

## Northernness, Sheffield and the 1966 World Cup: The 'Steel City' on Display

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*During the summer of 1966 the eyes of the football world turned their attention to the manufacturing city of Sheffield in northern England as the 'Steel City' played host to the FIFA World Cup. Although remembered more widely for England's one and only success in winning the Jules Rimet Trophy, the tournament had a more mixed impact on the communities, culture and infrastructure of the towns and cities which hosted group stage and knock-out matches during July 1966. Over the decades the tournament has been revisited by sports historians and the press with often romanticised representations of national triumph, whilst in recent years amidst the fiftieth anniversary of the only FIFA World Cup to be hosted in England, there has been increased scholarly activity exploring the event's cultural, economic, political and social impact, as well as legacies and memories of the tournament. This article adopts Sheffield as a case study in seeking to understand the role of the major sporting event as a platform for articulating and experiencing the post-war northern city at a time of significant economic and social change. It is contended that the tournament presented an opportunity for Sheffield to articulate multiple identities of the northern centre that both embraced its traditional industrial identity and looked to promote a modern, forward thinking city. By looking beyond the action on the football pitch, the article is focused on the World Cup's time in Sheffield to consider how the northern industrial city was articulated through celebration of local culture and promotion of industry alongside signposting to a progressive Sheffield. With varying degrees of success, Sheffield performed and utilised World Cup fortnight to promote a modern city embracing many of the trappings of post-war renewal whilst maintaining its traditional industrial identity. The article seeks to contribute to widening understandings of the construction, challenges to and performance of 'northernness' that have enjoyed heightened focus in recent decades.*

Every four years the FIFA World Cup brings with it varying levels of pandemonium across England as the men's football team's prospects of success are mulled over by millions of supporters, the national press and expert analysts. From Sheffield to Surbiton, the craze brings widespread articulations of hope and more commonly despair as much of the nation is swept up in a football frenzy as the 'Three Lions' ultimately fail to emulate England's sole FIFA World Cup triumph of July 1966. That tournament has become iconic not just in English sporting history but national identity and has culminated in received memory amongst those even too young to remember the match and Bobby Charlton holding the Jules Rimet Trophy

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aloft at Wembley.<sup>2</sup> As each notable anniversary occurs or England flirt dangerously with the prospect of emulating the success of Charlton, Stiles et al, 1966 is readily revisited. This was most apparent during the European Championships of 1996 (Euro 96) in England that combined the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a semi-final defeat by Germany that opened a flood of 'great nostalgia for 1966', bringing to the media gaze oft recycled archival footage, interviews with the winning team and even the story of Pickles the dog's recovery of the stolen Jules Rimet Trophy in 1966.<sup>3</sup>

In his June 2006 *History Today* editorial - an edition complete with a feature on the infamous theft – Furtado contended that difficulties are presented when 'moments in the past are so embedded in popular consciousness that it seems impossible that there could be anything new to say about them'.<sup>4</sup> Yet, by looking beyond the more familiar narratives associated with 1966 such as faint memories of watching the match on television, there is more to be discovered that reveals much about Britain of the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> Given the event's central role in popular culture, it is perhaps surprising that despite a plethora of popular work, there is a relative scarcity of academic work on the 1966 World Cup in England. The academic work that has emerged has addressed a diverse range of topics including politics, diplomatic relations, national identity, commerce, provincial experience, gendered experience, folklore and memories of the tournament. The wider political implications of the 1966 World Cup have been the subject of work by Polley who has revealed the challenges posed to the British government by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's qualification for the tournament, including potential exclusion of the team that would have prevented their inaugural World Cup Finals appearance and with it one of the greatest World Cup shocks of all time.<sup>6</sup> More recently, the government's role has also been subject to scrutiny by Gillett and Tennent who have explored in impressive detail the initial, limited government financial backing for the tournament and subsequent issues of hosting the World Cup in 1966 including infrastructure problems and challenges of provincial participation.<sup>7</sup> In doing so their study has cast new light on national implications of hosting the tournament, but also contributed significantly to understanding the experience of host towns and cities beyond London by mining a rich range of provincial sources including newspaper archives, official programmes, football club archives, transport records and council minutes.<sup>8</sup> Gibbons examination of contrasting representations of Englishness across World Cup finals similarly returned to contemporary

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<sup>2</sup> M. Polley, "The Diplomatic Background to the 1966 Football World Cup", *The Sports Historian*, No.18, 2, November 1998, 1-18.

<sup>3</sup> T. Gibbons, *English National Identity and Football Fan Culture: Who Are Ya?* (Ashgate, Farnham, 2014), 8, 79. For more on the story of Pickles the dog's recovery of the World Cup see M. Atherton, "England Loses the World Cup", *History Today*, Vol.56, Issue 6, June 2006, 21-28.

<sup>4</sup> P. Furtado, "Kicked into Touch", *History Today*, Vol.56, Issue 6, June 2006, 2.

<sup>5</sup> D. Porter, "Eggs and Chips with the Connells: Remembering 1966", *Sport in History*, Vol.29, No.3, September 2009, 519-539.

<sup>6</sup> Polley, "Diplomatic Background to the 1966 World Cup", 1-18.

<sup>7</sup> K.D. Tennent and A.G. Gillett, *Foundations of Managing Sporting Events: Organizing the 1966 FIFA World Cup* (Routledge, London, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Tennent and Gillett, *Managing Sporting Events*, 110-123.

newspapers to unearth the multifaceted and often blurred boundaries of supposed expressions of English national identity across several tournaments.<sup>9</sup> Dauncey and Hare too have advocated the value of returning to newspaper sources as a mechanism for accessing ‘history from below’ and gauging fan experience and national and local engagement, pointing to Herzog’s study of West Germany’s unlikely 1954 World Cup victory that drew upon local press reports of the time to explore public responses to “the miracle of Bern”.<sup>10</sup>

The fiftieth anniversary of the tournament in England also generated other timely profiles of the tournament from gendered, national and regional perspectives. Pope’s study of female fan experience and interpretations of the 1966 World Cup alongside the Munich Air Disaster and the rise of footballers as sexualised national celebrities has highlighted how the tournament provided the first memory of the sport for many women respondents, whilst also revealing the engagement of a number of women during the tournament was limited owing to traditional gender roles.<sup>11</sup> Hughson’s cultural history of the tournament has placed the tournament against a background of 1960s popular culture, masculinity, sporting advances and subsequent memories and mythology associated with England’s victory.<sup>12</sup> Popular responses have also emerged including a number of initiatives undertaken to mark the anniversary of World Cup fortnight in ‘Steel City’. The local media including BBC Sheffield revisited the city’s role in hosting matches at Sheffield Wednesday’s Hillsborough Stadium by encouraging listeners to share their memories of the tournament, whilst local newspapers reminisced about 1966 with *The Star* supporting the ‘Football’s Coming Home’ exhibition at Sheffield’s Moor Market.<sup>13</sup> Sheffield Local Studies Library also produced a small exhibition to mark the fiftieth anniversary of group games and a quarter final at Sheffield Wednesday’s Hillsborough Stadium, drawing upon local organisation records, photographs and newspaper reports, whilst Sheffield City Libraries also held public events in partnership with the Sporting Memories Network as part of the #memoriesof66 project.<sup>14</sup> This article seeks to draw upon some of these methodologies by returning to documents generated during the period to gain an insight into the experience in Sheffield during the 1966 World Cup. In particular, the article embraces a return to the documents generated by the various stakeholders in the interests

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<sup>9</sup> T. Gibbons, “Contrasting Representations of Englishness During FIFA World Cup Finals”, *Sport in History*, Vol.30, No.3, September 2010, 422-446.

<sup>10</sup> H. Dauncey and G. Hare, “Sport and media: representing and conceptualising identity and community”, *Movement 5 Sports Sciences – Science & Motricité*, Vol.86, Issue 4, 2014, 11; M. Herzog, “Win globally – party locally: the “Miracle of Bern” and its local reception”, *FIFA Conference paper: The Relevance and Impact of FIFA World Cups, 1930–2010*, Geneva, April 2013. For an excellent earlier study of Sheffield’s newspapers and their uses for exploring football in the city see A. Jackson, “Football Coverage in the Papers of the *Sheffield Telegraph*, c.1890-1915”, *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol.5, No.1, 2009, 63-84

<sup>11</sup> S. Pope, “Female fan experiences and interpretations of the 1958 Munich air disaster, the 1966 World Cup finals and the rise of footballers as sexualised national celebrities”, *International Journal for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol.51, No.7, 2016, 848-866.

<sup>12</sup> J. Hughson, *England and the 1966 World Cup: A Cultural History* (Manchester University Press, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> “Football’s Coming Home”, Sheffield Markets, last modified 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2017.

<http://sheffieldmarkets.com/blog/football-s-coming-home>; “When 1966 World Cup came to Sheffield”, *The Star*, July 28, 2016 <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/when-1966-world-cup-came-to-sheffield-1-8039430>.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the #memoriesof66 project visit <http://memoriesof66.sportingmemories.org/>

of avoiding ahistoricism, gaining a better insight into the economic and social environment in which the World Cup occurred as well as turning to the column inches of the local press to gain a sense of contemporary opinion in the media.<sup>15</sup> By adopting this approach, this article adds to existing work that seeks to expose and understand the apparatus and agents responsible for articulating, promoting and shaping northernness.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, by focusing on a specific northern manufacturing city at a time of change amidst post-war renewal during a short-term, high profile sporting event, it is hoped that the article sheds new light on the place of traditional notions of northernness at a time when a changing Sheffield was in the international spotlight.

This article begins by setting the scene with an overview of Sheffield as the archetypal northern manufacturing city seeking to ensure its continued presence amongst the major industrial centres in the country. The important role of steel in the city's identity is then outlined followed by profiling of new, modernist developments in the post-war city following significant damage during the Second World War. Attention then turns to the organisation of the tournament and the various agents and strands of activity involved in preparing the city for World Cup fortnight spanning business organisations, the city council's role, cultural and entertainment institutions and infrastructure. Responses and the varying degrees of success of Sheffield's place promotion – embracing both traditional industrial portrayals as well as more modern inceptions resulting from urban renewal – are analysed, before legacies of the tournament in Sheffield in terms of economic benefit, infrastructure, place promotion and northern identity are considered.

### **Post-war Sheffield**

In the spirit of 1950s and 1960s post-war urban renewal which had provided the industrial north with a short-term boost, Sheffield was keen to draw upon the potential offered by the tournament to promote the potential and progress of their areas.<sup>17</sup> Sheffield was keen to move away from perceptions of a city that 'could justly claim to be called the ugliest town in the old world' as Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, republished in 1963, would have it and no longer 'a dark picture in a golden frame'.<sup>18</sup> A decade before the first World Cup match at Hillsborough, a Sheffield City Council produced handbook reflected post-war Sheffield's aspirations for profiling industry, leisure, lovely suburbs, education, research and the arts, a modern 'city of contrasts' combining 'the smoky centre and the immediate outskirts which is bound to strike every visitor'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Gillett and Tennent, *Managing Sporting Events*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> K. Spracklen, "Theorising northernness and northern culture: the north of England, northern Englishness, and sympathetic magic", *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol.20, No.1, 2016, 4-16.

<sup>17</sup> Russell, *Looking North*, 65.

<sup>18</sup> G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937, Harmondsworth, Penguin edition, 1963), 95 cited in Russell, *Looking North*, 59.

<sup>19</sup> J.P. Lamb (ed.), *Sheffield* (Sheffield City Council, 1956), 5, 62.

The 'smoky centre' described in the 1956 Sheffield City Council produced guide to 'Steel City' reflected the relative prosperity enjoyed in the early decades of the post-war period, with full employment consistent throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with the majority of the work force still engaged in manufacturing (57.5%) and the heavy and light trades (44.4%).<sup>20</sup> In 1957 some 650 of the nation's 700 cutlery firms were based in Sheffield, with Richards employing over 500 workers in the 1950s and the largest firm, Viners, boasting 800 employees in 1965.<sup>21</sup> The 1950s saw periods of full production in the steel industry, adoption of new technology, a significant rise in profits at United Steel, English Steel Corporation and Firth Brown's.<sup>22</sup> Yet the 1960s saw Sheffield face heightened economic challenges from abroad in its staple industries, with Bernard Cotton, chairman of the Osborn steel group, aligning the decade with the end of 'the Victorian era in Sheffield steel'.<sup>23</sup> Amidst optimism for the industry's future, approximately £150 million post-war investment in modernization of steel in the Sheffield district saw old plant replaced with new, technically advanced production methods, but with it also resulting in changes on the South Yorkshire skyline, Tweedale noting:

The new Templeborough Electric Melting Shop replaced twenty-one open-hearth furnaces (fourteen of which has been housed in the quarter-mile-long old Templeborough shop – the longest open-hearth shop in Europe) and destroyed one of the landmarks in the district – fourteen huge chimneys along the Sheffield Road. In their place went the world's largest electric steelmaking unit of six 110-ton electric arc furnaces...closer to Sheffield, by 1963 the ESC [English Steel Corporation] had opened its new £26 million Tinsley Park works.<sup>24</sup>

With the World Cup matches at Hillsborough on the horizon, there were challenges to the city's industrial might, with the *Daily Mail* in April 1966 reporting on the English Steel Corporation's plans to close four melting furnaces, amidst a decline in the demand for steel during the ensuing six months bringing with it a downturn in atmosphere in the industry.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the World Cup's arrival in South Yorkshire presented Sheffield, still very much defined by its Victorian industries yet facing challenges to its recent boom, with an important opportunity to promote its status as 'Steel City'. The cutlery industry also faced a struggle to maintain its monopoly amidst challenges from the Far East and cheap imports which would ultimately prove the death knell for a number of major firms in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> D. Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (Carnegie, Lancaster, 2005), 272.

<sup>21</sup> Hey, *History of Sheffield*, 280-281.

<sup>22</sup> Hey, *History of Sheffield*, 286.

<sup>23</sup> G. Tweedale, *Steel City: Entrepreneurship, Strategy and Technology in Sheffield, 1743-1993* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995), 331.

<sup>24</sup> Tweedale, *Steel City*, 332-333.

<sup>25</sup> "Furnaces to close", *Daily Mail*, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1966; "It's boom time in the North-East", *Daily Mail*, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1966.

<sup>26</sup> Hey, *Sheffield*, 283.

Whilst the World Cup provided an opportunity to showcase legacies of the city's Victorian industrial might, there too was an eagerness amongst businesses and the local authority to highlight Sheffield as embracing the post-war urban developments and modernity in evidence in Britain's war damaged cities. The city centre was redesigned, bringing with it the establishment of new department stores, a state-of-the-art College of Technology and leisure provision, cleaning of smoke blackened buildings including the Town Hall, clearance of slums and the establishment of new housing on the periphery.<sup>27</sup> Sheffield in 1966 provided the visitor with a city proud of its industry, embracing modernity yet one that had 'lost much of its individuality as its old buildings were torn down and new ones rose in styles that could be found all over Britain'.<sup>28</sup> Of the new structures to adorn the South Yorkshire skyline, of the most acclaimed and controversial was the Le Corbusier-esque Park Hill housing developments, bringing 'streets in the sky' which attracted world-wide attention and provided 'a dramatic contribution to the townscape'.<sup>29</sup> The city could also look back on a relatively successful season for Sheffield Wednesday, defeated FA Cup finalists, with the club looking to push on amongst the elite of British football.

### Planning the Tournament

Sheffield was named as one of the possible venues to host the World Cup at an August 1960 meeting in Rome as England was selected ahead of Germany as the host nation.<sup>30</sup> The selection of Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough ground as a host venue was confirmed in 1963 alongside Wembley (London), Highbury (London), Old Trafford (Manchester), Villa Park (Birmingham), Goodison Park (Liverpool), St James' Park (Newcastle) and Roker Park (Sunderland).<sup>31</sup> Despite its South Yorkshire location, due to the arrangement of the group stages and regional pairing arrangements, matches at Hillsborough would take place as part of the Midlands group alongside Villa Park.<sup>32</sup> The January 1966 draw for the World Cup matches would see South Yorkshire play host to the 'charming Swiss, the strong-running Germans, the fiery Spaniards and the excitable Argentinians', a combination which brought Sheffield Wednesday general manager and secretary Eric Taylor to declare 'Sheffield has come out of it quite well. We have not got the cream but we have not got the rabbits either'.<sup>33</sup> One *Morning Telegraph* article summed up mixed emotions to the draw with the headline

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 273; 300.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 273-274.

<sup>29</sup> G.E. Cherry, *Cities and Plans: The Shaping of urban Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Edward Arnold, London, 1988), 113, 156; Hey, *Sheffield*, 278.

<sup>30</sup> *The Star*, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1966, SLSL W7Sheffield Local Studies Library, W7 World Cup 1966 newspaper cuttings (hereafter SLSL W7).

<sup>31</sup> Highbury would eventually be replaced as the second London venue by White City Stadium owing to the pitch not meeting FIFA size standards. Middlesbrough's Ayresome Park would go on to replace Newcastle as a 'North East' group host owing to disputes between the local council and the football club on issues surrounding ground development. See "World Cup Row Warning", *Daily Mail*, 11th June 1964; "Newcastle make decision today", *Daily Mail*, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1966; "Boro' picked", *Daily Mail*, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1964.

<sup>32</sup> Gillett and Tennent, *Managing Sporting Events*, 65.

<sup>33</sup> *The Star*, 7<sup>th</sup> January 1966, SLSL W7.

'Hotels are happy, fans not so sure', with the Chamber of Trade's Press Officer A.G. Priestley also declaring 'there will be some sadness about not seeing Brazil play in Sheffield but this draw has a brighter side. We must make sure Sheffield shows the Europeans the kind of hospitality that will make them want to come back'.<sup>34</sup> Letters promising a special welcome to Sheffield, where there was 'plenty to see in and around the city', followed from the Lord Mayor to the presidents of the Argentine, Spanish, Swiss, West German Football.<sup>35</sup> A more curious plan to provide a 'Yorkshire welcome' was that proposed by Joe Scott, owner of an entertainment company in the city, for 'sophisticated, intelligent, good-looking' hostesses who would help counter 'very, very dull' Sheffield.<sup>36</sup> The sense of opportunity afforded by the World Cup for promoting positive perceptions of the northern manufacturing districts and providing an opportunity to gain some deserved attention was echoed elsewhere. In his seminal study of northern England and the national imagination, Russell has pointed to how the World Cup provided a platform for articulating, and countering, northern antipathies at southern dominance of major footballing events in steel-producing Middlesbrough:

Many of these tensions and attitudes surfaced during the 1966 World Cup when other major grounds enjoyed the opportunity to show their qualities and those of their fans...The Mayor of Middlesbrough, whose Ayresome Park was a World Cup venue, made the revealing remark that local people 'now feel that they are part of the country' as a result of the town's inclusion in the event'.<sup>37</sup>

Yet such confidence in what the northern industrial city had to offer was far from universal with concerns at Sheffield's readiness even before the draw has been made. Although the local press were confident in the footballing arrangements that would cast the city into the international spotlight, with the newly renovated Hillsborough hailed as the 'Wembley of the North' and well versed in hosting international football, less faith was shown in the municipality's abilities to handle proceedings.<sup>38</sup> The *Sheffield Morning Telegraph* expressed concern that there was a 'very real problem...in the arrangement and implementation of the effort made on the non-football side', laying responsibility firmly at the city council's door who had done little when compared to the efforts of local companies, individuals and organisations.<sup>39</sup> The Lord Mayor's letters also provoked a response from journalist Bryan Dunthorne, who questioned the City Council's limited activity in preparing any 'Come to Sheffield' campaign as 'the most important event in the history of Sheffield as a sports centre' fast approached.<sup>40</sup> The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph's* Michael Crouch offered a similarly pessimistic view, with the headline "A

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<sup>34</sup> "Hotels are happy, fans not so sure", SLSL W7.

<sup>35</sup> "Civic message to World Cup teams", SLSL W7.

<sup>36</sup> "World Cup Hostess Plan", SLSL W7.

<sup>37</sup> D. Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), 254

<sup>38</sup> "World Cup Competition: Sheffield 1966: Visitors' Handbook and Programme of Events", p.31, Sheffield Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets, Vol 256 S.

<sup>39</sup> "World Cup: the Council must take the initiative", *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1965.

<sup>40</sup> "Civic message to World Cup teams", SLSL W7.

warm welcome to our World Cup visitors...We have little else to offer them' with the city's plans 'hampered by disappointment after disappointment' including the lack of beer garden provision and little visible evidence of the £17,000 invested in the tournament.<sup>41</sup>

Wider public concerns were also in evidence in the columns of the local press with one 'Letter to the Editor' from Manchester Road resident Jean Harris showcasing anxieties about promoting Sheffield:

It is without doubt painful for a native of Sheffield to be honest about his home town. We all love the particular plot from which we sprang, and are familiar with the old streets and haunts, but alas for these very reasons, we are rendered blind to the milieu of our existence. Only those who have never visited any other place with observance can be proud, or at least satisfied with Sheffield... Are we Sheffielders either too stupid or too self-conscious to do anything with finesse? Must all of us be rough and ready, and yet not a few be able to rise to an occasion?...The village mentality still prevails and blights our obvious potential.<sup>42</sup>

Listing the Art Galleries alongside Town, City and Cutlers Halls as 'all we have to offset Sheffield's predominant feature of interminable streets of neglected property', solace was found in the 'varied character of countryside' which surrounded the city.<sup>43</sup>

Despite recognising that 'Sheffield, to say the least, by the nature of its industries has hardly been looked upon as a mecca for tourists', an article by Sheffield Wednesday's General Manager and Secretary Eric Taylor in *FA News* recognised the potential the World Cup offered for the 'city with a changing face' in altering the lack of tourism 'for a hectic and welcome week or two'.<sup>44</sup> In tackling its reputation as a 'dour Yorkshire area producing the world's best steel and little else...of more smoke than sun, more grime than green belt', Sheffield's new buildings, smokeless zone areas combined with confidence that 'when Yorkshire folk set their stall to do a thing, they do it well' and enhancements at Hillsborough all made for an event with strong potential for boosterism and prestige.<sup>45</sup>

The national press turned attention to preparations in 'The North' in the days following the draw, with *The Guardian* surveying each of the host cities and towns, reporting limited progress but a 'great deal of enthusiasm' in Sheffield and a 'varied programme, including Britain's first industrial eisteddfod' in Middlesbrough – labelled with nearby Sunderland as 'bleak, workaday industrial towns'.<sup>46</sup> Yet, in comparison to other host cities, the Teesside town's preparations were praised, with one Sheffield newspaper comparing the South Yorkshire city's efforts unfavourably with Middlesbrough where the local corporation's

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<sup>41</sup> "A warm welcome to our World Cup visitors: We have very little else to offer them", SLSL W7.

<sup>42</sup> "Letters to the Editor: Rough and Ready City", SLSL W7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> E.W. Taylor, "World Cup Football in Sheffield", *FA News*, February 1966, 253, Sheffield Local Studies Library, MP 1371 M.

<sup>45</sup> Taylor, "World Cup Football in Sheffield", 253-254.

<sup>46</sup> "The North prepares for World Cup visitors", *The Guardian*, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1966.

£10,000 commitment exceeded other centres' investment per head of population and helped towards 'an unrivalled string of events'.<sup>47</sup>

### **Yorkshire and Sheffield Hospitality**

As Sheffield prepared to play host to the largest global football event on the planet, there were concerted efforts to ensure that those visiting the World Cup were well aware that they had arrived in Yorkshire. In the early months of 1966, one newspaper article with the headline 'A touch of Yorkshire', reported Sheffield Labour Councillor Joe Ashton's calls for foreign visitors during World Cup fortnight to be 'given traditional Yorkshire enjoyments, taken to a workingmen's club, bingo sessions conducted in French, or taken round a funfair'.<sup>48</sup> Yet, there appeared to be little universal agreement on the Sheffield or Yorkshire that should be presented to the city's visitors, with the eventual programme of activity delivering a combination of the traditional fare that Ashton had called for alongside attempts to promote a modern, vibrant, forward-thinking city embracing the international cultural and social opportunities that the World Cup presented. Embracing a cosmopolitan, European approach, however, brought difficulties with particular problems surrounding licensing doing little to help Sheffield's 'tawdry' reputation for entertainment, with one June 1966 *Sheffield Morning Telegraph* article declaring the lack of a World Cup beer garden due to licensing disputes as 'shattering the last vestiges of a brighter image'.<sup>49</sup> The failure to deliver on a successful nightclub for the tournament too did little to assist any cosmopolitan feel in South Yorkshire and led to further criticism in the local press. Despite such setbacks, around 200 separate functions were planned for World Cup fortnight and *The Star* recognised the potential an array of activities including folk music, exhibitions, tours, dancers and displays brought in showcasing a swinging 'Steel City', declaring 'it may not yet be La Vie Parisienne but it will be Sheffield in a mood to have the *New York Times* telling the world that the notorious swing has spread from London'.<sup>50</sup> As well as more international entertainments including Hungarian State Gypsy Ensemble, and an exhibition of the Seliman collection of oriental art, the offerings included a number of local relevance.<sup>51</sup> The newly renovated City Museum hosted an exhibition of sporting trophies, described by its director Geoffrey Lewis as 'pertinent to Sheffield because of the trophy making industry here'.<sup>52</sup> There was also an eagerness to showcase the manufacturing heritage of the 'Steel City' as local industries opened up to visits during the tournament, mimicking the northern tourism trends that saw 'the larger forges and cutlery shops of Sheffield' featured alongside other

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<sup>47</sup> "A warm welcome to our World Cup visitors: We have very little else to offer them", SLSL W7.

<sup>48</sup> "A touch of Yorkshire", SLSL W7.

<sup>49</sup> "Silver Blades World Cup Ice Gala Souvenir Programme", Sheffield City Local Studies Library, Miscellaneous papers, 1433 M; "Shattering the last vestiges of a brighter image", SLSL W7.

<sup>50</sup> "In the Swing?", *The Star*, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1966, SLSL W7.

<sup>51</sup> "Concerts for World Cup fortnight", *The Guardian*, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1966.

<sup>52</sup> "Exhibition of Trophies", *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1966, SLSL W7.

industrial ‘Yorkshire attractions regularly listed in guidebooks up to 1900 and beyond’ as visitors sought to discover the north.<sup>53</sup> Alongside industrial promotion, the City Council too were keen to promote the city’s steel manufacturing identity, selecting the ‘World Cup City – SHEFFIELD - City of Steel’ postal slogan ahead of a range of eight other options including “Sheffield Welcomes World Cup Visitors” and “World Cup Competition 1966 Sheffield England”, underlining the importance of Sheffield’s steel manufacturing identity and appearing on approximately 10 million letters.<sup>54</sup>

Alongside opportunities to celebrate and explore Sheffield’s steel connections, the World Cup also afforded opportunities for visitors to explore some of the modern developments in Sheffield, including the ‘ultra-modern’ Castle Market and daily tours of Park Hill-Hyde Park flats, dubbed ‘the greatest single development of its kind in Western Europe’ boasting an ‘international reputation among architects and planners’.<sup>55</sup> For those looking to escape the modern, manufacturing city, the proximity of ‘some of the most beautiful country in England’ and ‘great houses’ were promoted in a return to notions of the ‘golden frame’.<sup>56</sup>

Whilst the Sheffield attractions and those of other northern hosts had brought cynicism in the national press, a number of more positive articles appeared in local business association magazines and trade journals, whilst souvenir handbooks and visitor guides were produced by commercial and municipal bodies to promote Sheffield and the interests of their own organisations. The publications of the city’s business associations also served an important role in promoting Sheffield to the business world. The July 1966 edition of *Service in Sheffield*, the district’s Chamber of Trade journal, provided extensive detail of efforts to ‘impress visitors with a new garden city look’, whilst detailing renovation of Sheaf Square, flagpoles around the city, information centres, interpreter facilities, ‘the city’s biggest-ever programme of entertainment’ and issuing World Cup fortnight window posters welcoming visitors in four languages’.<sup>57</sup> Sheffield City Council utilised official World Cup visitor booklets and guides for the purposes of place promotion, albeit prompting some reservation in the local press of the city’s offerings.<sup>58</sup> Many aspects of traditional, industrial Sheffield were in evidence alongside an apparent eagerness to point to new developments in a modern city, with one official handbook’s introduction declaring:

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<sup>53</sup> Russell, *Looking North*, 58.

<sup>54</sup> “Lord Mayor to launch slogan”, *The Star*, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1966, SLSL W7.

<sup>55</sup> “World Cup Competition: Sheffield 1966: Visitors’ Handbook and Programme of Events”, 16, 50, Sheffield Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets, Vol. 256 S.; “World Cup Competition, 1966: Activities proposed by Corporation Departments”, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1966, World Cup [Miscellaneous Information Folder], Sheffield Libraries, 797.41 Q.

<sup>56</sup> “World Cup Competition: Sheffield 1966: Visitors’ Handbook and Programme of Events”, 16.

<sup>57</sup> *Service in Sheffield* (July 1966), 9.

<sup>58</sup> “Cup puts Steel City on the mettle”, SLSL W7. For a further discussion of local identity and place promotion in Liverpool during the World Cup, including the Merseyside press’ emphasis on responses to the city by visitors see E. Sheldon, “Becoming a Man in Post-War Britain: Football, Class and Identity in Liverpool and Newcastle, 1951-1979”, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2015, 220-234..

Sheffield is proud to be one of the great industrial centres of Europe. It is equally proud to have dispelled the legend that it is smoky and grime-laden. Visitors will be able to judge the truth of this for themselves when they have seen the magnificent new buildings which now increasingly enhance the City Centre and its near approaches, its vast parks and open spaces, its facilities for shopping, sport and entertainment and its beautiful suburbs.<sup>59</sup>

Beyond promotional literature, the city's business associations played an important role in showcasing industry and progress in Sheffield. The Junior Chamber of Commerce organised 'an exhibition of cutlery, tableware and silverware, aimed at catching the eye of World Cup visitors' in the Cutlers' Hall, which also housed the special World Cup visitors' lounge, with only manufacturers from the Sheffield areas permitted to exhibit their wares.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the Sheffield Rotary Club mobilised to plan their 'biggest-ever' goodwill operation including arranging tours of local works, producing booklets of the city's industries, setting up a visitor base at the Cutlers' Hall and establishing a special committee to cater for visiting businessmen 'to make sure the visitors enjoy themselves socially and get to know about the workings of Sheffield industry'.<sup>61</sup> The finale of this showcase of Sheffield's cutlery history came in the form of the final social event of the city's World Cup fortnight as the city's Master Cutler, Sir Eric Mensforth, hosted a gathering of overseas journalists at the Hall with a 'tremendous amount of goodwill for Sheffield' on show.<sup>62</sup> There was some more curious mechanisms deployed for promoting the northern city's industrial identity, including plans for the 'Made in Sheffield' exhibition of Sheffield products at the Cutlers' Hall to include taped factory noise to add realism, whilst the BBC recorded 'the lusty voices of Sheffield steelworkers in full voice' and the sound of Sheffield steel being made for use in a series of ten programmes on the World Cup centres for overseas broadcast.<sup>63</sup> Such romanticised, celebratory depictions of the manufacturing city echoed media representations of other northern hosts that bore 'an element of contestation over the city's image that was portrayed as contingent on outsiders' inaccurate perceptions as opposed to the more optimistic 'reality' that readers were invited to take pride in and identify with'.<sup>64</sup>

As the business of the football matches approached, the preparations for the World Cup across England received further national media attention, in doing so choosing to profile the very northern offerings at the disposal of visitors to the North East and Yorkshire. The day before the tournament's first match, *The Observer's* 'Hardly the ticket for World Cup fans' article combined notions of British and local identity in predicting 'as a national prestige booster – it [the World Cup tournament] is going to be a resounding flop':

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<sup>59</sup> "World Cup Competition: Sheffield 1966: Visitors' Handbook and Programme of Events", 15, Sheffield Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets, Vol 256 S.

<sup>60</sup> "Chamber will lay on display for World Cup", *The Star*, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1966, SLSL W7.

<sup>61</sup> "Rotarians' World Cup", *The Star*, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1966, SLSL W7.

<sup>62</sup> "World Cup journalists meet the Master Cutler", SLSL W7.

<sup>63</sup> "Taped factory noise will add realism to City display"; "City's men of steel sing to the world"; SLSL W7.

<sup>64</sup> Sheldon, "Becoming a Man in Post-War Britain", 223-224.

IN THE West End they have been cleaning up the clip joints; in Sheffield they are laying on nice tours round the steel works; and in Sunderland there are guided visits to coalmines. In other words, it is World Cup time in Britain – and Britain is about to provide a typically British welcome...in the six provinces where World Cup matches will be held there are activities ranging from brass bands to folk-dancing, from the excitement of a World Cup concert by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to drinking until 11.30 p.m. in the pubs of Sheffield'.<sup>65</sup>

### **Conclusion: Mixed Success and Legacies**

Ultimately, the football matches at Hillsborough would bring mixed success as a sporting showcase and opportunity to showcase Sheffield. Local press reports following the first game held at Hillsborough exclaimed the tournament provided 'a ticket to Europe for Sheffield' in expanding identities beyond a typical Yorkshire industrial city or British manufacturing centre:

Perhaps for the first time in the history of Sheffield, the city completely lost its parochialism last night. Going to the World Cup match and witnessing the fantastic street scenes afterwards was like taking a ticket to Europe for the evening...many of the banners were those of towns which proclaimed greetings to England and Sheffield. "Fritslar greets Sheffield" proclaimed one German banner...For the Sheffielders in the crowd it was an evening of great entertainment. And some of the Wednesday fans even started an Owls chant so as not to be outdone.<sup>66</sup>

As for the wider implications for the city's identity and memory, the article triumphantly declared:

It was a night for Sheffield to remember. It was the night Sheffield came alive. It was the night Sheffield went into Europe. It was the night Sheffield became Europe. And in the memories of many Swiss and Germans, the name of Sheffield will always have many happy associations.<sup>67</sup>

The local support rallied behind underdogs Switzerland as they looked for the Swiss to be 'to Sheffield what North Korea are to Middlesbrough' with the majority of the crowd supporting the underdogs in each of their 'home' games at Hillsborough.<sup>68</sup> The games at Sheffield, however, lacked the excitement of unlikely triumphs such as the famous North Korea defeat of Italy in Middlesbrough, as the other matches at Hillsborough saw the 'home' Swiss team complete the tournament without a single point following defeats by Spain and Argentina. The final match to take place in Sheffield brought the clash of two former World Champions, Uruguay and West Germany, with the Germans triumphing 5-0 in a bad

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<sup>65</sup> "Hardly the ticket for World Cup fans", *The Observer*, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1966.

<sup>66</sup> "A ticket to Europe – for Sheffield", SLSL W7.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> "Gallant Swiss win the hearts of Hillsborough Crowd", SLSL W7.

tempered affair described as an 'afternoon of ripe melodrama' which saw two Uruguayan players dismissed and the team's ill-discipline roundly criticised in the press.<sup>69</sup>

With Hillsborough and Sheffield's role in hosting the tournament complete, attention focused on the progress of the England national team, ultimately culminating in a 4-2 victory over West Germany in a famous Wembley final victory, courtesy of a hat-trick by Geoff Hurst and a Martin Peters goal after trailing 1-0. In his study of national identity and the 1966 World Cup, Mason argues the England national team's triumph had 'a positive impact on national morale' by providing 'a temporary distraction from economic problems and a happy memory in worsening times'.<sup>70</sup>

In terms of legacies for the provincial centres including Sheffield, Gillett and Tennent have pointed to short term benefits of hosting the tournament but placed greater emphasis on 'the failure of the tournament to encourage tourism away from London', resulting in limited economic benefit and legacies beyond the capital despite the football having attracted significant numbers to the north.<sup>71</sup> Attendance statistics for the matches held in the 'North' reflected at least some success in bringing fans to the region, albeit often for the matches only. Following the semi-final between West Germany and Russia at Everton's Goodison Park, an article from *The Guardian* reported on the cup games in the north having brought over 600,000 through the turnstile, with Goodison Park boasting the highest total attendance in the north at 235,695, whilst Sheffield drew 'the second highest Northern total of 140,134' despite the article noting that 'the matches at this ground were in the Midlands group'.<sup>72</sup> The South Yorkshire press reflected positively on the tournament's impact on fans, whilst praising the positive role played by Sheffield in hosting the tournament. In his 'The cup of memories that will last for many years' article, journalist Colin Brannigan drew comparisons between the Wembley Final and Sheffield Wednesday's epic FA Cup Final defeat a couple of months previously in declaring 'the crowds have gone, but the memories will remain for many years to come'.<sup>73</sup> Another article reported the case of a German doctor describing hospitality in Sheffield as 'unique' and cited the Swiss Sports Editor of *Tribune de Lausanne* Valentin Borghini's praise of the local population who 'for among all the people I have met during my life I have never seen any who are so naturally kind and willing to help as the inhabitants of Sheffield'.<sup>74</sup> Other foreign visitors considered Sheffield 'a typically English town and that the people were warm, friendly and that nothing was too much trouble for them', whilst drawing comparisons with industrial towns along the Ruhr.<sup>75</sup> There were mixed reviews reported on the entertainment on offer and the cleanliness of

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<sup>69</sup> "Uruguay pay heavily for indiscipline", *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1966.

<sup>70</sup> T. Mason, "England 1966 and All That" in S. Rinke and K. Schiller (eds.), *The FIFA World Cup 1930-2010* (Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen), 197

<sup>71</sup> Gillett and Tennent, *Managing Sporting Events*, 121.

<sup>72</sup> "603,028 at Cup games in North", *The Guardian*, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1966.

<sup>73</sup> "The cup of memories that will last for many years...", SLSL W7.

<sup>74</sup> "City hospitality is 'unique', German tells Lord Mayor", SLSL W7.

<sup>75</sup> "Sheffield – such a friendly place", SLSL W7.

the city, whilst praise was forthcoming for Sheffield's new high rise residence and the blending between old and new buildings.<sup>76</sup> The latter element is particularly relevant given the City Council's World Cup handbook declaration that the tournament would afford an opportunity for the 'magnificent new buildings' to help support positive place promotion of a regenerated Sheffield, views later echoed in Gibbon's 1969 *Yorkshire: Britain's Biggest County* guidebook, discovering a 'picture now worthy of the frame'.<sup>77</sup>

Just as Sheldon has emphasised the success of the World Cup in changing cynical perceptions of Liverpool albeit with few commercial gains, Sheffield too emerged from the tournament with a renewed confidence and pride.<sup>78</sup> The August 1966 edition of *Service in Sheffield* included a special 'World Cup fortnight – A Truly Proud Sheffield' feature including photographs of the flagpoles and garden spaces installed for the tournament and reflected upon limited economic benefit for local traders but the important function in putting a 'new Sheffield' on the map:

Sheffield traders did not reap, in terms of cash, the rich harvest that the World Cup fortnight in Sheffield promised...But for most it was an investment in sharing in the projection of Sheffield as a proud, progressive and enterprising city. Dividends in this sense were truly handsome. Not only the rest of Britain but many parts of the world learned through the Press, radio and television of a new Sheffield – a busy, prosperous, industrial city replanned into a garden city that could more than hold its own for beauty and civic achievement with anywhere else in the country...This was impressively Sheffield on its mettle.<sup>79</sup>

The editorial of the Sheffield Junior Chamber of Commerce's *The Hub* publication diagnosed Sheffield 'a Victim of World Cup fever, a disease beneficial to everyone whether football fan or not', yet emphasised the need for the public to ensure that Sheffield did not 'sink back into its normal condition of semi-coma'.<sup>80</sup>

As the Sheffield City Council reflected upon the immediate legacies of World Cup fortnight, City Treasurer F.G. Jones felt Sheffield had got good value for money, reported that the event was under budget (approximately £14,000 compared to £17,000), and declared 'the atmosphere that was created, the good will that was engendered, and the publicity which Sheffield got as a result the expenditure was well worth while'.<sup>81</sup> The records of the organising World Cup Sub-Committee provide a useful insight into the relative successes and failures of components of World Cup fortnight and shed some light on what proved popular in promoting 'Steel City'. In September 1966 World Cup Liaison

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<sup>76</sup> "Sheffield – such a friendly place", SLSL W7.

<sup>77</sup> G. Gibbons, *Yorkshire: Britain's Biggest County* (London, Geographia Ltd, 1969), 6, cited in Russell, *Looking North*, 65.

<sup>78</sup> Sheldon, "Becoming a Man in Post-War Britain", 224.

<sup>79</sup> *Service in Sheffield* (August 1966), 18-19, Sheffield Local Studies Library, World Cup 1966: Articles relating to Sheffield, 380 S 1965-66.

<sup>80</sup> *The Hub*, Sheffield Junior Chamber of Commerce, Vol.15, no.3, August 1966), 14, Sheffield Local Studies Library, 380 S VOL.15. 1966-67.

<sup>81</sup> "World Cup cash was 'well spent'", SLSL W7.

Officer and Librarian John Bebbington reported on responses by the various organisations engaged in entertaining visitors and Sheffielders, spanning reactions that ‘ranged from completely negative to highly satisfactory’.<sup>82</sup> Events organised by the Corporation Departments seemingly had limited appeal to foreign visitors excepting the Abbeydale Works site with 800 of the 8,523 visitors coming from overseas, compared with the popular Exhibition of Civic Plate, attended by 13,350 people, attracting ‘relatively few foreign visitors’ and ‘none from overseas being noted’ amongst the 155 Park Hill tour attendees.<sup>83</sup> The Junior Chamber of Commerce’s “Made in Sheffield” did, however, prove successful in showcasing the ‘Steel City’ wares to an international audience, with 25% of its 5,000 visitors hailing from overseas, whilst the Stainless Steel Development Association’s ‘Stainless Steel Fortnight’ was hailed as a ‘great success’ with a number of visitors from overseas. The industrial visit statistics did little to dismiss the cynicism of the press, with no less than 22 of the 47 firms that permitted special visits having received none, whilst no direct business arising from the initiative were recorded.<sup>84</sup> As Gillett and Tennent have argued, the experience of Sheffield’s factories reflected wider patterns across the provincial host towns and cities, with tours organised to ‘exhibit Britain’s industrial wealth’ attracted disappointing numbers and created even less leads that might enhance international trade.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, Sheffield’s World Cup experience brought mixed fortunes from the perspective of long-term economic impact, a trend consistent with other provincial towns and cities. Yet, World Cup fortnight in Sheffield undoubtedly succeeded in creating positive perceptions of the ‘Steel City’ as a result of articulating traditional, industrial northernness that brought praise from visitors to the city, the business community and Sheffielders alike. Moreover, the important role of local and regional identity during the World Cup and positive responses to experience of the ‘Steel City’ illustrate the enduring ability of traditional northernness to exist alongside modern developments in the city and the value placed on local and regional identity whilst Sheffield was the subject of national and international focus. Further research to establish the extent to which northernness was evident and the result of a concerted effort in the other provincial northern towns and cities is necessary before the 1966 World Cup Finals can be considered to have played a pivotal role in articulating and exposing northernness to new audiences and shaping cultural legacies centred around unique encountering of the north. Yet, the initial indications from Sheffield’s experience during World Cup fortnight suggest that the tournament is a useful platform for understanding mechanisms,

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<sup>82</sup> “World Cup Competition, 1966: Report to the Chairman and Members of the Policy Committee”, 21<sup>st</sup> September 1966, World Cup [Miscellaneous Information Folder], Sheffield Local Studies Library, 797.41 Q.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Gillett and Tennent, *Managing Sporting Events*, 110, 117.

methods and responses to articulations of northernness across multiple public, private and voluntary organisations.