban on women watching the sport, a sense of cultural apartheid within a community identity can occur, whilst highlighting the fluidity of communities throughout history.

Returning to the sociological narrative, Brown et al's 2005 report *Football and its Communities* has a high degree of relevance, and can be further linked to the historical context of community. For Brown,

Sociological literature has often defined community as having three dimensions:

- Community as locality (e.g. communities based around specific geographical locations)
- Community as social networks (e.g. neighbourhood communities, face to face relations, friendship groups, communities of interest)
- Community as communion (e.g. spiritual feelings of collective identity, shared common roots, senses of belonging).<sup>26</sup>

This theory can encapsulate football within all three dimensions, and further highlights that communities are not fixed social constructs. For instance, community as communion is somewhat dependent on the club shaping a sense of collective identity and belonging. In 1983, the year Dunfermline Athletic appointed Jim Leishman as manager, this had diminished greatly. In turn, with a decline in shared common roots within a football club, community as social networks also recede. If the club is the vehicle for face to face relations and communities of interest, a declining supporter interest within a club may reiterate Bauman's argument that the idea of community is fiction. However, there is a counter view that football supporters are not fixed in terms of identity, which links to Hill's perspective that

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<sup>26</sup> Brown et al, 2008, 311.

Scotland's peculiarly indigenous soccer culture is now something of a memory, of a time in the 1930s when the massed terraces of working class males from the shipyards set British attendance records.<sup>27</sup>

There is a romantic simplicity to Hill's view, and relates to feelings of national identity. Whilst the record attendance for a British football match was the 149,415 crowd that attended the Scotland v England match at Hampden in April 1937, the highest average club attendance that season was 20,252 at Rangers.<sup>28</sup> This could highlight that national identity was far more prevalent when faced with a perceived common enemy. The fact that national team attendances were not replicated at club matches in the 1930s could even strengthen Bauman's viewpoint, because Scots were temporarily uniting as a community, only to return to individualised lives after the contest against England. As Mason highlights, 'football seems to have had an added role in the cultural life of the Scots, becoming the main medium of expression of a dislike of England and the English.'<sup>29</sup>

It is easy to label football as being exclusively a sport of the working classes, but in terms of community involvement, one must continue to avoid making lazy assumptions about homogenous groups. By 1960, clubs, 'concerned with improving their image to attract commercial sponsorship and sponsors seek their customers from the better off.'<sup>30</sup> Conversely, throughout history there has been a bond between football and working class communities. Charles P. Korr, who studied working class culture within the concept of West Ham United Football Club, argues that

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27 J. Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, 2002, 16.

28 Ross, *The Roar of the Crowd*, 82.

29 Mason, *Sport in Britain*, 179.

30 *Ibid.*, 180.

No organised sport has assumed a greater hold on the time and emotions throughout Europe than soccer. The transformation of football from an unstructured game into professional teams with vast spectator appeal was an important step in the definition of a workers' culture.<sup>31</sup>

Korr, an American academic, chose West Ham as a subject of research because of a perceived working class community amongst its supporter base, and due to the club being formed by a group of workers at the Thames Iron Works. Dunfermline Athletic began life breaking away from the elitist cricket club within the town, but the parallel to industry remains. Fife is known as the mining kingdom, and thus prior literature on both working class and mining communities needs to be considered.

Stefan Ramsden's *Remaking Working Class Community (2015)* suggests that historians' interest in the ways 'locality shapes and constrains working class culture has until recently tended to end with the post-war demise of the 'traditional working class communities' is thought to have coalesced in British industrial localities from the 1880s to the 1950s. Such communities, it is assumed, were torn apart in the post-war decades by affluence and urban restructuring, paving the way for the privatisation of working class life.<sup>32</sup>

However, Ramsden's reference to the broader, urbanised, inner-city perspective of working class life fails to truly grasp the notion of community as locality around towns and villages. For Ramsden, 'since the nineteenth century, sociologists and historians have argued that *community* declined as modernity progressively undermined local social ties and attachment to place.'<sup>33</sup> One may argue that this, based on Brown's framework, only highlights a decline in the community as locality dimension, and in turn does not reveal a decline in community as communion as the shared common roots and sense of belonging can still be prevalent in the mind. In contrast, without

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31 C. Korr, West Ham United: The Making of a Football Club, 1986, 212.

32 S. Ramsden, Remaking working-class community: sociability, belonging and affluence in a small town, 1930-1980 in *Contemporary British History*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 2015, 3.

33 *Ibid.*, 4.

the specific geographical location as a vehicle for community, a sense of imagined community is invariably weaker as there is no underpinning connection. This latter point can be tied to Cohen's theory of displaying geography through football support, even if it refers to geography from a previous family generation, thus reinforcing the symbolic revival of collective identity. Sociologist and social historian Ray Pahl theorises this, stating that the working class communities can be linked to either community on the ground – observable social networks and practices, and community in the mind – feelings of belonging and attachment.<sup>34</sup> This view is further recapped in Joanna Bourke's *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960 (1994)*, the author maintaining that

Historians tend to be vague about what constitutes a community or communal feelings: generally, it is said to include elements of identification with a particular neighbourhood or street, a sense of shared perspectives, and reciprocal dependency.<sup>35</sup>

Within this discourse, there is the important distinction of backward looking romanticism and forward thinking socialism under the umbrella of working class communities. Whilst Hobsbawm writes that the 'remarkably standardised working-class culture unravelled in post-war years'<sup>36</sup> this ignores both the idea of community in the mind and the sense of romanticism towards a previous time. Roberts' argument that, with the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century being labelled as a watershed, 'working-class people were moving from a communally based life to one which was centred around the home and the nuclear family'<sup>37</sup> is problematic on two fronts. Firstly, there is the inference that family life was secondary to a wider sense of shared community

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34 R. Pahl, Are all communities communities in the mind? In *Sociological review* 53, 2005, 631.

35 J. Bourke, Working Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity, 1994, 137.

36 E. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1780, 1991, 4.

37 E. Roberts, A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940, 1985, 72.

identity up until the 1950s, and secondly, as Ramsden highlights, ‘historians more generally appear to have honoured the epochal narrative by ignoring the topic of working-class community entirely for the latter 20<sup>th</sup> Century.’<sup>38</sup> A further argument against Roberts is from Bourke, whose research found that British working-class neighbourhoods were short on communal solidarity often attributed to them, with instrumentalism, competition and sharply defined gradations of status prevalent.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, one can argue that the notion of backward looking romanticism is dominant amongst both individual persons and collective groups who wish to return to a preferred perception of community, but also amongst some historians who take the 1950s as a defining time in the idea of a decline in working-class communities, a time which Lawrence says ‘implies that this was a period in which working-class people left community behind.’<sup>40</sup> He further found that many men did not engage in the homo-social behaviour imputed to traditional working-class communities. Therefore, one must be wary when conveniently categorising designs of community. The term itself cannot be seen as a fixed social construct, which in itself can highlight contradictions in historical and sociological perspectives and lead to romanticised assumptions. For Ramsden,

Assumptions of a decline in older forms of community across the [post-war] period are exaggerated – both because the community of the ‘traditional’ neighbourhoods is often overplayed...and because there was considerable community in social patterns across the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>41</sup>

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38 Ramsden, *Re-making Working-Class Community*, 305.

39 Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain*, 138.

40 J. Lawrence, *Class, Affluence and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c.1930-1964* in *Cultural and Social History* 10, 2013, 277.

41 Ramsden, *Re-making Working-Class Community*, 308.

Consequently, one may conclude from the historical literature that community, working-class or otherwise, is an elastic concept that can constantly evolve depending on theory and circumstance.

Previous literature regarding mining communities largely focuses on the squalid conditions of the miners. Durland's 1904 research *Among the Fife Miners* suggests that

It was not difficult to see here an excuse for men drinking. Alcohol produces a pleasant effect without demanding any effort. The public house is often more attractive than the home.<sup>42</sup>

This may suggest that Roberts' view had a varying degree of relevance, in terms of a sense of community being more prevalent than a family based life. However, there is also the argument of a community out of necessity, especially within both mining and working-class communities. For Burke, ties used to bind people together 'appear to arise out of a need to deal with common problems and frustrations, rather than make possible new and enjoyable experiences.'<sup>43</sup> Returning to specific mining communities, Williamson insinuates that, amongst miners,

Class is not a category; it is a relationship among men and it is rooted ultimately in the organisation of economic life and the social relationships of production...community is imprecise, it is not clear whether it is defined in terms of geographical space or some vague sense of belonging.<sup>44</sup>

With this work written in 1982, one must add the admonition that the vague sense of belonging would arguably become more entrenched between March 1984 and March 1985. During the miners' strike, mining communities were deeply divided, hence shattering a sense of collective identity yet strengthening the sense of

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42 K. Durland, *Among The Fife Miners*, 1904, 56.

43 Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, 149.

44 B. Williamson, *Class, Culture and Community: A Biographical Study of Social Change in Mining*, 1982, 5.

belonging in terms of the striking miners and their families, or within the sanctity of the physical, geographical space of the pits in relation to the working miners.

A pivotal piece of work in relation to mining communities in Fife is Ron Ferguson's *Black Diamonds and the Blue Brazil* (1993). This book focuses on the town of Cowdenbeath, six miles to the east of Dunfermline. For Ferguson, there did exist a change in class consciousness, but the catalyst was not the perceived 1950s watershed, it was the rise of Thatcherism. The old communal bonds, 'formed in times of hardship, began to be loosened. Even the old political loyalties were strained as ordinary people became more affluent.'<sup>45</sup> A crucial but obvious distinction must be made here. Whilst mining community invariably meant working-class community, working-class community encapsulated a multitude of industries. In Fife, for example, dockyards were also customary, yet mining did play a significant role in shaping a sense of Fife identity.

R.G Coyle described the high number of fatalities within the mining industry, an unavoidable element that can link to Ferguson's view of the loosening of old communal bonds, formed in times of hardship. Whereas national identity could be forged against a visible enemy, a sense of community amongst miners was arguably shaped in the face of a collective opponent of their own – the mines that provided their livelihood. Coyle explains that, from 1851 to 1861, 18% of miners were dead by the age of 20, compared to 6% of land workers. Furthermore, 59% of miners were dead by 35 (22% for land workers) and 92% of miners were dead by the age of 55, compared to 49% of land workers.<sup>46</sup> It was not just the applicable threat of early

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45 R. Ferguson, *Black Diamonds and the Blue Brazil*, 1993, 62.

46 R.G. Coyle, *The Riches Beneath Our Feet: How Mining Shaped Britain*, 2010, 211.

death; the squalid rows of back to back houses existed up until the late 1950s.<sup>47</sup>

Additionally, whilst

Some of these [mining villages] had cottages of reasonable quality, with vegetable plots and gardens...the vast can only be described as hell-holes, it being in the colliery owners' interests to house as many people as possible, at the least cost, on the smallest area of land.<sup>48</sup>

This all centres around the conception of shared experiences shaping notions of communities, suggesting that the solidarity of working-class mining communities, although overstated by some historians, can be described as like a mirror. For Williamson, 'class is also something which is experienced; it is a mode of social recognition bringing, under certain circumstances, a consciousness of belonging.'<sup>49</sup> However, the sense of belonging in itself is not a fixed term. Working as a miner does not automatically relate to a sense of belonging in a mining community in the same way in which living in a particular neighbourhood does not simply entitle an individual to 'access specific spatially restricted resources, such as friendships, schools, shops and leisure activities.'<sup>50</sup> With this, it can be stated that a sense of belonging to a particular football club is more fixed in the sense that the individual is in greater control of choosing to belong as opposed to being thrust into a sense of community due to poverty or industry. To a further extent, community in the mind can be related to a football club more seamlessly than community in the mind to a particular geographical location that you are not physically part of. A Further problem

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47 Ibid., 211.

48 Ibid., 211-2

49 Williamson, *Class, Culture and Community*, 7.

50 Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, 150.

with the term community within a mining construct, and one which can also relate to further community discourses, is this

Obscures both minority groups and individual action, and provides no mechanism by which we can know who at any time belongs or does not belong to the designated group.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, whilst this thesis will explore the relationship between Dunfermline Athletic Football Club and its community within the specific time frame of the 1980s, one must firmly state that the term community can never be seen as a fixed one, and will continue to provide a plethora of historical and sociological arguments. One fundamental aspect with regards to this thesis is that 'community' as a term is a deeply complex concept, and one that is continually debated, as the multitude of different approaches to the topic highlighted in this chapter show. It is a term that is fluid in its nature, and thus theories have varying degrees of relevance within specific case studies. The analysis of the previous literature strongly underlines the complexity of the term, with multiple theories and debates surrounding community. Despite this level of intricacy, the multi-layered theoretical approach from Brown et al will be the one most referred to in subsequent chapters, along with the relevant theories of community on the ground and community in the mind from Pahl, as these two theories have a high amount of relevance in terms of a football specific notion of community, but it was worth using and analysing the further theories in this chapter to showcase that the term can confuse and frustrate historians and academics, and often lead to further questions on the issue. In terms of this thesis, connecting the theories of Brown and Pahl to the sense of community within both Dunfermline Athletic Football Club and coal mining will be attempted, with the deliberate decision

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51 Ibid., 150.

to exclude many of the further theories of community from the main analysis to ensure a clearer thesis.

Unsurprisingly, there has been a dearth of academic literature about Dunfermline Athletic, but it is more peculiar that nothing has fully explored the relationship between the town, the team and coal mining, especially in the context of Ron Ferguson writing two books about Cowdenbeath, a much smaller Fife club in terms of stature and attendances, albeit one that has spent the previous two seasons playing in the division above the Pars. The two most in-depth works on the club are Jim Paterson and Douglas Scott's *Black and White Magic (1984)*, which primarily covers the era of 1959-1970, which remains the most successful in the club's history. There is a brief history of the club included, but the book is predominantly a series of reprinted of reprinted newspaper articles alongside commentary of the era. In 1985, to coincide with the club's centenary, local teacher and amateur historian John Hunter self-published *Dunfermline Athletic: 1885-1985*. This remains the most definitive published piece of work on the history of the club.

As the club began to be successful on the pitch in the 1980s, the history needed to be updated, and in 1987 Robert Fraser's *Leishman's Lions: The Roaring Success Story* was published. This book is dedicated to the early days of the Jim Leishman period, purely from a footballing perspective. In 1996, John Lloyd's *Simply the Best: Dunfermline Athletic Greats* began by stating that

Scotland is a nation of communities and Dunfermline Athletic is at the heart of its community. Without the relationship the club would falter and it's no accident that the club's recent revival has come about with Fifers, who are former players, at the helm.<sup>52</sup>

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52 J. Lloyd, *Simply The Best: Dunfermline Athletic Greats*, 1996, 1.

Whilst the notion of community is far more interwoven, one could maintain that, in the context of footballing fandom, watching players from the area play and manage the team strengthens and legitimises the bond between club and supporters, and links back to the concept of historical romanticism of a geographical location. Lloyd also co-wrote *The Giant That Awoke: The Jim Leishman Story* (1990), which tells the story of the 1980s success from the perspective of the manager. However, this was in the immediate aftermath of Leishman's acrimonious departure from the club, and raw emotion is evident throughout the book, with Leishman calling the day of his departure as the most wretched day of his life.<sup>53</sup> When detailing the history prior to the 1980s, the work of Hunter will be primarily used, with Paterson and Scott's work serving as a vital source for the 1960s.

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<sup>53</sup> J. Leishman, and J. Lloyd, *The Giant That Awoke: The Jim Leishman Story*, 1990, 9.

## **Chapter Two – History of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club and brief history of mining in Fife.**

In the 1977 *Encyclopedia of British Football*, Soar and Tyler disparagingly dismiss Scottish football as

The history of three very great clubs, an epic series of internationals against the Old Enemy England, of a constant stream of talent leaving the country for richer rewards south of the border, and of very little else.<sup>54</sup>

Football in Scotland swept East in the mid-1870s. In Edinburgh, Heart of Midlothian were founded in 1874, with their city neighbours Hibernian, formed by Irish immigrants thirteen years before Celtic, following a year later. In Dunfermline, a Fife town eighteen miles North West of Edinburgh that served as the de facto capital of Scotland until 1437, 'cricket was a very popular sport, and it was one of the [cricket team's] players, a Mr David Brown, who formally launched football in the town.'<sup>55</sup> As Hunter writes, 'the first organised football club consisted of members of the Dunfermline Cricket Club who played cricket in the summer and football in the winter to keep themselves active.'<sup>56</sup> However, on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1885, a dispute led to the formation of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club. President Graham MacPherson read a letter from the cricket club, stating that 'no one be admitted a member of the football club unless he be a member of the cricket club.'<sup>57</sup> The footballers considered this to be an unreasonable demand, and so an advert was placed in the *Dunfermline Journal* on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 'announcing that a special meeting

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54 P. Soar, and M. Tyler, *Encyclopedia of British Football*, 1977, 93.

55 Ibid., 7.

56 Ibid., 8.

57 Ibid., 8.

would be held at the Old Inn the following Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Thus, Dunfermline Athletic Football Club was born, but further clubs also played in the town during this phase, before the advent of professional football in Scotland. Clubs such as East End Swifts, Phoenix FC and Our Boys all competed within the town, and wider West Fife clubs Kingseat, Lassodie, Burntisland and Lochgelly also formed clubs. As Hunter states, 'to cater for and encourage this interest the Fifeshire Football Association was formed in 1882 with its own trophy, the Fife Cup.'<sup>58</sup> The first public meeting of Dunfermline Athletic, the advert placed in the *Journal*, simply said

The members of the D.A.F.C will meet in the Old Inn on Tuesday First, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, at Eight O'clock PM.

Business – To draw up Rules, &c.

A. Westwood, Jun, Int. Sec.<sup>59</sup>

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June, Dunfermline Athletic Football Club played its first ever match, a hastily arranged 2-1 victory over Edinburgh University. In less than two weeks, the club had been formed, gathered 60 members, and leased the East End Park ground from the North British Rail Company.<sup>60</sup> For the first match, admission was priced at 3d, with ladies admitted for free, but there are no records with regards to this first attendance or to the extent of female supporter involvement.

Success soon followed, with the Fife Cup triumph of 1887. However, this was marred by violence amongst the players in the semi-final against a fellow mining community, Lassodie, and fighting both on and off the pitch in the final against Burntisland Thistle. One cannot firmly state whether these incidents were a symbol of geographic collective identity against a defined opposition, or simple hooliganism,

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58 Ibid., 10.

59 Ibid., 10.

60 Ibid., 10.

but it did prompt a local reporter to write that 'if rough play and scenes such as Saturday are allowed to go on, the national game should wither like a decaying thistle in the country.'<sup>61</sup> The fighting may have been a by-product of the increasing leisure time for supporters. As Hunter states,

The mid-1880s were a good time to launch a new football club. More and more industrial workers in the factories, mills and mines of West Fife were winning the right to a half-day on a Saturday and attending a football match was becoming the traditional way for the working man to spend this newly found leisure.<sup>62</sup>

The period also saw a rise in wages, and coupled with cheap public transport, football, although still amateur in Scotland at this confluence, was an increasingly popular pastime. However, Kuhn challenges preconceived ideas about football as a solely working-class pursuit, arguing that

Although the players in these clubs were workers who attracted a largely working-class audience, the teams were founded, funded and administered by capitalist industry. This means that from its beginnings as a professional enterprise, football was economically and politically dependent on and controlled by the middle and upper-classes.<sup>63</sup>

From the perspective of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club, being formed from an argument within the cricket club highlights two perspectives. Firstly, whilst it would be naïve to merely dismiss cricket clubs as exclusively for the middle and upper-classes, one cannot firmly state that the founding of the football club was exclusively by working-class members, thus reinforcing Kuhn's view, whilst paradoxically challenging his notion of clubs being formed by capitalist industry. Secondly, the hasty break-up of the two sporting institutions highlights both a strong sense of

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61 Ibid., 10-11.

62 Ibid., 8.

63 Kuhn, Soccer vs the State, 24.

community identity, in addition to a fragile one. For example, Pahl's view of community on the ground reveals a community of sporting circumstance that swiftly divided, yet also a strong sense of belonging amongst those who chose to dedicate their sporting ideals to the football club. Furthermore, this suggests that Brown's community as locality ethos is a fluid social construct, dependent on the strength of community as social networks and community as communion. A shared identity of representing Dunfermline at both cricket and football was not enough, and accordingly the sense of belonging and shared interest theories become more profound. With reference to the first detail regarding the class structure of the two sports, there is nothing in the prior literature to challenge widely held conceptions. However, Donald Adamson revealed that cricket in Dunfermline came to the town via Dunfermline High School, an ancient grammar school founded in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, and linked to the prestigious Dunfermline Abbey, burial ground of Robert the Bruce. Adamson's Father got into trouble for founding an unofficial football team at the school in the 1930s, alongside future Liverpool and Scotland player Billy Liddell. It is Adamson's view that cricket was largely insignificant in the mining areas, with the sport largely restricted to grammar schools.<sup>64</sup>

Whilst professionalism in England was legalised in 1885, the year Dunfermline Athletic was formed, the Scottish Football Association agreed to professionalism in 1893. By 1898, however, 'football in Dunfermline was at a low ebb and it seemed not unlikely that senior football in the town was gone forever.'<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1899, a public meeting in the Co-op hall resulted in the idea of re-establishing a senior team, by a margin of one vote.<sup>66</sup> The Co-operative

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Donald Adamson, Monday 25 May, 2015.

<sup>65</sup> Hunter, *Dunfermline Athletic 1885-1985*, 14.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

movement is entrenched within Fife history, with the establishment of one of the largest services in Britain taking place in Cowdenbeath in 1875.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, in Dunfermline, the movement began in 1861, an event which 'did not arise from any commercial initiative, but from the needs of the people living in the growing mining communities.'<sup>68</sup>

1921 marked a significant intersection in the club's history, with the formation of a new supporters club, 'reckoned to be the first of its kind in Scotland.'<sup>69</sup> This allowed Dunfermline Athletic to pay off the £3,500 debt on the new ground. 719 members signed up during the meeting at the Co-op hall.<sup>70</sup> A wider, contemporary significance is the parallel with the events of 2013, in which the club faced liquidation, until it was saved by a conglomerate of fans under the umbrella of Pars United. As Donald Adamson states,

The underlying belief behind Pars United and those within it (especially those who set up The Pars Community) was the belief that we had to move on from a club which was controlled by one person (who would inevitably die, lose money or lose interest) to one which was owned by the community of Dunfermline.<sup>71</sup>

The end result was raising £1.5 million in six months to buy back the stadium and re-capitalise the club, thus coming full circle from raising money to pay off debt in 1921.

For Adamson,

Living in a town like Dunfermline, the values which came from generations of coal miners, linen workers and other working-class occupations, shape public opinion and indeed moral

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67 D. Gray, *Stramash*, 2010, 53.

68 I. Gibson, *The Spirit of Lassodie*, 2006, 17.

69 *Ibid.*, 24.

70 *Ibid.*, 24.

71 Interview with Donald Adamson, 1 August, 2014.

values. Most of the key players...have such workers and especially coal miners within their families in the last couple of generations.<sup>72</sup>

This relates to Brown's community as attachment concept, with the football club serving as a symbol of identity, but also as a visual symbol of geographical locality, enabling Pahl's theory of community in the mind – the feeling of belonging, to shape the community on the ground – observable social networks and practices. The contemporary parallel is fundamental within the context of the club's formative years and sense of comradeship, and allows for the 1980s to be explored and analysed with this in mind.

The nickname 'Pars' is one that is both ambiguous and disputed. The Scottish Professional Football League suggests,

One theory was that performances were so bad at one time that the players must have been drunk or 'paralytic', while another theory centres on the parallel lines used in their black and white shaped shirts. A third option comes from Plymouth fans who moved from their base at the English naval dock to Rosyth. They became the Plymouth Argyle Rosyth Supporters and displayed banners with the PARS written on it at East End Park.<sup>73</sup>

For Hunter, the nickname originates from 1912, when the club was first admitted to the Scottish League, due to the belief that they were equal to, or on par with, the best in the land.<sup>74</sup>

On 14 March 1960, Jock Stein walked into East End Park to take on his first managerial position.<sup>75</sup> Under Stein, the rise was meteoric, with the future European Cup winner saving the Pars from relegation in 1960, and defeating Celtic 2-0 in the

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72 Ibid.

73 <http://www.spfl.co.uk/news/article/10-things-about-dunfermline>

74 Hunter, *Dunfermline Athletic 1885-1985*, 27.

75 J. Paterson, and D. Scott, *Black and White Magic*, 1984, 15.

Scottish Cup Final replay in 1961.<sup>76</sup> A link between the club and coal mining was in the form of Eddie Connachan, who was still working at the Preston Grange Colliery in East Lothian when he kept goal for the Pars in the final.<sup>77</sup> As Stein himself said, 'I have great memories of course of winning the European Cup with Celtic but after that no memory is greater than winning the Scottish Cup with Dunfermline.'<sup>78</sup> Stein, one of British football's greatest ever managers, was shaped by his formative years as a coal miner in Lanarkshire. As MacPherson comments, 'it was inevitable that he would go underground, following in the footsteps of his Father and other family members before him.'<sup>79</sup> In 1942, seven men had been killed whilst working beside Stein in the Bothwell Castle pit, but his respect for his roots never diminished. During the miners' strike of 1984-85, Stein, at this stage Scotland manager, would turn on his full beam to dazzle lorries that were going through a picket line with coal to Ravenscraig Steelworks.<sup>80</sup> The Pars' progress under Stein continued, with a run to the quarter-final of the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1962, before defeating Everton in the Fairs Cup in 1963. A 6-2 triumph over Valencia was described in *The Courier* as undoubtedly the club's finest hour.<sup>81</sup> Despite Stein's departure for Hibernian in 1964, the club continued to soar. 1965 saw another Scottish Cup final appearance, ironically losing 3-2 to Stein's new club, Celtic. In 1966, the *Sunday Times* wrote that

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76 Ibid., 25.

77 Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

78 Ibid., 25.

79 A. Macpherson, *Jock Stein: the Definitive Biography*, 2005, 25.

80 Ibid., 27.

81 Paterson and Scott, *Black and White Magic*, 63.

Dunfermline have, to a great extent, reverted to the old idea that a football club should strongly mirror the skills of its own area. Almost all the Fife club's players come from a narrow radius of East End Park...This brings in its train a powerful local loyalty among the players and perhaps could be the answer to those clubs who are finding it hard to stop their supporters drifting to Rangers and Celtic.<sup>82</sup>

Professor Alan Bairner, a lifelong Pars fan whose Father, Sandy, worked for the club in the 1980s, highlights a sense of belonging in the town during this period, with the mixture of council house areas creating a greater sense of community. The independently owned shops and Pittencrief Park, along with the legacy of Dunfermline born philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, led to this community of attachment.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, fans of his generation had grown up with the success of the 1960s, and this was historically significant when conveyed to later generations. Although the club was struggling in the early 1980s, the successful 1960s could be seen as a catalyst for the re-engagement of supporters, because the club had huge potential. Bairner reiterates that the club helped to develop a real sense of pride in the town due to the team challenging the larger supported clubs in Scotland. This helped to develop an ingrained mentality that Dunfermline Athletic was different from Raith Rovers and Falkirk, because recent success could still; be remembered.<sup>84</sup> From a footballing perspective, the *Sunday Times* article infers that a collective identity amongst players and supporters is crucial in establishing the community as communion as entrenched within a club due to shared common roots amongst members of the community. Donald Adamson reiterates this view about the significance of the 1960s in shaping both the town and future incarnations of the

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<sup>82</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 20 February, 1966.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Alan Bairner, 29 July, 2014.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

team, arguing that it was the 1960s which gave Dunfermline the reputation as being a leading provincial club, and with this accolade the sense of pride amongst the people of the town, even those who did not attend matches, was palpable.<sup>85</sup> The significance of this era is still evident today, with *The Golden Years: Dunfermline Athletic in the 1960s* planned to be shown at the town's Carnegie Theatre in the autumn of 2015. The organisers are confident at attracting 1000 people over two showings, reinforcing the significance of this period on the town. As a fan of the team in this era, Leishman was able to use this as a hook to reinvigorate the support, who may have lost interest on the ground, but had never deserted the club in the mind, again linking to Pahl's concept of community.

Dunfermline Athletic returned to the cup final in 1968, with George Farm's Pars defeating Hearts 3-1. Later that year, 49 fans were hurt as the crowd spilled over barriers in the match against Celtic. A record crowd of 30,000 were already inside East End Park to see the cup winners. A year later, the halcyon era nearly reached its nadir, with the Pars losing 2-1 in the Cup Winners' Cup semi-final against Slovan Bratislava of Czechoslovakia, having previously defeated Apoel of Cyprus, Olympiakos of Greece, and West Brom of England. It would be over a decade before Dunfermline Athletic Football Club would be relevant in Scottish football.

Like its Westerly neighbour Lanarkshire, coal mining is historically significant in Fife. In the seventeenth century, miners were treated awfully, with the 1606 Act of Parliament stating that, 'if any collier, coalbearer or salter left their employment without permission, his master has the right to reclaim him.'<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, it was stated that any deserters would be labelled as a thief, and punished accordingly,

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with Donald Adamson, 25 July, 2015.

<sup>86</sup> A. Maxwell, *Chicago Tumbles*, 1994, 14.

thus fortifying the slavery aspect. Children were forced to work down the mines at eight years old, and in Fife, 'well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, miners were not allowed to be buried in the graveyard as the more respectable folk.'<sup>87</sup> Despite the enslavement halting in 1799, a series of combination acts were introduced, containing the first anti-trade union laws. As Gray points out, 'the solidarity between miners and their families found voice in left-wing politics.'<sup>88</sup> Durland echoes this to an extent, arguing that

In laying emphatic stress upon the eight hours' a day, the Miners' Union is rendering a service to the masters as well as the men. The man who is well taken care of and not run til he runs down every day of his working life can do better and yield better return to his employer.<sup>89</sup>

These two angles are interwoven by the unique history of the Fife miners, and one that helps understand the sense of solidarity felt in 1984-85. Whilst Gray's argument is strong, the perception of community is once again prevalent. One cannot firmly state that all mining families were actively involved in, or even believed in the ideology of left-wing politics, but there is a parallel with a sense of comradeship, loyalty and duty. The visible living conditions could serve as shared opposition, and in turn highlight Nairn's internalisation of duality theory. A strong sense of mining community did not always translate to a left-wing community, but miners could still associate themselves with both fellow miners and socialists based upon shared experiences. The eight hour day referenced by Durland stemmed from bold and united trade union action, resulting in the Fife miners becoming the first in Europe to win the eight hour day, an outcome which earned Fife the label as the most militant

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87 Ibid., 14.

88 Gray, Stramash, 53.

89 Durland, Among the Fife Miners, 31.

county in Britain.<sup>90</sup> Fife established itself as the strongest of all county unions, supported by the 14 week strike in 1877 against a 10% cut in wages, which resulted in a substantial victory for the miners. Furthermore, 1894 saw the first ever all-Scottish strike, resulting in unprecedented police brutality.<sup>91</sup> Whereas the national strike lasted for 15 weeks, the Fife miners lasted 17, further verifying the militant character. As Gray states,

Fife is an area viewed suspiciously if not in open hostility by the rest of the country. I was unaware of any other people in Scotland who identified themselves by their county as do Fifers, rather than their city or town.<sup>92</sup>

Adamson claims that Fifers are often referred to, somewhat disparagingly, as miners by people from outside the kingdom.<sup>93</sup> Despite the negativity towards those from Fife, the county did possess the richest reserves of coal in Scotland, with Dunfermline and Lochgelly being the main coal seams.<sup>94</sup> As Ferguson underlines,

The working of coal in the area goes back at least 700 years. The monks of Dunfermline reported finding 'black stones that burned' and they were given a charter to work coal in the thirteenth century.<sup>95</sup>

It was referred to previously about the wider context of community within both a footballing and societal sense as being flawed due to potential exclusion of women within communities of interest and senses of belonging to visual symbols. Nonetheless, in addition to Dunfermline Athletic Football Club offering free admission

#### for women, in wider society

<sup>90</sup> Maxwell, *Chicago Tumbles*, 16.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>92</sup> Gray, *Stramash*, 106.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Donald Adamson, 1 August, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> Gibson, *The Spirit of Lassodie*, 9.

<sup>95</sup> Ferguson, *Black Diamonds and the Blue Brazil*, 56.

The women of the mining villages stand out in a particularly heroic light, bringing up large families in very small houses and keeping the life of the community going...some of the women worked underground in the pit, and there were occasions when children were actually born down the mine.<sup>96</sup>

As a result, there was an organic creation of a community of disadvantage that incorporated a multitude of families within mining areas. Like a large proportion of theories of community, there existed a fluidity that served as the basis for further forms of community, either on the ground or in the mind, within these communities of disadvantage. This idea of disadvantage within Fife is highlighted by statistics of fatalities. 1308 miners were killed in 1908 and 1453 lost their lives in 1909.<sup>97</sup> At this juncture of history, UK pits were producing 225 million tonnes, 82 million of which were exported. In 1920, the output had risen to 229 million tonnes, an all-time high, along with manpower of 1,253,000.<sup>98</sup> The Fife Coal Company 'quickly became the largest coal mining enterprise in Britain. By 1911, the Fife Coal Company employed 14,000 people, producing 4.5 million tonnes each year.<sup>99</sup>

The history of mining, both within Fife and as part of a wider discourse, is closely associated with industrial action. Across the land, strikes took place in 1912, 1919, 1920, 1925 and 1926, to varying degrees of success.<sup>100</sup> In terms of employment in the mines, the national level had declined sharply from 1,136,000 miners in 1919 to just 139,000 in 1984.<sup>101</sup> In Fife, 30,000 men worked in the pits in

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>97</sup> Twentieth Century Dunfermline, 2000, 11.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>99</sup> Ferguson, *Black diamonds and the Blue Brazil*, 91.

<sup>100</sup> Twentieth Century Dunfermline, 14.

<sup>101</sup> [http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/447436/Coal\\_since\\_1853.xls](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447436/Coal_since_1853.xls)

1914, 10% of the region's entire population, with 150,000 men being employed across Scotland.<sup>102</sup> The early 1970s saw the pinnacle of modern mining in Fife. Comrie Colliery's highest yearly output of coal was 555,701 tonnes in 1970, with the highest weekly output in March 1971 being 15,300 tonnes, and the highest daily output of 3,300 tonnes on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1971.<sup>103</sup> The national employment figure for this year was 286,000 workers, 85,000 of them in Scotland.<sup>104</sup> Despite the perceived success, the 1970s also saw national strikes in 1972 and 1974, with the latter resulting in the arrest of 13 miners in the Fife colliery of Longannet. Valleyfield Colliery was closed in 1978, and a year later, an event in Westminster would have wider reaching consequences for all mining communities, not least in Fife. As Ferguson states, 'it was the miners' long struggle from serfdom to reasonable conditions that the radical political tradition of West Fife was forged'<sup>105</sup> but in 1979, following a period of widespread political unrest labelled the Winter of Discontent,

The Conservatives gained power with Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister. Her government set out to curb the power of the unions generally, and specifically to restructure the nationalised coal industry.<sup>106</sup>

However, at this juncture the coal industry in Fife was already declining. Since World War Two, Leadside Colliery (1950), Blairhall (1969) and Valleyfield (1978) all closed, reflecting the national trend. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there had been more than 1,000 coal mines in the UK, but by the early 1980s just 200 were still in operation.<sup>107</sup> After the mines began to close, the vast majority of men in the Fife area

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102 <http://www.thecourier.co.uk/news/local/fife/stark-report-into-fife-deprivation-1.86662>

103 Twentieth Century Dunfermline, 14.

104 [http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/447436/Coal\\_since\\_1853.xls](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447436/Coal_since_1853.xls)

105 Ibid., 109.

106 G. Hutton, Coal Not Dole: Memories of the 1984/85 Miners' Strike, 2005, 4.

107 Ibid., 3.

worked at the dockyard in Rosyth or on the ever-expanding industrial estates at Donibristle and Pitreavie.<sup>108</sup>

### **Chapter Three – Case Study: Dunfermline Athletic Football Club in the 1980s.**

When Jim Leishman left his role as Dunfermline Athletic Football Club manager on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1990, he had presided over the longest undefeated run in the history of the club – 22 matches from August 1985 to January 1986, he had led the club to the top of the Premier Division for the first time in the club's history, and presided over only the second Scottish club to progress from the third tier to the first in consecutive seasons. In his seven year reign as manager, 24 different supporters' clubs were established, the club had become a full-time playing team for the first time since 1976, and the club's average attendance had increased by 1000%, from an average of 1090 in 1984 to 10,989 in 1990. Yet, in the aftermath of his departure. Leishman wrote

Suddenly all the hard work I had put in from the early days when the club was firmly anchored in the second division, all the crusading visits to the supporters' clubs and

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108 Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

pubs to draw up enthusiasm for Dunfermline – everything seemed to be a complete waste of time.<sup>109</sup>

The detail about the work in the community is a key hook, because Leishman, according to Bairner, was the Dunfermline community in an organic sense. Even today, Leishman, as Lord Provost of Fife, is a prominent visual symbol of the county. A 1987 television news report on the club made reference to the glory days, stating that in the 1960s ‘Dunfermline Athletic Football Club fulfilled the ultimate function of the local football club. They gave their whole community a sense of pride and achievement.’<sup>110</sup> To place the 1980s version of the club within a mining context, for a miner, the willingness to go to the rescue of a doomed colleague was seen as a badge of honour,<sup>111</sup> and Leishman, himself a son of mining stock, was attempting to rescue Dunfermline Athletic. Yet, if as Brown states, ‘football clubs...embody many of the collective symbols, identifications and processes of connectivity which have long been associated with the notion of community,’<sup>112</sup> Dunfermline Athletic had to a certain extent failed to satisfy the functional need for social bonding due to the poor crowds. As Leishman revealed in an interview about the apathy towards the club in the early days of his tenure,

I used to like walking from the City Hotel to East End Park, both to clear my head and to replicate what Jock Stein had done in the golden era of the club. In the early days I would not see anybody going to the game. One day I spotted a chap in an older Pars shirt. When I asked him if he was on his way to the game, he laughed and said he was just out for a walk.<sup>113</sup>

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109 Leishman and Lloyd, *The Giant That Awoke*, 1990, 24.

110 I. Archer, *STV News Item*, 1987.

111 Ferguson, *Black Diamonds and the Blue Brazil*, 59.

112 Brown et al, *Introduction: football and community*, 2008, 305.

113 Interview with Jim Leishman, 5 August, 2014.

This is highlighted by the crowd of just 358 for the Second Division match against Arbroath in 1984, which remains the lowest in the club's history.<sup>114</sup> Leishman suggests that the 1000% rise in attendances during his tenure was largely the result of success on the park, yet as Gordon Baird revealed, 'it wasn't just down to results...Leishman's first season was a disaster and the second saw the Pars miss out on promotion.'<sup>115</sup> There has been little written about the decline in attendances from the 1960s to the 1980s, but as Kenny Cowan told me,

Miners tended to be hard to please, and in the 60s a lot of our core support came from the communities, and dwindled largely in the 70s, and by the time the mid-80s arrived the pits were closing and although mining communities still held a large part of our core support, directors recognised that a more family friendly environment was required.<sup>116</sup>

This reiterates the complexities of the term community. It is plausible that football clubs are fluid symbols dependent on an assortment of wider factors to serve as a symbol of collective identity. A counter argument is that, because professional football clubs in the UK have rarely disappeared fully, they will always stand as sites for the expression of common identity, even if supporters fluctuate between the strength of these bonds. Therefore, the man in the old Dunfermline Athletic shirt encountered by Leishman may be viewed as an example of a symbolic notion of community, wearing the shirt as an expression of backwards looking romanticism, but unwilling to re-immense himself in a sense of active belonging. This links with Pahl's theory, as the supporter may have felt the feelings of belonging and attachment of community in the mind, without fully engaging in the observable social networks and practices.

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114 <http://www.parsdatabase.co.uk>

115 Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

116 Interview with Kenny Cowan, 20 April, 2015.

Prior to Leishman's appointment, apathy was the overriding emotion, amongst both the supporters and those within the club. Baird details this, stating that

One of the club's main problems was the almost inert stance adopted by the board under the previous chairman, Dr John Yellowley. He held the position from 1971 to 1982 and oversaw a disastrous decline in the club's fortunes, though in his defence the club almost went bankrupt just before he took over...Unfortunately, he never came across as the most sociable person; the fact that, as chairman, he needed to engage with the support seemed to elude him.<sup>117</sup>

Baird goes on to state that, because the club had appointed former players as managers between 1972 and 1980 in George Miller and Harry Melrose, both of whom played in the 1961 cup final winning team, fans were somewhat more restrained in their criticism when the club began its downward spiral, and instead, simply stopped attending matches. Moreover, the appointments of Pat Stanton and Tam Forsyth were huge failures, which as Baird highlights,

As Fifers can be very parochial, much of the responsibility was laid at the door of two managers regarded as outsiders, and those left on the terraces weren't slow in letting them know. The falling numbers meant that the one remaining supporters' bus to away matches finally gave up in October 1982.<sup>118</sup>

The decline's beginning is briefly referenced in *Black and White Magic*, stating that 'by 1972 they [Dunfermline Athletic] were forced to call for financial assistance from the public to save Dunfermline Athletic from following Third Lanark out of the game.'<sup>119</sup> An article in the *Scottish Daily Express* of 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1970 included a quote from Chairman Leonard Jack, who prophesied that 'some people think that this club is a sinking ship, but this ship will sail again.'<sup>120</sup> In 1988, the second issue of

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117 Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

118 Ibid.

119 Paterson and Scott, *Black and White Magic*, 142.

120 *Scottish Daily Express*, 2 October, 1970.

Pars fanzine *Walking Down the Halbeath Road* reminisced on the Tam Forsyth stint in its 'Hall of Shame' section, saying that his 'lack of experience and naivety was not helped by his aggressive and ignorant attitude to players, fans and reality.'<sup>121</sup> On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1983, following Forsyth's resignation, the club's reserve team coach, former player, Fifer Jim Leishman, was charged with resurrecting the sinking ship.

In *The Football Manager: A History*, Carter describes how, although football managers in what he describes as the television age (1970-92) had a background mainly in football, most managers had experience of working in industry, and that the vast majority of managers in Britain came from working-class backgrounds.<sup>122</sup> Leishman had been a Pars player in the 1970s, playing 67 times and scoring four goals, including the winning goal at Ibrox against Rangers. He signed for the Pars on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1971, three days after leaving Beath High school in Cowdenbeath with six O Levels and two Highers. As Fraser states,

The Pars were the team he always supported. Jim had often walked to East End Park from his home in Lochgelly to see the top European teams in action in the 1960s.<sup>123</sup>

Leishman, like his managerial hero Jock Stein, had come from mining stock, but unlike Stein had never worked down the pit himself. However, 'like most in the small community of Lochgelly, his dad worked down the pits.'<sup>124</sup> When Leishman was appointed manager of the then part-time club, his full-time employment was as the manager of Cowdenbeath job centre For Ron Ferguson, Leishman occupies a special place in Fife football folklore, particularly in the relationships between

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121 *Walking Down the Halbeath Road*, Issue 2, April 1988.

122 N. Carter, *The Football Manager: A History*, 2006, 108.

123 R. Fraser, *Leishman's Lions: The Roaring Success Story*, 1987, 83.

124 J. Lloyd, *Simply the Best: Dunfermline Athletic Greats*, 1996, 17.

Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline.<sup>125</sup> Herein lies a further complexity surrounding the notion of community, in relation to the sense of belonging to a particular football team. Gray spoke of a county identity amongst Fifers, and Leishman poetically declared that there are 'four kingdoms: the kingdom of Bahrain, the United Kingdom, the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of Fife,'<sup>126</sup> which, as Lord Provost, does not surprise. Conversely, Cowdenbeath fanzine *The Blue Brazilian* poked fun at Dunfermline, with comments such as 'what do you call a Dunfermline supporter in a suit? The accused.'<sup>127</sup> In contrast, Pars fanzines, in particular *Walking Down the Halbeath Road* chose to ignore Cowdenbeath, focusing its humour on Falkirk or their own team. Due to the close proximity of Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath, there is seemingly a microcosm of the perceived relationship between Scotland and England, albeit devoid of the political undertone. Holt spoke of a 'shared opposition irrevocably linked to a political past'<sup>128</sup> yet one could argue that the sense of shared opposition amongst mining communities of Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath was a societal rather than a footballing one, whether this was the wealthy mine owners or the governments who prompted industrial unrest. It is at this juncture that the internalisation of duality is highlighted within a localised context. Whereas some Scots felt at ease being a ninety-minute patriot and yet politically British, amongst Cowdenbeath fans there is the suggestion that the wider sense of solidarity felt between miners and their families and expressed via left-wing politics could also be compartmentalised within a footballing milieu, with Cowdenbeath's sense of shared opposition being Dunfermline. That it was seemingly a one way rivalry can be

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125 Ferguson, *Black Diamonds and the Blue Brazil*, 72.

126 Interview with Jim Leishman, 5 August, 2014.

127 *The Blue Brazilian*, May 1992.

128 Holt, *Sport and the British*, 25.

explored as such. Cowdenbeath, a town that the British government at one time perceived the biggest threat of Bolshevik revolution, had its glory days in the 1920s, at least in terms of popular support. For instance, Cowdenbeath's largest average attendance was 9211 in 1925. In contrast, Dunfermline's in 1925 was just 2889. By 1961, however, Dunfermline's had risen to 10,191 whereas Cowdenbeath's had fallen to 1583. By 1984, the lowest point for the Pars in terms of a sense of active supporter participation, Cowdenbeath's average was just 348.<sup>129</sup> With just six miles separating the two towns, it cannot be denied that supporters were turning their backs of Cowdenbeath in favour of the more successful Pars. This aspect was reiterated by interviewees Donald Adamson, Alan Bairner and Kenny Cowan. Using Leishman as an example, who walked from Lochgelly to Dunfermline to watch Stein's 1960s team, it is worth noting that Lochgelly lies just over two miles east of Cowdenbeath, meaning that he would have passed the town on the way to East End Park. Herein lies the fluidity of football supporter communities, and strengthens the perception that football clubs as visual symbols are not rigidly followed by different generations. As Kenny Cowan revealed,

In this age of rivalry it is hard to contemplate watching more than one team, but it was `common. Fans would watch the Pars and Cowden on alternate weeks, as fixtures were arranged to avoid being at home on the same Saturdays. Cowden, however, were perceived to have little ambition to play in the top league...leading to disillusionment among their fans, many of whom started to watch the Pars.<sup>130</sup>

Crucially, Cowan further highlights that, in the 1950s, a development club was formed with agents all over West Fife selling a form of lottery numbers. This suggests that Dunfermline Athletic Football Club's directors saw Cowdenbeath as an

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129 Ross, *The Roar of the Crowd*, 90.

130 Interview with Kenny Cowan, 20 August, 2014.

extension to their sense of community, and insinuates an uncertainty as to how geographical communities are truly defined within a footballing context. Therefore, by considering Brown's definitions of community, the sense of apparent rivalry with Cowdenbeath highlights an ambiguity relating to wider discourse. For example, when linking to his community as communion construct, one may argue that the spiritual feelings of collective identity, shared common roots and senses of belonging are undermined by being attached to a club from a different town, even if this town forms part of the wider county. Paradoxically, this could be a stronger sense of Pahl's community in the mind because of the need to prove the level of support for another town's team. The specific geographical location of Dunfermline is a separate entity from the specific geographical location of Cowdenbeath, so one must further reiterate the fluid nature. Which community is truly being defined, and at which intersection of history? As Cohen states,

Football communities are generally non-spatial...People go from football communities all the time, and their members are continually reflexive about who makes up their community and what this means for how the group is perceived by its own members or others.<sup>131</sup>

Therefore, whilst this perspective reiterates the view of elastic Fife football fandom historically, with supporters watching home matches at Dunfermline one week and at Cowdenbeath the next, it is possible that community can be seen in terms of communities of interest. A declaration of support for a particular team does not always equate to a shared sense of belonging with the wider community. As Joe Graham disclosed, he considered the Kingdom of Fife to consist of three distinctive identities. Firstly, those from west Fife, including the town of Dunfermline. Secondly, Central Fife, which incorporates both Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly. Thirdly, the East

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<sup>131</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, 82.

Neuk, which stretches out to St Andrews<sup>132</sup>. Within these separate Fife identities, one must suggest that living in a particular neighbourhood is not an entitlement to access spatially restricted resources such as friendship groups and leisure activities. In a footballing sphere, it can be counter argued that, if football clubs are seen as Cohen's concept of contested phenomena which can mean different things to different people in different historical periods,<sup>133</sup> then Dunfermline supporters from Cowdenbeath do possess Brown's community as communion narrative, because of the view that football communities are open to change. Furthermore, once support is entrenched and passed down a generation, it can be seen as legitimising the process, even if there was no initial sense of Pahl's community on the ground.

The visual example of the historical and sociological theories are the changing levels of crowds at matches, and placing further emphasis that one of the strongest notions of community is the symbolic sense. Dunfermline Athletic Football Club can be seen as defining the community boundaries of West and Central Fife in a manner in which Cowdenbeath Football Club were unable to do, certainly within the 1980s.

The role of Jim Leishman within Dunfermline Athletic Football Club in the 1980s cannot be understated. The manager was highly modest whilst reflecting on his first spell in charge of the club, arguing that the success on the park was the defining factor in terms of a heightened sense of community.<sup>134</sup> Nonetheless, the 1995-96 season culminated in a First Division title win, and yet crowds were half the size as they were just six years previously. Leishman further states that the players perfectly understood the local community, with the vast majority of the team turning

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132 Interview with Joe Graham, 5 August, 2014.

133 Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, 82.

134 Interview with Jim Leishman, 5 August, 2014.

up to supporters' functions without being asked to by the club.<sup>135</sup> Norrie McCathie was specifically highlighted by Leishman, a player who started his career at Cowdenbeath and was club captain when he tragically died from carbon monoxide poisoning in January 1996, aged just 34. Success under Leishman was not instant, with the Pars missing out on promotion in 1984-85 by just a point. Off the field, 'Jim Leishman was now working full-time with the Pars having also taken up the post of commercial manager in addition to his part-time team-boss duties.'<sup>136</sup> This latter part is vital in establishing the significance of Leishman, both in terms of the club and the community. The 1985-86 season began with a centenary night out in the town to mark the first hundred years of the club. According to Fraser,

It involved players, manager, cabaret, guest speakers but most importantly the fans. Those present heard of plans to launch a Centenary Club to raise money for the team. Former Bolton and England star Nat Lofthouse, the special guest at the launch, explained how a similar scheme at his former club had brought Bolton back from financial ruin. Jim Leishman commented, 'It will bring us back to the standards we have been used to.' More than 200 fans joined within the first two weeks of the launch and support continued to grow for the club.<sup>137</sup>

Joe Graham highlights that Leishman's unparalleled public relations skills within Scottish football during this period were a large contributor to the numbers joining the Centenary Club.<sup>138</sup> Alan Bairner further reiterates this, calling Leishman a genuine man of the people whose enthusiasm and personality carried people along with him, be it the players on the park or the fans off it.<sup>139</sup> Bairner reminisces about a club trip to the greyhound racing, which included his Father, Sandy, who had started working

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135 Ibid.

136 Fraser, *Leishman's Lions*, 22.

137 Ibid., 22.

138 Interview with Joe Graham, 5 August, 2014.

139 Interview with Alan Bairner, 29 July, 2014.

part-time as a boot cleaner after his own retirement as a baker. Leishman gave Sandy Bairner money for bets, which was immediately spent on alcohol. Leishman loved this, and Alan Bairner mentions that Leishman had an inherent understanding of the club, the players, the staff and the supporters, and leads to the belief that he was community in an organic sense.<sup>140</sup> However, both Duncan Simpson and Gordon Baird suggest that the football club's relationship with the local community had historically been very positive, save for the decade leading up to Leishman's appointment. They both reference the foundation of the first supporters' club in Scotland, back in 1921.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, Simpson highlights the effectiveness of Leishman off the park.

As a locally born former player whose career had been cut short by injury, he already had the backing (and the sympathy) of the fans but he was quick to develop a good relationship with the local media, including the importance of feeding positive messages...He encouraged lapsed supporters to back to East End Park, if only to see what all the fuss was about. He was also active with supporters' groups, making countless personal appearances, and went to schools and youth clubs to cajole youngsters into going to matches.<sup>142</sup>

This latter perspective was reinforced by Leishman after his dismissal as manager, but a further imperative component as to why Dunfermline flourished during this period, was due to history. Unlike most other provincial clubs, Dunfermline Athletic had enjoyed considerable success in both domestic and European competition during the 1960s. After over a decade of decline on the park and austerity off it, the club once again provided an aura of positivity for fans, with Leishman continually referencing the Pars' history. The argument therefore existed that fans could believe

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140 Ibid.

141 Interviews with Gordon Baird and Duncan Simpson, 22 April, 2015.

142 Interview with Duncan Simpson, 22 April, 2015.

in a sense of hope more clearly than those of other small-town clubs who had never enjoyed a level of success. It also relates to theories of community, further suggesting that the idea of backward looking romanticism within a wider community context can be applied to football supporters. Pahl's community in the mind perspective could be argued as being more fixed in the sense that feelings of belonging and attachment can still endure, even if they do not necessarily co-exist with observable social networks and practices. Furthermore, his community on the ground element can be far less of a fixed social construct as it requires a degree of active participation. Dunfermline Athletic's fluctuating crowds from the late 1960s to the late 1980s highlights this. Nevertheless, the term community is written about with the caveat that it can be deeply flawed. For example, in the late 1980s Dunfermline and its immediate areas had 70,000 inhabitants, and as Lloyd argues,

With average crowds of exceeding 10,000, it means there is no club in the country which has a larger support as a ratio of the population. To put it in context, Rangers would have to attract an average gate of 100,000 to compete yet they draw from all over the UK.<sup>143</sup>

This raises two pertinent issues. The incredible nature of the Dunfermline population in supporting their local football club, with one in seven of the population attending matches, and the deep rooted complexities as to how community can truly be defined. That six in seven of the Dunfermline population did not attend matches does not automatically equate to failure of the club to engage with its local community. In addition, it cannot be assumed that all of the supporters came from the town, as the earlier perspectives about Cowdenbeath highlight. With the Forth Road and Rail Bridges easily connecting Dunfermline with Edinburgh, fans could easily travel from the capital, further emphasising that community does not have to be a strict

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<sup>143</sup> Lloyd, Leishman's Lions, 3.

geographical one. In a wider sense, migration has resulted in football supporters being drawn from across nations and cities. Whilst Dunfermline Athletic fans, according to Bairner, were predominantly Fifers by birth or by history, the equally fluid nature of football fandom ensures, especially in Scotland, that the largest football clubs attract supporters whose primary sense of collective identity lay within winning trophies.<sup>144</sup> Pahl's community in the mind ideology does not have to be reciprocal, and thus a feeling of attachment to a winning team does not always equate to being truly accepted by the residential supporter communities associated with a particular football club. However, whilst Leishman argued that success was a major contributor to the sense of belonging within Dunfermline Athletic, the concept of community was far more entrenched than a perceived sense of belonging due to on-field success.

In February 1986, with the team performing admirably on the park, the part-time, third tier Scottish team from Fife received national attention, which oddly coincided with a BBC soap that was still in its infancy. The Dunfermline squad visited an Edinburgh recording studio to record a track to the EastEnders theme tune.<sup>145</sup>

Writing in *The Courier*, Leslie G. Peters wrote

The inspiration to make a record of the EastEnders theme came direct from the fans on the terracing of East End Park...Recently appointed director Mr Blair Morgan heard the song and decided to investigate the possibility of committing their version of to tape to mark the club's centenary.<sup>146</sup>

Although it seems in contrast with creating a successful team on the park, the publicity stunt resulted in the squad performing on live television to 3.2 million

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<sup>144</sup> Interview with Alan Bairner, 29 July, 2014.

<sup>145</sup> Fraser, Leishman's Lions, 31.

<sup>146</sup> L.G. Peters, *The Courier*, 20 February, 1986.

viewers on the BBC One show *Pebble Mill*.<sup>147</sup> As Duncan Simpson says, Leishman's job in terms of his Commercial Manager role was to sell the club, and he did it superbly.<sup>148</sup> The fact that it coincided with the club's centenary was admittedly a stroke of good fortune, with Gordon Baird highlighting that 'the plans may have been relatively modest but most fans enjoyed being reminded of the city's glory days and were curious about other areas they were less aware of, all of which helped to whet their appetites.'<sup>149</sup> At the end of the centenary season, the club celebrated winning the third tier championship, finishing two points ahead of Queen of the South. However, the political, societal and community landscape across Fife had been altered by a yearlong national conflict.

Whilst the most infamous period of industrial action amongst miners began in March, 1984, the catalyst was in May, 1979, when

Following a period of widespread industrial unrest known as the winter of discontent, the Conservatives gained power with Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister. Her government set out to curb the power of the unions generally, and specifically to restructure the nationalised coal industry.<sup>150</sup>

With the National Coal Board, under the leadership of Ian MacGregor, closing pits throughout the early 1980s, with the plan to reduce output by 4 million tonnes, it was the announcement

On 1 March, that Cortonwood Colliery in Yorkshire was to close which sparked a local strike which the NUM executive backed by declaring a national strike. It started in earnest on 12

March, and by 14 March all Scotland's pits were at a standstill.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Fraser, *Leishman's Lions*, 33.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Duncan Simpson, 22 April, 2014.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

<sup>150</sup> Hutton, *Coal Not Dole*, 4.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

There was a stark contrast with Nottinghamshire, where the miners continued to work citing the need for a national ballot. In *Coal Not Dole* it is argued that there was 'no argument up here...In Scotland we were solid. We were not interested in a ballot.'<sup>152</sup> In June 1984, hundreds of buses travelled from Scotland to Orgreave, scene of police brutality against the miners, but which also saw 103 miners charged. However, as one miner stated

Of the 103 charged with violence that day, not one was ever found guilty because all the charges were dropped, there was no evidence against them...It made us realise what we were up against in terms of the force, the resources and the finance that the government was prepared to put into to ensure that the outcome would be in its favour.<sup>153</sup>

However, in the *Dunfermline Press*, not every article suggested a strong sense of community identity amongst the people of Fife towards the striking miners. On November 23, 1984, it spoke of the daughter of a striking mine worker who returned to work, Mrs June Hyslop, being the victim of a stone throwing attack in High Valleyfield.<sup>154</sup> As a political opponent to the strike, Dr Peter Davidson, a Conservative local councillor, wrote to the newspaper in response to the Fife Council Policy and Resources Committee sanctioning grants of £360,000 to assist the striking miners and their families. He argued this was an unacceptable use of public money, because the miners would receive £1400 each on their return to work, and that there was no ballot for a strike. Whilst these points may have been pertinent, the picket pay for miners was just £2-£3 per day.

During the miners' strike, the *Dunfermline Press* did carry articles that linked football and the industrial action. For example, on December 21, 1984

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 12-3

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>154</sup> *Dunfermline Press*, 23 November, 1984, 1.

Officials at Dunfermline Strike Centre spoke of the warm-hearted support from the public as Christmas approaches...The youngsters were given an extra Christmas treat on Wednesday evening when Dunfermline Athletic manager Jim Leishman played Santa Claus at a Christmas party organised by the strike centre.<sup>155</sup>

Nevertheless, a month previously, in the November 23 edition, it was stated that that the Fife Football Association had called off a benefit match to raise money for the children of the striking miners as it did not wish to take sides.<sup>156</sup> The match, announced in the previous week's edition of the newspaper, was due to feature a Fife Select versus Heart of Midlothian, with the article stating that

Fife's senior clubs (Dunfermline Athletic, Cowdenbeath, Raith Rovers, East Fife) are coming together to give the children of the striking miners in the region a happy Christmas. Jim Leishman will manage the Fife side in the match at East End Park.<sup>157</sup>

The paper had even printed the players selected for the Fife team, but the Fife Football Association secretary James McConville stated that 'the decision was taken after the protests that the children of the unemployed were equally in need of a Christmas treat'<sup>158</sup> further adding that the caveat that it was not a political decision to call off the match. Whilst this may be true, the contradictory perspective is that, if the belief was that the children of the unemployed were equally in need of presents, why not spread the funds further rather than cancelling the match altogether? However, historically Dunfermline Athletic would assist the local community following tragedies in the mines. For example, in October 1939 a firedamp explosion at Valleyfield Colliery claimed the lives of 35 men, and a collection was taken at the Pars' next

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155 Dunfermline Press, 21 December, 1984, 5.

156 Dunfermline Press, 23 November, 1984, 1.

157 Dunfermline Press, 16 November, 1984, 1.

158 Dunfermline Press, 23 November, 1984, 1.

match, raising £29 in aid of the appeal fund. In 1957, an explosion at Lindsay Colliery in Kelty killed nine miners, with the club's board and supporters' club donating funds. Ten years later, an underground fire at the Michael Colliery in East Wemyss resulted in the deaths of nine miners. Sympathy and solidarity drew the four Fife senior clubs together to play a benefit match against Sunderland at East End Park, raising £1,919 in the process.<sup>159</sup> This highlights that, whereas football clubs serve as a visual symbol for collective identity, those within the communities surrounding the football club are fractured in a societal sense, with divisions based on employment and circumstances. As opposed to historical tragedies pushing mining communities together, a strike was potentially pulling them apart.

Gordon Baird argues that it is doubtful that the football club served as an epicentre for community during the turbulent times of the 1980s. As he points out,

As Thatcherism bit more deeply, [people] turned inwards. The vast majority of people in the area, who were working in the mines, in Rosyth Dockyard or on the industrial estates at Donibristle and Pitreavie, were concerned primarily about their own jobs. It had been made clear that there was no such thing as society, so why would there be any point in thinking a mere football club could offer any salvation?<sup>160</sup>

Analysing this perspective, there exists the notion that Brown's community as social networks and community as communion was shattered at the expense of individual fear, with shared common roots and neighbourhood communities within the football club undermined by wider societal self-interest. During the strike, the relationship between the miners and the football club largely existed in a parallel universe, with the *Dunfermline Press* largely reporting on the strike on its front page and the Pars' fortunes on the back, aside from the aforementioned examples involving Jim

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

Leishman. For instance, the 2 November, 1984 edition carried a winning article from a Dunfermline High School pupil, Grant Abbott, prophesising that

Whichever way the strike ends, things will never be the same again on the coal face. There will always be hostility and discord amongst the miners, with some still bearing grudges because their colleagues broke the strike or returned to work.<sup>161</sup>

In addition, the front page reported on the European Parliament in Strasbourg meeting to discuss the strike, and five miners' pickets appearing at Dunfermline Sherriff Court in connection with incidents at Cartmore Opencast Site, Lochgelly.<sup>162</sup> In contrast, the back page carried the positive story of the Pars' game against Alloa in the Second Division, drawing over 4400 spectators, the second biggest gate in Scottish football on the day.<sup>163</sup> One must agree with Baird's view that the club and the strike existed as separate entities. Whilst a good amount of money was raised for the families of striking miners, there is no evidence from interviews or the local media regarding free Dunfermline Athletic tickets for striking miners, but one would further suggest that this would also have been met with disapproval akin to the cancelled benefit match.

The complexity of community within a time of societal division could easily have manifested itself to the football terraces. However, there is no evidence to suggest that any issues occurred between those for or against the strike. There is nothing reported in the *Dunfermline Press*, but former Pars goalkeeper Ian Westwater highlights that there was an incident at East End Park involving Airdrie goalkeeper Jock Martin:

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<sup>161</sup> *Dunfermline Press*, 2 November, 1984, 6.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

It was well documented that Jock had broken the strike when he was a miner and was labelled a 'scab'. To say he got dogs abuse from the Pars faithful was an understatement. After the game Jock was walking through the car park when some of the fans started giving him verbal, resulting in three Pars fans being laid out by Big Jock.<sup>164</sup>

Regarding the impact of the strike upon the idea of community, if a genuine community is distinguished by the bonds of comradeship, loyalty and duty, then this must have been tested in mining communities. Whilst in March 1985 the strike 'had ended in almost every area except West Fife'<sup>165</sup> it did not mean that there was universal support from within mining communities themselves, let alone the wider Fife population. Bourke's view that community includes a sense of shared perspectives both strengthens and weakens the notion of the term. On one hand, a year long dispute would have forged unbreakable bonds amongst striking miners, yet alienated former colleagues who chose to return to work. In addition, the shared perspectives of working miners would have led to a forced sense of community based upon the shared interest of being in the minority of those who chose to work amidst large scale picketing.

Consequently, the pit as a symbol of identity was shattered, thus reiterating Cohen's perspective of symbols not being fixed entities that can only be interpreted in set, pre-determined ways. The idea of a symbolic community is undermined when the symbol is divided. As Simpson argues, 'any sense of community in mining areas disintegrated when the pits closed.'<sup>166</sup> This perspective suggests a view of community being imprecise, and whether the term is defined in terms of geographical space or a vague sense of belonging. In addition, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust paper in

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<sup>164</sup> Interview with Ian Westwater, 19 May, 2015.

<sup>165</sup> Dunfermline Press, 8 March, 1985, 1.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Duncan Simpson, 22 April, 2015.

2013 found that Fife continues to contain Scotland's largest concentration of coalfield deprivation<sup>167</sup>, which, when linked to Brown's view of community as locality, suggests that this notion, although the easiest to define, is not a definitive factor for a sense of community. Whilst the mining communities still exist as a specific geographical location, it is not enough to serve as a vehicle for community as social networks or community as communion. The aftermath of the strike may have further fractured a sense of community, but in the parallel dimension Dunfermline Athletic was a strong, visual symbol, albeit one that was predominantly separate from mining at this period in history. A sense of football club community is largely dependent on success or a feeling of belonging, and as Baird says, 'a football club has a wide spectrum of supporters and any real involvement [with the strike] would have been seen as political and would surely have upset some at East End Park.'<sup>168</sup> Thus, football club identities must largely be sanitised as to not alienate a section of supporters, but any intrinsic link between the club and the strike may have split Brown's community as communion framework, with the spiritual feelings of collective identity and senses of belonging, in the same manner in which the strike impacted upon community as social networks of neighbourhood communities and friendship groups. Baird's language hints at the notion of Brown's community as locality as a complex one, as the specific geographical location of Dunfermline was not united by overwhelming support for the strike, thus further fracturing the friendship groups and senses of belonging associated with community as social networks and community as communion.

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167 <http://www.thecourier.co.uk/news/local/fife/stark-report-into-fife-deprivation-1.86662>

168 Interview with Gordon Baird, 22 April, 2015.

Whilst the club seemingly adopted a neutral stance, Jim Leishman was a strong supporter of the miners, and his impact upon the football club in the 1980s is pivotal. On the park, he was assisted by a highly competent coach in Gregor Abel, and off the park his public relations skills were unrivalled. As Ian Westwater highlights, Dunfermline was hardly an attractive prospect for a player who had played Premier Division football for Hearts aged 16, but who had suffered a career threatening injury:

It shows the mark of the man that a very enthusiastic young manager by the name of Jim Leishman was able to sell the move to me. Leish's passion for the game and particularly the Pars shone through...It was made clear to the players that the fans were a crucial part of the success of the club and therefore there was an expectation that whenever possible the players would attend these events...Needless to say, we had a ball.<sup>169</sup>

Analysing Westwater's language, one could further argue that, within the fixed symbol of the football club, Jim Leishman was, as Bairner highlighted, community in an organic sense. He facilitated Brown's idea of community as communion and senses of belonging amongst players and supporters, with promotions serving as an easily identifiable example of community pride. However, the fragility of collective identity was emphasised in the aftermath of Leishman's departure from the club on July 26, 1990, after turning down the position of General Manager, a post that he would eventually accept in August 2003 after a successful spell as Livingston manager. As one fan commented in the *Dunfermline Press*, 'a lot of people will not go to matches because of the way the board have treated Jim Leishman.'<sup>170</sup> Another fan stated that Leishman had 'done more than anyone to boost the morale of the club, putting Dunfermline on the map and taking the club from the Second Division to

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<sup>169</sup> Interview with Ian Westwater, 19 May, 2015.

<sup>170</sup> *Dunfermline Press*, 27 July, 1990, 1.

the Premier League.<sup>171</sup> A week later, '3000 marchers took to the streets in a bid to secure reinstatement for departed manager Jim Leishman'<sup>172</sup> including Big Country's Stuart Adamson, a lifelong Pars fan, who expressed that 'Jim did not just bring Dunfermline Athletic back to life, he brought the whole town back to life.'<sup>173</sup> Reflecting upon this emotive language, there is a definite nod to the idea that the 1960s halcyon era was still prevalent in the minds of some, because Leishman had brought the club and town back to life, as opposed to giving it the life in the first place. Linking this to Brown, Leishman, consciously or subconsciously, served as the facilitator for the community as social networks and community as communion, with the caveat that the club had always been the visual symbol of community as locality, and one which had been historically significant, both in the 1960s and at earlier junctures.

The march highlighted Brown's view of community as social networks and community as communion, with a shared sense of identity. However, considering the average gate at the time was over 10,000 fans, 7000 were missing. Furthermore, the aftermath of Leishman's departure reiterated the idea that football communities are generally non-spatial. The Pars lost 1800 supporters in the following season, further reiterating Cohen's view that football communities are fluid and open to change. The sense of collective identity amongst 1800 was evaporated, despite fanzine *Walking Down The Halbeath Road* stating that a boycott of matches is unlikely to bring Leishman back.<sup>174</sup> To this day, the club have yet to achieve a higher average attendance than in Leishman's last season, despite promotions to the top flight in

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171 Ibid., 11.

172 *Dunfermline Press*, 3 August, 1990, 1.

173 Ibid., 1.

174 *Walking Down the Halbeath Road*, Issue 13, August 1990, 3.

1996 and 2011. As Brown states, there is the assumption that football clubs emerged to 'satisfy a functional need for social bonding for its supporters'<sup>175</sup> but the frailty of community identity ensures that this bond is only as strong as the individual desire to participate in a collective identity.

## **Conclusion**

One of the aims at the beginning of this thesis was to explore the link between Dunfermline Athletic Football Club and the coal mining industry, during a time in which the club was undergoing a renaissance under Jim Leishman and the coal mining industry was being decimated by the Thatcher government. As Fife is often referred to as the mining kingdom, it appeared to be a fascinating area of study. The idea of community evolved from this initial thought, and allowed for research into the sociological and historical theories of the term, one which is entrenched with complexities.

In the opening paragraph of this dissertation, Bauman's view of the idea of community being a work of fiction was quoted, but the subsequent findings and analysis suggest that the statement must be heavily questioned. Rather than the idea of community being fiction, it is a multifaceted term that has varying degrees of fluidity. Therefore, the term may appear contradictory due to its constantly evolving nature, but it is far from fiction. For example, Brown et al's perspectives of community being broken down to community as locality, community as social networks, and community as communion hold a degree of potency when linking it to a football club. In Scotland, football clubs primarily exist within a community based around specific geographical locations, with notably exceptions such as Third Lanark, who ceased to exist in 1967, Clyde, who moved to Cumbernauld in 1994,

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<sup>175</sup> Brown et al, Introduction: football and community, 2008, 306.

having previously been based in Rutherglen, and Meadowbank Thistle, who relocated to Livingston in 1995. Consequently, using this ethos there is a sense of community already embedded purely because the town or the stadium serves as a visual symbol of identity. However, in 1983, with average attendances of just over one thousand spectators, Dunfermline Athletic's significance as a community symbol was severely diminished. Leading on from this, both the community as social networks and community as communion are compromised, whilst on the other hand maintaining a degree of strength. For instance, whilst low attendances result in a sense of being ostracised from the vast majority of people within the community in terms of belonging, the friendship groups and spiritual feelings of collective identity remain. This links in with Jarvie's view of community usually having deeper implications, such as the collective identity of the town, region or group of workers.

Dunfermline Athletic Football Club's rise in the 1980s was remarkable. Unlike the emergence of Gretna in the mid-2000s, the Pars were not bankrolled by a billionaire, but rather led by the son of a miner who understood the local community to such an extent that Professor Alan Bairner stated that Jim Leishman was community in an organic sense. Under Leishman, Dunfermline Athletic Football Club served as the vehicle for greater friendship groups, communities of interest and feelings of belonging, but crucially, success of the team contributed to a sense of pride that was superbly led by Leishman's understanding of Dunfermline and West Fife communities. Conversely, one must further conclude that a large factor for a heightened sense of community in the 1980s was that the attachment had never truly dissipated. From 1921, when the newly established supporters club helped to pay off £3,500 worth of debts, to 2013, when the Pars United group saved the club from liquidation, the entrenched nature of Fifers, the club and the community has

been prevalent. Therefore, linking this to the interviews conducted, there is a theme that community has played an important part throughout the history of the club in terms of Brown's community as communion theory. The Pars United takeover in 2013 may have ensured that, retrospectively, the sense of community stretching back to 1921 may have gathered greater significance, but a sense of community within the club has been prevalent. These two events highlight Pahl's community on the ground ethos of actively taking part in community activities, although community on the ground is also dependent on the sense of community in the mind to drive it. Within this, the sharp rise of attendances in the 1980s can be attributed to Leishman's excellent public relations skills, a period of success that included three promotions, and a heightened sense of belonging that was rekindled rather than established.

When the idea began for this thesis, the link between Dunfermline Athletic Football Club and the coal mining community during the year long strike was a strong area of interest, in particular whether the football club served as a vehicle for collective identity amidst a period of social struggle. From the outset, it was established that any perceived link was tenuous, and in terms of the miners' strike, the interviews with Gordon Baird and Duncan Simpson suggest that a sense of community as social networks and community as locality were deeply divided, with the club not serving as a sense of positive escapism due to the divided belief mechanisms within the supporter base. Mining played a crucial role in the history of Fife, from the moment the monks of Dunfermline first discovered the black diamonds in the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, whilst there are clear parallels between mining communities and the supporter community of the Pars, such as a feeling of belonging and shared common roots, the club did not serve as a bastion of hope for

miners in the 1980s. The miners' strike may have strengthened solidarity on the picket line, and also developed a sense of forced solidarity amongst those who chose to work, but mining communities would soon be decimated as soon as the pits closed. Furthermore, living within a community or supporting a football club does not automatically equate to belonging to a community, and allows for further analysis about the complex and fluid nature of communities. The fortunes of the striking miners existed on the front pages of newspapers, and the Pars remained on the back pages. Any links, such as the cancelled benefit match, highlighted division amongst communities rather than unity. Dunfermline Athletic Football Club, the sense of community during the 1980s, and the link to coal mining is a fascinating area of study, but like every facet of community, is one that historians and sociologists should continue to debate, such is the complex nature of the theory of community.

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