

# A Brief Historical Survey of Sports and Leisure Activities in Britain

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## *Introduction*

Britain might be called the mother country of modern sports, for, as will be mentioned below, many of the popular modern sports originate in Britain. The climate there is perfectly suitable to sports and leisure activities both indoors and outdoors: not too hot nor too cold. The land is favourably covered with abundant lawns and hills, on which people can enjoy picnic, hiking, bowling, cricket, soccer, rugby, golf, and various other leisure activities. According to the HMSO official statistics in 1986 (*Social Trend 20*, 1990 edition), the most popular sporting activity in Britain is walking (two miles or more), followed by swimming, snooker/billiards/pool, darts, keep fit, football, squash, tennis, and cycling.

However the sports and other leisure activities were not there from the start in their modern refined form.

In the Middle Ages the people enjoyed prize-fights, cock-fights and animal-baitings as well as such communal events as wakes and fairs, and the royal household and the aristocracy under the Tudors relished masques, revels and pageants. Card and dice games such as primero, gleeck, ruff and hazard were played at gaming houses and campanology was popular as night pastime. The first theatres grew out of the open-air mysteries and moralities under Elizabeth I.. Under the Stuarts, chess, billiards and bowling were also in vogue.

But the 'unrefined' and blood sports gradually declined because of the puritanism which denounced earthly pleasures as temptations of the Devil,

the eagerness to work and aspirations among the newly emerged middle class, the enclosure movement which not only turned sheep into man-eaters (*Utopia*, Bk. one) but also reduced the commons used for fairs and football, the steady infiltration of humanitarianism and philanthropism (inspired by Locke, Hogarth, Wesley, Fielding, Bentham, and others), liberalism, evangelicalism, teetotalism, and so forth. The form of recreation also changed from the community-centred into the individuals-centred with the agricultural and industrial revolutions as the turning point.

As seen in the attached chronological chart, many of the sports we see today were popularized or invented during or after the Industrial Revolution triggered by the wealth and leisure enjoyed by the aristocracy and rich middle-class people, with the lower class people always aspiring and longing after a higher standard of fashion and tastes relished by the upper class. Actually each class was taking its cue from the class above it.

It is true, however, that the introduction of machinery in the industrial revolution ruined and pauperized a number of small traders and their families (a revolt against it can be seen in the Luddite, or machine-breaking, riots in 1811) and deprived the mass of unregarded labourers in the factories and mines of the amenities and traditions of country life such as the village green and its games, the harvest-home, the tithe feast, the May Day rites, field sports and so forth. (Incidentally, it is said that the social severance between employers and employees and the war of classes date from the fatal years of the war with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France or the Napoleonic Wars (1793 - 1815) which proved a source of increased wealth to the landlords and prolonged calamity to the wage-earners.) Furthermore, as Thomas Burke, author of *English Night Life* (1943), commented in the book, the speed introduced by railways killed many things besides human bodies; it killed leisure (hour-long talk at clubs etc.), and with it conversation, to which leisure is essential.

It must be added here that public schools which put emphasis on sports and discipline also greatly contributed to making sports popular. As far as the public school is concerned, one might recollect here what Montalembert, a French statesman and historian, said about the Duke of Wellington's

victory over Napoleon at Waterloo : “The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton.”

In this thesis we will see how sports and other leisure activities have developed in Britain.

### *Before the Industrial Revolution*

Before the Industrial Revolution (c1760-c1860), there were not so many leisure activities among the common people, at least not in the form familiar to us modern people. Cities not yet so crowded nor industrialized as during or after the industrial revolution, people both in town and in the country could co-exist and enjoy their beautiful nature only at a few yards from their door and were not so much in need for special leisure activities in modern forms.

It is also true that most of the people, except the aristocracy and the landed gentry, were busily engaged in their mainly agricultural work and had not much leisure ; taking their exercise as a natural mode of action in doing their work, in cultivating the land, or in walking or riding to and from their daily work.

Hunting with dogs or trained hawks of animals and birds, catching fish, luring of wild duck, liming by twigs, netting on the ground, snaring, trapping, and shooting (which rapidly destroyed birds) of games were a pursuit for sport as well as for food. It is true that the forest laws of Norman and Plantagenet times ensuring the King to have abundance of red deer to hunt sacrificed the interests of all classes of subjects and a law passed in 1671 by the Cavalier Parliament prevented the great majority of freeholders from killing game even on their own land so that the squire should have plenty of partridges to shoot. But the hunting of fox and the pursuit of hare were a popular village sport, led indeed by the gentry but shared with all their neighbours, high and low.

What the common people enjoyed other than these in those days were such communal events as fairs (festive gatherings of ancient origin but chartered in the 13th and 14th century as legal trading occasions, often held on the commons, with stalls, sideshows, games and similar entertainments),

religious festivities such as wakes, Easter, May Day (often accompanied by morris dances) and Christmas, miracle or mystery plays, and other popular sports such as boxing (with different rules from ours), various rough kinds of football, single-stick (a kind of fencing), sword-fighting, horse-races, and badger-, bull- and bear-baiting. In the Restoration period the cockfighting seems to have been the most popular sport of all, though the less sporting events of hanging and whipping were also spectacles greatly enjoyed until the public execution was outlawed in 1867. During the reigns of George III and IV, horse-races and prize-fights were very popular as is seen in the following remark by G. M. Trevelyan.

News of Wellington's campaigns in Spain were not awaited with greater national eagerness than reports on the prospects of famous horse-races and prize-fights. (*English Social History*, chap. 16)

The duels fought at push of rapier and later with pistols, typically to settle a point of honour, continued until growing humanitarianism, evangelicalism and respectability helped to put down in the middle of the 19th century the custom as well as the prize-fights and the setting on of animals to fight one another in the sports below.

Badger-baiting was a barbarous betting sport practiced for many centuries in England in which a badger was attacked by a terrier dog. It was outlawed in about 1850, though one of the last cases was recorded as late as 1897.

Bear-baiting was another betting sport in which a bear was tethered to a post and whipped, taunted and set upon by dogs. It was popular for hundreds of years (though criticized by Puritans etc.) in Britain until made illegal in the 19th century. The first attempt at abolition was made in Parliament in 1802, and the sport was finally declared illegal in 1835. Henry VIII is said to have ordered the first purpose-built bull- and bear-baiting theatre in Southwark, south London, and Elizabeth I also enjoyed such entertainments.

Cockfight is a sport in which two or more specially bred game-cocks

fight, often to the death, spectators betting on the outcome. Originally introduced by the Romans, it was popular from the early 16th century to the 19th century among all the classes. During the reign of Henry VIII a royal cockpit was built at Whitehall. Although it was outlawed in 1849, cockfight still occasionally took place in secret as the takings by far exceeded the fine.

Boxing, another sport of ancient origin, became popular in England in the late 17th century, and in the 18th century attracted, as a prize-fight, huge crowds, who betted heavily on the result. What is interesting about boxing is that it was also loved by the fashionable members of the aristocracy, who hired and backed the gladiators and presided over the ceremonies. But it was not until the adoption of the Queensberry Rules in 1867 that the brutl form of boxing was reformed into the modern form. In 1880 the Amateur Boxing Association was founded and in 1891 the National Sporting Club was established and regulated professional boxing competitions.

Horse-racing, the so-called "sport of kings", is also a gambling sport, but has a long history closely connected with the aristocracy. It came into present form in the 18th century, regular meetings organized throughout the country under considerable royal patronage. It was in 1750 that Jocky Club was founded with the aim of bringing order to British horse racing, which was at that time beset by corruption, bribery, doping and other forms of malpractice. Among the most famous races and meetings are Royal Ascot (initiated by Queen Anne in 1711), the Derby (establishd in 1780), St Leger (since 1776), Oaks, and the Grand National Steeplechase (since 1836).

But the blood sports and prize-fighting (except horse-races and boxing) gradually declined, as was mentioned before, because of the emergence of puritanism, evangelicalism, humanitarianism, philanthropism and so forth.

The reflection on the indecorous customs and manners in the early 17th century, the "gin era" in the 1730s and 40s, and the exploitation of humanity during the industrial revolution is also said to have helped to develop gardening and sports as healthy entertainments. An intimate love of woodland and a strong preference for country over town life seem to have been shared by the leaders of England in the early 19th century. Although

a great deal of forests were already destroyed by the iron and steel manufacturers in the 18th century, there remained hedgerows scattered over the country, park trees reserved for their beauty, and coverts of conifers and rhododendron planted for game, which still constitute a characteristic of the English countryside.

As for popular ball games there were Shrovetide football (an annual contest played for many hundreds of years on Shrovetide in various English towns with no boundaries or rules and the goals situated some two miles apart) and cricket.

Cricket, probably the most English of all the games, is believed to have been initiated by peasants in southern England. Etymologically, the term "wicket," a set of three stumps topped by bails which forms the target of the bowler and is defended by the batsman, derives from the wicket gate into which sheep were driven. The rough-hewn, curved bat like a hockey-stick in the 18th century bears close resemblances to a shepherd's stick. Although it had grown up locally in Kent and Hampshire in Stuart times, it was not before the beginning of the 18th century that cricket was enlarged both in geographic and social boundaries and evolved into the shape of modern cricket. In the 19th century it became very popular as the village cricket which is very vividly depicted in the following passages :

I DOUBT if there be any scene in the world more animating or delightful than a cricket-match ; — I do not mean a set match at Lord's Ground for money, hard money, between a certain number of gentlemen and players, as they are called — . . . . No the cricket that I mean is a real solid, old-fashioned match between neighbouring parishes, where each attacks the other for honour and a supper, glory, and half a crown a man. . . . Note, that your good cricketer is commonly the most industrious man in the parish ; the habits that make him such are precicely those which make a good workman — steadiness, sobriety, and activity — . . . .

(‘A Country Cricket Match’, *Sketches of English Life and Character*, by Mary R. Mitford, 1909)

'Play!' suddenly cried the bowler. The ball flew from his hand straight and swift towards the centre stump of the wicket. The wary Dumkins was on the alert; it fell upon the tip of the bat, and bounded far away over the heads of the scouts, who had just stooped low enough to let it fly over them. . . . But gentlemen of Muggleton, is it in cricket alone that our fellow-townsmen stand preeminent? Have you never heard of Dumkins and determination? . . . Have you never, when struggling for your rights, your liberties, and your privileges, been reduced, if only for an instant, to misgivings and despair? And when you have been thus depressed, has not the name of Dumkins laid afresh within your breast the fire which had just gone out; and has not a word from that man, lighted it again as brightly as if it had never expired? (Great cheering.)

(*The Pickwick Papers*, chap. VII, by Charles Dickens, 1836-37)

*The Pickwick Papers*, the contemporary encyclopedia of manners and customs at that time, provides us with glimpses of leisure activities and night-life of all kinds in country and in town.

Furthermore, referring to the popularity and importance of cricket in the society high and low, Trevelyan went so far as to say that:

"If the French *noblesse* had been capable of playing cricket with their peasants, their chateaux would never have been burnt." (*English Social History*, chap. 13)

Cricket's development can be traced in the following events: the foundation of Hambledon Club in Hampshire in 1760 and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in 1787, and the inceptions of Eton versus Harrow games in 1797, Oxford University versus Cambridge University games in 1827, country championship competitions in 1864 and the Test (international) Match in 1877 (in Melbourne, Australia).

Part of its popularity seems to lie in its tempo slow and sedate enough

not to interrupt good conversation, both on and off the field ; and the inevitable enjoyable session in the bar afterwards. Its popularity is also endorsed by the extent to which cricketing metaphors appear in the daily conversation. To name but a few, there are such phrases and sentences : ‘to play up’ (=to put all one’s energy into a game), ‘to play the game’ (=to keep the rules and behave honourably), ‘to play a straight bat,’ (=to be upright and straightforward in one’s moral conduct), ‘to keep your eye on the ball’ (=to concentrate your attention on the main issue), and ‘It’s not (playing) cricket.’ (=It’s not a fair play.)

As for indoor leisure facilities there were pubs and coffee houses, which served as melting pots of classes. The pubs provided a game called Skittles, a game of nine pins played for centuries which was well established by the Middle Ages, almost exclusively associated with public houses. (Darts, though of English origin in the Middle Ages, began to be played and became popular as late as the beginning of the 20th century.) The pubs also had song- and-supper rooms annexed to them, which later developed into music halls. It was in 1852 that Charles Morton, “father of the halls”, opened the Canterbury Music Hall. The music halls reached their peak of popularity in the 1870s and 80s and the popular performers were called “stars” because they appeared every evening on the stage. It is estimated that there were 257 music halls in England in c1870. Meanwhile, the coffee houses, which numbered 2,000-3,000 in London in 1683, in turn, were gradually replaced by more closed clubs. As to the clubs which became more prominent feature of social life and more wide spread in the 1820s and 30s, Thomas Burke commented :

They were not mere dining-clubs or clubs for gaming ; they were the home from home, where men of like position and interests could meet for general intercourse, and live more cheaply than at restaurants or even in their own houses. . . . Mrs. Gore, the fashionable novelist of her day, was more acid, and perhaps nearer to reality, in her approval of clubs. She saw them as useful lightning-conductors of domestic storms. (*English Night Life*, pp. 96-99, B.



T. Batsford LTD, London, 1941)

The imported foods such as sugar, potatoes (introduced from America by Sir Walter Raleigh who is also known as the “father of pub” because he was the first officer to issue licence to publicans), tea and coffee, had by then changed the food life. Early in the reign of George III all classes in town and country are said to have drunk tea in their own homes.

### *During and after the Industrial Revolution*

Although vacance had been started by the new gentlemen enriched by stocks (The South Sea Bubble bursted in 1720.), real development of modern leisure activities was brought about by the industrial revolution. In this respect, you will see an amazing concentration of sports which were either invented or reshaped into modern forms between late 18th century and 19th century.

Public schools, which have long functioned as an institute to create and maintain English manners and disciplines, especially after the drastic disciplinary reforms in the early 19th century led by Dr Arnold, the outstanding headmaster of Rugby School, made a very conspicuous contribution in two sports: rugby and squash. Concerning the origin of the former, tradition ascribes the introduction of handling to William Webb Ellis, a student at Rugby School in Warwickshire, who, in 1823, disregarded the rules of football and ran with the ball in his arms. After scores of clubs were formed in Britain and Ireland, the Rugby Football Union was formed in 1871 and the laws codified. The first international match was played between England and Scotland in the same year. As for the latter, it is said to have been invented at Harrow School in Middlesex by school boys waiting to play rackets, who would practice in a confined place near the racket court. Incidentally, badminton, another racket game which is said to have originated at Badminton House in Gloucestershire in the 1870s, probably derived from the ancient children's racket game of battledore and shuttlecock.

Similarly universities, especially the Oxbridge (Oxford University and

Cambridge University), contributed a great deal in organizing or establishing rules of sports. For example, in 1848, Cambridge undergraduates took steps towards common rules of football (soccer), which had been enthusiastically played usually in village streets between teams from neighbouring hamlets as early as the medieval times and played regularly by 1800 in the public schools. Soccer has now a greater following than cricket, though its image is occasionally damaged by the so-called “soccer hooligans.”

Golf, which is generally believed to have originated in St Andrews in Scotland where it is called “the Royal and Ancient Game”, has a longer history, the earliest record of a similar game played in Holland dating from 1296. The game was thus played in Holland and was widely played by the 15th century. Dutch traders introduced the game into Eastern Scotland in the 16th century, and James I (James VI of Scotland) is believed to have introduced it into England when he succeeded to the throne upon the death of Elizabeth I. The earliest surviving written rules, however, were compiled at St Andrews for the club’s inaugural competition in 1754. The first Open Championship was held in Scotland in 1860 and the British Amateur Championship in 1885.

Britain’s colonial rule in India brought about a by-product : the introduction from there of polo, a favourite of the royal family. The game is believed to originate in Persia, China and Tibet. The British learned it in India in the 1850s and took it back to England. The word ‘polo’ comes from Balti ‘polo’, “ball”, akin to Tibetan ‘bolo’, the word for the willow root the balls are made from.

Another sports introduced from overseas are croquet and lawn tennis. Although croquet may derive from “paille-maille” or “pell-mell” played in the 16th century in Pall Mall, a street in London well known for its exclusive clubs, the modern game came into England from France in 1852. It became very popular over the next 30 years, especially with young ladies and gentlemen because they could enjoy it out of earshot of their chaperons. However the popularity began to decline in 1880s because of the growing enthusiasm for tennis.

Lawn tennis evolved in England in the 1870s as an open air version of

real tennis (the old game). The real tennis was an ancient indoor racket-and-ball game originating from a game played in the medieval France by monks around the edge of covered cloisters. It reached its peak of popularity in the 16th century in France and England. The original name being '*le jeu de paume*', it became 'real' tennis (a corruption of "royal" tennis). Henry VII & VIII were players (the latter had a court built at Hampton Court still in use today) and Elizabeth I was a keen spectator. The first lawn tennis tournament was held in Wimbledon in 1877 and the Lawn Tennis Association was formed in 1888. The Davis Cup, annual international lawn tennis matches, has been played since 1900.

The second half of the 19th century saw a great expansion in the popularity of sports and holiday-making as well. It was brought about by many factors: consolidation of traffic network; improvement of (turnpike) roads (between 1700 and 1790, 1,000 Road Acts were passed, making the users of the road pay for its upkeep); invention of the railway system; improvement of rivers and development of canals (initiated by the construction in 1760s of a canal between Worsley and Manchester by Bridgewater, 'father of English canals' (Trevelyan), with James Brindley as engineer); introduction by the Factory Acts of free Saturday afternoon after 2:00 p. m. for textile workers in 1853 and for all factory workers in 1867; paid holidays which became more general in British working life in the 1880s; closure of banks by the Bank Holidays Act in 1871 (which established Boxing Day, Easter Monday, Whit Monday and the first Monday in August as free days); as well as humanitarian feelings inspired by philanthropists and writers such as Dickens and Kingsley who interested the public in the sufferings and feelings of the children and the poor.

As for the railway system, it was first built in 1825 between Stockton and Darlington (Durham) with George Stephenson as engineer and started operation in 1830 between Liverpool and Manchester, introducing cheap long-distance journey to the mass of citizens in Britain, thus enabling them to enjoy travelling which had been monopolized by the privileged upper class who owned coaches — a status symbol of the upper class until they were replaced by large luxury cars at the beginning of the 20th century.

Thomas Cook (1808-92), a teetotaler and the initiator of the hotel system, played a great role in expanding the use of railways for leisure activities. He organized the group tour, the first of its kind in the world, in 1841 for those who attended a temperance conference in Loughborough, Leicestershire. He also sent a great number of visitors to the Great Exhibition at the Hyde Park in 1851, which, housed in the Crystal Palace, an enormous glass building, showed to the six million visitors at home and from overseas England's wealth, progress and enlightenment. His tours also provided the thrifty and humble citizens with delightful continental travels, which had until then been relished mainly by the wealthiest who made the grand tour of France, Italy, etc. [It is estimated that 40,000 English, counting masters and servants, were touring or resident on the Continent in 1785.]

It must be added here that the (safety) bicycle, first designed by J. K. Stanley in 1885 and made more comfortable to ride in 1887 by J. Dunlop who invented pneumatic or inflatable tyres, also had considerable effect on social life. Thanks to the bicycle, the working-class people now had a cheap means of transport and greater opportunities for entertainment.

The full development of holiday resorts started in the early 19th century. Under the later Stuart kings spas at Bath, Buxton, Harrogate and the Tunbridge Wells, which were fully equipped with coffee houses, theatres, public paths, ball-rooms, gambling houses, and so forth, had been frequented for purposes of fashion and of health by the courtiers, the gentry and their families. In the latter half of George III's reign, Turner was already depicting the waves and the mystery of the sea. But doctors had not yet discovered the health-giving qualities of its air, nor as yet did anyone seek either the seaside or the mountains for the refreshment they could give to the spirit of man.

The first pleasure pier was built on the Isle of Wight in 1813-14, followed by those at Margate, Brighton, Southend, Southpool, Blackpool, Great Yarmouth and so forth. Even before the age of railways, Londoners had swarmed at seaside resorts such as Brighton and Margate, and Scarborough in Yorkshire was serving as the first seaside resort as early as 1730s.

But it was not until Dr Richard Russel, who had published in 1749 *A Dissertation on the Use of Sea Water in the Diseases of the Glands*, began to prescribe seabathing and drew numerous patients there that the craze for Brighton began to be seen. Brighton's popularity as a seaside resort was further increased by the patronage of Prince Regent (later George IV) and the Royal Pavilion he built there.

By the end of the 19th century, holidays by the seaside had become a part of life to the lower middle class and even to the working class in England and Wales. Thomas Hardy's *An Imaginative Woman* (1893) gives us an idea about the holiday spent by a prosperous gunmaker, his sentimental wife, and their children at a seaside in the south England.

Perhaps because the sea was choppy outside the Island, Ella's husband found it much pleasanter to go sailing and steaming about without his wife, who was a bad sailor, than with her. He did not disdain to go thus alone on board the steamboats of the cheap-trippers, where there was dancing by moonlight, and where the couples would come suddenly down with a lurch into each other's arms; for, as he blandly told her, the company was too mixed for him to take her amid such scenes. Thus, while this thriving manufacturer got a great deal of change and sea-air out of his sojourn here, the life, external at least, of Ella was monotonous enough, and mainly consisted in passing a certain number of hours each day in bathing and walking up and down a stretch of shore.

Cornwall was already a holiday resort of the well-to-do at Easter and of the masses in August. In the summer the lodging-houses and farms in the Lake District were also thronged with family parties.

As for indoor entertainment and diversions, there appeared a boom for readings and lectures in the middle of the 19th century. Reading became very popular in the 1850s as the literate people increased in population as a result of the success of Sunday schools, voluntary schools and mechanics' institutes. (Incidentally, these schools' importance declined after the Educa-

tion Act, 1870, which introduced the direct state intervention in education.) The readings by the authors themselves such as Thackeray and Dickens had a vogue and lectures given by Carlyle, Ruskin, and others were popular as well.

Rebellion of the people's conscience against mechanization and exploitation of workers also brought into being a variety of humanity-based organizations and charities. The first cooperative (shop) was founded in 1844 by two dozen Chartist and Owenite workmen of Rockdale in Lancashire and working men's clubs were founded in 1850s to provide working men with education, relaxation and recreation. The RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was established in 1824 instigated by "Humanity Martin" who waged a long campaign to have cruel sports banned. The YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) was founded in 1844 aiming to promote the spiritual, social and physical welfare of the people, followed by the YWCA founded in 1855. The Salvation Army, a Christian organization founded in 1863, was dedicated to evangelical and social work, or alleviating the grinding poverty of the Victorian slums. The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) was founded in 1884, and RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) in 1889.

### *Concluding remarks*

As was mentioned above, one may say that most of the sports and other leisure activities in Britain in modern forms were by and large brought into being and expanded by the Industrial Revolution — the wealth, leisure and humanitarianism against the alienation of humanity generated by mechanization.

## Chronological chart of sports and leisure activities in Britain

- Mid-17c The coffee-house comes in as a new fashion.  
late-17c Even ordinary and poorer people begin to visit clubs at coffee-houses.
- 1730s Scarborough in Yorkshire becomes the first seaside resort.  
1750 Jockey Club founded.  
1753 Dr Richard Russell begins to prescribe sea bathing in Brighton.

### Second half of 18c.

Craze for umbrellas and walking sticks is inspired by those in the Orient.

1760 The Hambledon Club (cricket) in Hampshire founded and popularizes the game.

1761 Brindley's canal over the Irwell built.

1763 Wedgwood establishes potteries.

1769 The Methodist Hannah Ball starts Sunday schools at the height of evangelical revival.

late 18c Balls very popular. Taverns, coffee-houses, debating societies, vapour-bath houses, bagnios (brothels), etc. also popular.  
Punting as a sport or a summer pastime starts.

### last quarter of 18c

The music clubs and the free-and-easy song and drama clubs become a special feature of London.

The circus or the equestrian display also popular.

1780 The Derby founded.

Sunday schools get under way thanks to Robert Raikes and Rev. Thomas Stock.

1785 *The Times* founded.

1787 The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) founded.

1797 Eton versus Harrow games (cricket) started.

End of 18c Dominoes (derived from China) is introduced into Britain

probably by French prisoners during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815).

- Early 19c The introduction of leather-tipped cues, chalk, slate beds, and India rubber cushions revolutionizes billiards.  
Highland Games such as 'tossing the caber' and 'tossing the weight' begin to be held in Scotland by clan chiefs dissatisfied with the speed of their messengers.  
Voluntary schools are started by two bodies : one based on the principles of Church of England and the other on the work of a Quaker, J. Lancaster.
- 1800 Mechanics' institutes started in Glasgow.
- 1807 Slave trade abolished.
- 1810 Steeplechase first held at Bedford.
- 1812 The first regular sea passenger service started by Henry Bell's *Comet*.
- 1813-14 The first pier built on the Isle of Wight.
- 1819 Burlington Arcade designed.  
The first regular sea-going service started by Rob Roy.
- 1820s-30s Clubs become a more prominent feature of social life and more wide spread.
- 1821 *The Manchester Guardian* (currently *the Guardian*) founded.
- 1823 William Webb Ellis started rugby at Rugby School.
- 1824 The National Gallery opened to the public.  
RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) founded.
- 1825 The first railroad between Stockton and Darlington built.
- 1827 Oxford University versus Cambridge University games (cricket) started.
- 1830 'The Rocket' opens the railway between Liverpool and Manchester.
- c1830 Squash invented at Harrow School.
- 1831 A Lord's Day Observance Society (campaigning to stop all



- work and entertainment on Sundays) formed.
- 1832 The first brassband founded at Blaina, Gwent.
- 1833 Colonial slavery abolished.
- 1834 New Poor Law checks the growing evil of pauperism.
- 1835 Bear-baiting declared illegal.
- 1839 Committee of Privy Council for education instituted.
- 1841 *The Punch*, the oldest and best-known humorous magazine in the English language, first published.
- 1843 Guy's Hospital Rugby Club formed.
- 1844 The first cooperative shop founded in Lancashire.  
YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) founded.
- 1848 Steps towards common rules of soccer are first taken by Cambridge undergraduates.
- 1849 Cockfighting outlawed, though still held in secret.  
The rules for bowls codified.  
Harrods began as a small grocer's shop.
- 1850 Factory Act provides that work on Saturday is to be finished by 2 p.m. in textile factories, the regulation gradually extended to other workers.
- Mid. of 19c Week-end leisure develops with wages given every Friday.  
Busking (=street performance) starts to be seen.
- 1850s Polo introduced from India.
- 1850s-60s Grouse hunting becomes popular because of the improvement of guns and the growth of railways.
- c1850 Badger-baiting outlawed, one of the last recorded cases in 1897.  
Working men's clubs founded.
- 1851 The Great Exhibition held at Hyde Park, London.
- 1852 Modern form of croquet introduced from France.  
Charles Morton, "father of the halls" opens the Canterbury Music Hall.
- 1855 YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) founded.
- 1859 The National Portrait Gallery founded.

- After IR Walking becomes popular among the rich merchants at Hyde Park or St James' Park full of entertainments or in Bath, a favoured place of the retired East Indian Company high-rank employees.
- 1860 The First Open Championship (golf) held in Scotland.
- 1861 The first tramway opened in London.
- 1863 Charity Commissioners first appointed.  
The first underground railways opens between Paddington and Moorgate in London.
- 1864 The country championship competitions (cricket) started.
- 1865 The Salvation Army founded.
- 1867 The Queensberry Rules regulates and modernizes boxing (which had become popular in the 17th century).  
Public execution abolished.
- 1870 The Education Act passed and direct state intervention in education begins.
- 1870s Badminton started at Badminton House.  
Holidays by the seaside become popular.
- 1871 The Rugby Football Union formed and the laws codified.  
The first international match (rugby) between England and Scotland.  
The Bank Holidays Act provides for the closure of banks.
- 1872 The First FA (Football Association) Cup held at the Oval is won by the Wanderers, a club of ex-public school men.  
The Speaker's Corner at Hyde Park begins to be used as a traditional site of open-air public speaking.
- 1873 The Kennel Club of Great Britain established.
- 1875 Snooker probably invented at Kabul by Colonel Sir Neville Chamberlaine, an Indian army officer, by adding extra balls to the normal three used for billiards.  
Liberty's started.
- 1877 The first lawn tennis tournament held in Wimbledon.  
The Test (international) Match (cricket) begins with a game

- between England and Australia in Melbourne.
- 1880's Lawn tennis takes the place of croquet as the game for the encounter of young ladies and gentlemen.
- 1880 The Amateur Boxing Association founded.
- 1884 NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) formed.  
Paid annual holidays of one week for manual workers introduced in one firm.
- 1885 The Billiards Association founded.  
James Starley designs the Rover 'safety' cycle, and John Dunlop pneumatic tyre (1887), making cycling popular in Britain.  
(The first official cycle race was held near Paris in 1868.)  
The British Amateur Championship (golf) started.  
The FA legalizes the employment of professionals.
- 1886 The first dog show held in Islington.
- 1880s Pearly kings and queens begin to decorate their outfits with Japanese pearl buttons.
- 1888 The Lawn Tennis Association formed.
- 1889 RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) founded.
- 1890 The first deep-level Tube opened between King William Street and Stockwell in London.
- 1890's Bicycle becomes fashionable.  
Rock-climbing in Wales and the Lake District becomes a skilled pastime at home.
- 1892 The Scottish Bowling Association founded. (English counterpart in 1903.)
- 1893 The First Ladies Championship (golf) held.  
The RUF suspends professional players declaring the game to be exclusively amateur.
- 1895 The National Trust founded.  
The first electric tramway opened in Bristol.
- 1897 RAC (Royal Automobile Club) founded as the Automobile Club

Sakasegawa : A Brief Historical Survey of Sports and Leisure Activities in Britain  
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