‘To Cross the Skager Rack’. Discourses, images, and tourism in early ‘European’ football: Scotland, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Scandinavia, 1898-1914

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Pre-publication print of an article to appear in Soccer and Society (forthcoming 2016). There may be small textual differences between this version and the published version. Any reference made to this paper should refer to the published version.

Abstract
This article examines the footballing relationship between the UK and Scandinavia during the period 1898-1914, specifically that between first-tier Scottish football clubs and the Danish Football Association (Dansk Boldspil Union, DBU) and the middle-class Copenhagen clubs which dominated it. The strictly amateur DBU and its city clubs invited British football clubs to Denmark on summer tours of the country to learn how to play the game; and, in turn, British clubs typically received a payment to come over. This article examines the common themes in both the Scottish and Danish press accounts of these tours, in particular the use of sketches, cartoons, and other imagery. Then, the political context of British and Scandinavian football during the period is examined, including Scotland’s anomalous relationship with FIFA, the new governing body of world football. Finally, this article looks at the touristic accounts of Scots whilst in Denmark, ones which typically sought out the familiar.

This article will examine the interrelationships between European clubs and associations during some of the early years of competitive association football. Its specific focus will be on the journeys of British football clubs to Scandinavia during the period 1898-1914, with a particular examination of Scottish clubs’ summer presence in Denmark during the time period. Whilst newspapers and club insiders were faintly cognisant of the future potential of club football as competition, Scottish clubs’ pre-First World War tours to Denmark largely had three purposes: 1) the procurement of technical football knowledge, especially from professional Scottish clubs; 2) money: both for the clubs who visited, and for the Danish Football Association (Dansk Boldspil Union, DBU) and the middle-class, amateur Copenhagen clubs which dominated its governance during the pre-War period; and 3) relaxation and enjoyment after the stresses of the domestic league and cup seasons.

Nevertheless, the broader meanings of these tours, which have largely been undiscussed within the English-language historiography of football, will also be analysed: namely, the media treatments of the events – including the cartoons, etchings, and photography used for the occasions – as well as some media accounts (typically written by the players
themselves) which emphasised the fraternal and touristic aspects of the trip. Tourism was especially important, as football’s entry into Denmark came on the back of well-established transport and trade links between the country and the UK’s North Sea ports, and thus precedents already existed for the well-trodden paths that British footballers would take towards discovering Denmark, its landscape, and its ‘history’. Here, then, the early years of ‘international’ club football in Europe can be viewed as a lens for viewing late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century British attitudes toward the idea of ‘the Continent’, and possible futures for the game. They also reveal elements of political insecurity within the broader British, Scandinavian, and European contexts, in these the earliest years of world football governance.

This piece builds upon an earlier work by the author, which examined the first three tours of Denmark by Scottish and British clubs: those of Glasgow’s Queen’s Park FC in 1898, 1900, and 1903.\(^2\) Yet this is one of the few articles in the English-language historiography of football which examined British clubs and pre-War European tours to any great extent. In the case of Denmark, this is perhaps especially surprising, as the nation was one of the first to face off against British national teams in a significant men’s football finals – those of the 1908 Olympics in London and the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, where ‘Great Britain’ squads, comprised of English amateurs, beat Denmark in the gold medal match.\(^3\) Very shortly after Stockholm, Nils Middleboe would become the first Dane to emigrate to British football.\(^4\) Grønkjær and Olsen believed that these tours, especially Queen’s Park’s first appearance in Copenhagen in 1898, indeed had a galvanising effect on the development of competitive football, non-professional in Denmark.\(^5\)

**The origins of Danish football?**
The early years of Danish football certainly had their fair share of connections to the UK, as has been previously discussed in the English-language historiography on the history of world football.\(^6\) One of the working myths on the foundation of Denmark’s (and continental Europe’s) first official association football club, Københavns Boldklub (KB) – a body founded in 1876 – involves the father of one pupil at Zealand’s Sorø Akademi, who in 1877 received a football as a birthday gift from his father, a merchant based at Hull. By 1878, he and other boys from Sorø Akademi and several other nearby schools began playing football in 1878 a
winter activity in lieu of cricket. Scottish footballers worked on the premise of a different myth: previous to Queen’s Park first 1898 tour, Queen’s Park’s Alexander Hamilton credited Dundee man JT Smart, a former KB member whilst resident in Copenhagen, as having introduced the game.\(^7\)

The truth is difficult to pinpoint: KB had its fair share of British members, in part due to the movement of people and goods which occurred between Denmark and the UK after the former’s defeat by Germany in 1864 at the end of the Second Schleswigian War. During the late nineteenth century, Denmark’s cities, especially Copenhagen, benefitted both from the explosion of the agricultural industry and easy access to international sea lanes. Copenhagen quadrupled in population to over half a million people by the end of the period.\(^8\) Families from well-to-do backgrounds would often send their children on tours of Britain, while some Danish companies had employees trained in the UK: it is therefore not likely that one single person, British or Danish, introduced association football to Denmark.\(^9\)

Part of what made Denmark and a logical location for early continental forays amongst British clubs, in fact, was its easy access from Edinburgh, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Hull, and the northeast coast of the UK. The Leith, Hull, and Hamburg Steam Packet Company was founded in 1836, and established a regular service between Copenhagen, Kristiansand, Hamburg, Hull, and Leith shortly after its management was taken over by James and Donald Currie in 1862. From the outset of these sailings, the company’s boats carried Danish exports of cattle to the UK; and, in the coming years, more state-of-the-arts ships had special compartments fitted for the transportation of butter, eggs, and bacon.\(^10\)

Queen’s Park’s 1898 visit to Denmark was the first trip to continental Europe made by a Scottish football club, and the second tour by major UK football clubs beyond British and Irish shores in as many years; in 1897, London’s Corinthians visited South Africa. Queen’s Park and Corinthians were the self-styled amateur clubs of Scotland and England, respectively, and their visits abroad took on ‘missionary’ connotations for commentators of the time. For Corinthians, their 1897 tour of South Africa was meant to solidify the bonds of British imperialism.\(^11\) England’s Clapton FC are widely acknowledged as the first to make the trip to the continent, having made a trip to Belgium in 1890, though it is probably difficult to identify who was first with any certainty.\(^12\) Queen’s Park, however, were interested
primarily in what they thought of as education, and in communing with the broad church of European amateur sport.\textsuperscript{13} Danish football would remain staunchly amateur until 1978.\textsuperscript{14}

**The tours and their sources**

Queen’s Park FC’s first visit to Denmark in 1898 was arranged through the visit of a Mr. Knudsen (often spelled with other variations) to the Scotland-Wales international at Fir Park, Motherwell on 19 March 1898. This set off a chain of correspondence between the club and the Danish Sports Federation (\textit{Dansk Idræts-Forbund}, DIF), which negotiated the club’s attendance at the International Festival of Sports and Gymnastics (\textit{Den Internationale Gymnastik- og Idrætsfest}), held in Copenhagen from 30 May to 2 June of that year.\textsuperscript{15} Essentially, Queen’s Park’s attendance at this staunchly amateur festival was a show of solidarity: Danish athletic and gymnastics culture at the time was militantly amateur and overwhelmingly middle-class, as were QP, who maintained their staunch anti-professionalism in the face of a Scottish and English football establishment that had been forced by clubs to accept professionalism.\textsuperscript{16} But there was also cynical edge to this, as the Festival sold Queen’s Park amateurism towards a more deliberate end: gate receipts, needed to make the event profitable after an initial grant from the Danish government.\textsuperscript{17} Queen’s Park would return in 1900 and 1903; but, despite the role played by the Glasgow club in instituting these contests -- and they would continue to come over to Denmark in the coming years -- the DBU was interested in better clubs, one which represented the professional vanguard of British football. Even by 1903, for their third clash against Queen’s Park, the DBU hired a professional coach: David Mitchell, formerly of Rangers and Kilmarnock, the first of a long line of British coaches who migrated abroad.\textsuperscript{18} When Newcastle United and Southampton arrived in Copenhagen in 1904 to participate in the Regatta Cup, it ushered in a highly lucrative era for Copenhagen’s ostensibly amateur city clubs. This was a self-perpetuating cycle which helped Copenhagen clubs maintain firm control over the DBU: most of association’s select squads which faced Queen’s Park were made up of members of KB, Akademisk Boldklub (AB), Frem, and Boldklubben 1893 (B93). These clubs drew from a highly middle-class, educated circle; and, aside from filling their coffers, British clubs’ tours of Denmark strengthened the power and prestige of the Copenhagen clubs.\textsuperscript{19}
By 1914, Queen’s Park were far from the only ones to have travelled down the Øresund. During the late 1900s and early 1910s, Copenhagen had become a popular closed-season destination for British football clubs, and not just ones based immediately on the North Sea coast. Table 1, derived from the DBU’s annual reports based in the Danish State Archives (Rigsarkivet), shows the extent to which British and Danish football interacted, specifically during the period 1910-14. Major Scottish clubs such as Celtic, Rangers, and Hearts were common visitors, as were big English sides such as Newcastle United, Liverpool, and Middlesbrough. The teams assembled to play the visitors, as before 1910, were typically a mix of players from KB, B93, AB, and Frem, with the odd DBU select squad. Matches against British clubs were a part of busy summer programmes, and were typically sandwiched around matches at home and away against a variety of mostly Swedish and German sides. Unlike with their continental counterparts, Danish clubs and select teams, previous to 1914, were not recorded as making a return journey. After Queen’s Park’s second visit to Denmark, in 1900, Scottish newspapers suggested inviting a DBU select team to the 1901 Glasgow International Exhibition, but this never happened.²⁰

Taylor has recently argued that historians, unlike those working within other disciplines within the broad umbrella of ‘sports studies’, have been relatively slow to embrace transnational research.²¹ To that end, a few precedents for transnational, bilingual research exist within the broad body of work on media accounts of mega events: specifically, the work of von der Lippe and MacLean, as well as Boyle and Monteiro.²² Additionally, Kowalski and Porter provide another rough template for this work in their historical examinations of football during the Cold War.²³ Several other articles discuss the influence of British football on later Nordic playing styles, but little English-language work has attempted to examine the transnational development of late-nineteenth-early-twentieth century European club football (inclusive of the UK) on two sides of the linguistic coin.²⁴

Research for this paper was performed via contemporary newspapers located in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, and the Danish Royal Library (Det Kongelige Bibliotek) in Copenhagen. At the same time, it utilises governing bodies’ documents housed in the Scottish Football Museum in Glasgow and the Danish State Archives in Copenhagen. The Scottish and British newspaper accounts of these
trips were written by the players and officials of the clubs, and this inevitably influences their content and primary motifs; thus, it is necessary to obtain accounts of these events from different provenances, primarily Danish ones. After all, as Brown has recently stated regarding the assumed link by Anglophone historians between the ‘informal Empire’ of Britain and the origins of South American association football, an assumed model of outward British diffusion typically ignores sources in languages other than English, as well as national contexts for sporting and cultural development.25

Sport was a popular topic in Scottish newspapers by the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. While the best coverage of Scottish football was initially based in weekly or bi-weekly sports-only titles such as *Scottish Referee* and *Scottish Sport*, by the 1890s populist titles like Glasgow’s *Evening Times* were beginning to make heavy inroads into the field, so much so that their sales were increasingly being driven by interest in sport.26 But Queen’s Park’s first three tours of Denmark, despite their novelty, were given very little coverage by both the sports papers and dailies. 1898 and 1903 featured some run-up and post-tour coverage, while 1900’s tour competed for column space with the relief of Mafeking during the Second South African War.27 Scottish newspaper accounts of the trips, even those written by travelling club members, often did not list names of the opposing team’s players, or sometimes even the name of the club beyond ‘the Danish team’; the term ‘Bolldklub’ (football club or ball club) was used interchangeably between different sides. Football supporters were not alone in facing this particular issue with regard to Danish affairs: the 1910 annual report of the British legation in Copenhagen noted a void in British papers’ coverage of Denmark:

> There is still no British correspondent in Copenhagen, and the British press continues to get its Danish news either from Danish correspondents... (some of whom are undoubtedly good), or from the German Press. Regret is frequently express in Danish journalistic circles that the British press is not better supplied with Danish news.28

Given this deficiency, it would be unrealistic to expect the likes of the *Evening Times* to cover these tours thoroughly, let alone *Scottish Referee*. In fact, in many respects, Referee’s lack of a travelling correspondent meant reducing the Danes to crude stereotypes: Figure 1 shows a cartoonist’s perception of Queen’s Park’s 1903 tour, one that sufficiently illustrates Denmark to be a ‘Viking’ land across an ocean. For British newspapers, Boolean searches
through digitally-available help only so much with getting around this black hole in coverage: since the best accounts of these tours were written by the players and administrators of these clubs, they ended up appearing in smaller, more sympathetic newspapers. In Glasgow, for instance, the *Glasgow Observer*, the city’s Catholic weekly, contained a great deal about Celtic’s post-1905 tours of Europe; for cross-town rivals Rangers, it was the Unionist title the *Glasgow News*. However, *Politiken*, the daily liberal Copenhagen broadsheet, devoted front pages towards these visits, often with sketches of the matches themselves. For instance, Figure 2 shows not just the match itself between Middlesbrough and a DBU select in Copenhagen on 9 May 1907, but also the surrounding media scrum, complete with photographers sitting on the touchline at goal. When Celtic visited Copenhagen in June that year, all three of their matches got sketches of their own (Figures 3, 4, and 5).

Some of *Politiken*’s sketches were admittedly humorous, such as Queen’s Park’s playing in the rain during their May 1908 visit, as shown in Figure 6. Others still display a clever use of reportage: for example, the paper’s numbered account of Rangers’ 1911 exploits against a side featuring KB and B93 members, as shown in Figure 7. Meanwhile, the illustration of Civil Service FC’s visit in May 1912, as shown in Figure 8 came with a far larger account than was given in the hometown *Edinburgh Evening News*. But if one looks beyond just the coverage of the stories themselves, and onto adverts for the games, one begins to notice certain patterns. Take, for instance, Celtic’s journey to Copenhagen to play a select team of KB, B93, Frem, and AB members, part of a longer journey around Scandinavia and continental Europe. Celtic were advertised as a ‘professional’ club; and, after general entry to their first match cost one kroner, the price fell to 50 øre for the second match (Figure 9, Figure 10). Meanwhile, Rangers’ June 1913 visit to the new Idrætsplads ground at Fælledparken in Østerbro, Copenhagen, offers an opportunity to view *Politiken*’s photographs of the match itself, and the well-dressed crowds which attended it. Hearts’ tour the year previous noted the ‘colossal’ size of the new ground, costed at £40,000: Jimmy Duckworth, Hearts’ trainer, was reported as saying that he had ‘never seen any track that comes near this one’. Two days later, an Edinburgh paper referred to the exclusivity of the crowd, stating: ‘The crowd included many members of the Danish Government and civic
dignitaries seated in the Tribune as the reserved section is called. It was half men and half women. Very few of the working class attend football.  

Beyond just information, however, both Scottish and Danish newspapers’ accounts of the trips served as an opportunity to further build upon pre-existing sporting identities; or, in some cases, as a means of displaying the ‘otherness’ of their foreign opponents. Scottish football clubs were certainly perceived to be upholding their own unique traditions, and this included Glasgow’s ‘Old Firm’, Rangers and Celtic. Rangers, shown in Figure 11 marching off to the continent for their 1913 tour of Scandinavia, are drawn to look distinctly like Orange marchers, not-so-subtly hinting at the club’s close relationship at the time with employees of the staunchly Protestant Harland and Wolff shipyards on the River Clyde. The narrative of the Norwegian leg of Celtic’s 1912 tour, meanwhile, featured as one of its centrepieces Roman Catholic mass at St. Olav’s Cathedral in Christiania (now Oslo). (In contrast to Celtic’s mass, given in Latin, a Protestant service in Christiania went well over the head of Hearts that same year; they had to settle for unintelligible Norwegian speakers and Bibles.) But the reputation of Queen’s Park as Scottish football’s middle-class tastemakers did not mesh with the Danish sketch artists’ perceptions of them. Upon playing the first match of their May 1900 tour to Denmark – which was played in front of the Danish royal family, including Prince Christian (the future King Christian X), Princess Maud, Prince Carl (the future King Haakon VII of Norway), and Princess Aleksandrine – Politiken’s artists drew a decidedly more common, somewhat foreign Queen’s Park lining up to meet Prince Christian, as seen in Figure 12. The Danish press, then, like their Scottish/British counterparts, viewed the ‘other’ as something a bit more alien.

**Political football?**

The presence of royalty and other Danish government officials at these matches means that they cannot be considered wholly apolitical. Hearts, during their May 1912 tour to Denmark, even witnessed the funeral of King Frederick VIII, whose death forced the postponement of their first match. Yet, whilst the Scottish newspapers accounts of the post-1905 matches noted the presence of the British ambassadors and other diplomatic staff at these events, records of the British embassies in Copenhagen, as well as those in Oslo and Stockholm – housed at the National Archives in Kew – barely mentioned football in any context. This
apparent lack of explicit political interest in football did not mean that the context of these visits did not exist within a greater political context – far from it. Wider European geopolitics were creeping into football by this point. The formation of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) in 1904 featured both Denmark and Sweden, but none of the home nations. England joined only when Daniel Woolfall was made FIFA president in 1906, and applications by the Scottish Football Association (SFA), the Football Association of Wales (FAW), and the Irish Football Association (IFA) were rejected by FIFA members who feared a precedent for similar ‘stateless nations’ – Germany’s states, in particular – being admitted into the Federation.37 The SFA, the FAW, and the IFA were not admitted until 1910, largely through a grandfather clause, and FIFA sought to protect this distinction: for instance, in 1911, SFA member club Aberdeen was warned by FIFA not to participate in summer friendly matches against teams affiliated with the Bohemian Football Association.38 Before Hearts’ voyage 1912 voyage to Scandinavia, the Edinburgh Evening News made reference to Celtic, Rangers, and Aberdeen, who the year before had ‘taken advantage of the raising of the embargo upon Continental tours by Scottish clubs’.39 Even at this point, Scottish clubs had their first taste of FIFA’s attempts to establish governance of world football, and the complexities of the UK’s unique privileges complicated Scottish participation in international football against the Nordic countries: whilst a bitter professional/amateur feud raged within the British Olympic Association (BOA) in the run-up to the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, the BOA vetoed a plan from 1912’s organisers which would have allowed England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland to compete separately in the competition’s football tournament. As in 1908, Great Britain’s Olympic football team was comprised of English players selected solely by the English Football Association (FA).40 Quite tellingly, within the DBU’s 1913 annual report, Denmark’s gold medal match at the 1912 Olympics against Great Britain (which the Danes would lose 4-2) is recorded as being against ‘England’.41 Whilst Danish newspapers clearly recognised that Scottish clubs were ‘Scottish’, Scotland itself had a long way to go as being recognised as a separate sporting polity outside of the UK.

Beyond this, war and muscular statecraft were certainly motifs in the Scottish accounts of these tours. While the press accounts of Queen’s Park’s first 1898 tour are sparse, the build-
up in Scottish Sport made no bones about Glasgow’s middle-class amateurs crossing into a friendly enemy’s territory:

[Queen’s Park] cross the foam on Thursday from Leith to one of the finest cities in the north of Europe. It is strongly fortified, and is enclosed by a wall, the circuit of which is five miles, but though the Q.P. are carrying war into an enemy’s country, we fancy the gates will be opened quickly enough to them. Within the walls they can study the arts of peace, and a visit to the royal library and museum, if for nothing else but to see Thorwaldsen’s sculptures, will repay them.\(^42\)

Upon their return to Scotland, one of Scottish Sport’s columnists, ‘The Misanthrope’, even joked about a future where war was sublimated in favour of football: ‘I’d rather have a jolly good old-fashioned war any day to a modern football match, and surely nations would never sink so low as to prefer the latter to the former. But, mark you, that is the direction in which things are tending’.\(^43\) Scottish Referee was more explicit about the martial context.

Upon Queen’s Park’s return home, in a piece headlined ‘Scots Wha Hae!’:

As we anticipated, Queen’s Park have nobly upheld their own and their country’s honour in the land of the Dane. Our cablegrams from our correspondent at the seat of the War tell of victory all along the lines, goal, penalty, and touch, and utter subjugation, if not annihilation of the enemy.\(^44\)

A decade later, Referee saw reasons for optimism in Queen’s Park’s 1908 voyage, especially as Queen’s Park’s draw in its first match was held up as an indication that Danish football was pulling level, stating:

The time may come when we will have many international contests, and so assist to preserve the ‘entente cordiale’ with all countries, and any disputes which could not be settled at The Hague might be quite well decided on the football field. The question of reduction of armaments would also be solved.\(^45\)

Events in Europe, however would quickly render such feelings obsolete, and perhaps in retrospect look dangerously naïve.

Beyond just Denmark, and within the regional context of Scandinavian football, Scottish clubs noted that trips to Norway in particular were political, at least in the minds of their Norwegian hosts, whose union with Sweden broke up in 1905. The Norwegian Football Association (Norges Fotballforbund, NFF) was not formed until 1902, and the government was keen to promote sport as a means of competing internationally against Sweden, the primary barometer by which Norwegian sport (especially football) was judged.\(^46\) At that
point, Norway had hired their own British coach, former Manchester United man Vincent Hayes.\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Glasgow News} noted during Rangers’ 1911 visit to Christiania that: ‘There is a big effort being made here to make the game popular, the Government giving a grant of £50 to help towards the expenses of the two games’.\textsuperscript{48} The next year, when Celtic visited, \textit{Glasgow Observer’s} ‘Man in the Know’, quite probably a high-ranking club official, stated:

I may say that there is the most intense jealousy between Norway, Sweden and Denmark in matters political and imperial, and this feeling extends to football. The game was introduced to Norway only ten years ago, and had but a brief spell of life, languishing and dying in the short space of two years. But when the natives saw the progress made by Swedes and Danes, they took heart, engaged English professionals as coaches, fitted up a tidy enclosure, and went into the pastime with as much zest as they impart to their great winter games of skiing and skating.\textsuperscript{49}

The storm clouds were already on the horizon. In one of the few references to competitive sport in the records of Britain’s Nordic embassies, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British ambassador to Sweden (future envoy to the US), reflected establishment concerns about the country’s poor performance at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm:

Although British subjects were successful in what we should generally consider as the most important events, lawn tennis, football, swimming, shooting, rowing, the mile and the marathon races, they failed in those competition which required long technical training of a highly specialized characters and the system of scoring adopted in the Olympian games by which each event is of equal value, results in what appears to be a rather ignominious conclusion for England. Consequently our prestige has suffered to a certain extent, especially in the military competition in which, partly to bad luck, our representation did not obtain distinction. The question naturally presents itself – is it worthwhile to go through the trouble and expense of completion unless the British competitors can be trained to the same extent and degree as their foreign rivals? This question will naturally be carefully considered by the military authorities \[by\] the next Olympic meeting which will take place in Berlin.\textsuperscript{50}

At least partially, then, the post-1918 treatments of these Scottish tours (or lack thereof) can be explained by the First World War, and the shifting geopolitics of football at the time. Richard Robinson’s flawed 1920 history of Queen’s Park, for instance, saw the club’s failed attempts during the period to initiate friendly matches with German clubs as clairvoyant; it was hard to imagine, stated Robinson, ‘that the classic slopes of Hampden [could have ever] been desecrated by the foot of a Hun… The vileness of the race was not then known, or even suspected’.\textsuperscript{51} Waquet and Vincent state that it was not until the creation of inter-allied tournaments during the Great War that football and rugby became truly international
The period 1898-1914, then, was a highly awkward time in the broader narrative of international association football.

Tourism

By the late 1900s, Denmark was no longer the only stopping point for most British clubs who made their way to continental Europe. Nevertheless, the footballers who visited Denmark and other countries were not there solely for footballing reasons. Aside from the commercial and cultural reasons football clubs made these trips, these trips were also recreational: they served as players’ rewards for a hard-fought season in the top tiers of British football. Tours and holidays had long been a hallmark of Victorian football, at least in Scotland: whilst many matches were deliberately arranged with major English sides in order to secure significant crowds and gate receipts (and occasionally to laud Scots who had become professional footballers in England), other winter and summer tours were planned specifically with relaxation and occasionally hedonism in mind. Football in Victorian Scotland, after all, existed in a highly masculine, fraternal context which encouraged after-match (over)sociability. In fact, not all tours were so lucrative for the travelling teams: the Edinburgh Evening News’s ‘Diogenes’ even hinted that Hearts’ 1912 Scandinavian tour — hurt at least somewhat by the death of Frederick VIII — was not primarily for money:

[Hearts’] trip was pre-eminently a holiday outing, intended more for this than anything else, to give players a change of air and scene after a very arduous season. It was not a money-making business; in fact so far as I can gather it will cost the club a trifle. However, it was, within limits, a great success. The members of the party saw some strange sights, they made some friends, they played some good football.

It is not surprising then that in Scottish newspaper accounts of the trips, the sea voyages themselves, as well as the destinations visited along the way, were a part of players’ and administrators’ narratives of what occurred. Huggins states that, despite the ‘sporting tour’ being a common theme of the historiography of British and Irish sport (particularly in an imperial context), the opportunity of players to enjoy themselves as tourists in these places has been left mostly unexamined. This theme is currently being developed further by Taylor, who recently gave a paper on accounts of foreign tourism in interwar British football players’ autobiographies.
With the lack of English-language scholarly historiography of British tours of Denmark during the period, it can be difficult to find evidence of what exactly the common routes of travel were for Britons, including Scots, who found themselves on Zealand’s Øresund coast. It is doubtful, however, that these Scottish footballers went too far off of the beaten tourist path. The Leith, Hull, and Hamburg Steam Packet Company’s 1896 tourist guide to its destinations included a map of Copenhagen’s, as well as description of its sights:

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, with 300,000 inhabitants, is very beautifully situated on the Sound. The principal attractions are: -- the Thorvaldsen Museum, built in the form of a hollow square, with the grave of the great sculptor in the quadrangle, and containing all his principle works and many paintings and relics illustrative of his life; the Fruekirke (sic), with Thorvaldsen’s Christ and the Twelve Apostles; the famous Museum of Northern Antiquities; the Ethnographical Museum of Northern Antiquities; the Danske Folke-Museum; the Royal Picture Gallery; the Castle of Rosenborg, with a chronological collection illustrative of the reigns of the Danish kings from the 16th century; and, in the evening, the Tivoli Gardens – the favourite place of entertainment for all Copenhagen. Go up also to the top of the Round Tower of the Trinity Church by winding ascent that Peter the Great is said to have ridden up on horseback. The view from the summit is a very interesting one. 57

While the guide did recommend voyages outside of Copenhagen, they were typically confined to the immediate environs of the Danish capital, particularly those destinations based on the Øresund:

Interesting excursions can be taken to the Deer Park (Dyrehave), Charlottenlund, Klampenborg, the palace of Frederiksborg, arranged as a National Historical Museum, and by rail or carriage through the pleasant meadows and shady beech woods of Zealand, so often described in the stories of Hans Christian Anderssen. A very pleasant trip can be made taking the steamer to Elsinore, where Hamlet’s grave may be visited, and returning by the railway. Roskilde also, with its fine old Cathedral and pleasant surroundings, is well worth a visit. 58

Scottish clubs’ tours of the sights and sounds whilst in Denmark did not deviate far beyond these contours. In fact, at least in part, Queen’s Park’s first visit can be described as part of a package holiday. The organisers of the International Festival gave participant athletes free entry and travel to a variety of attractions and destinations in Copenhagen, and on Zealand’s west coast. The awards ceremony of the Festival was held in the Arenatheatret of Tivoli Gardens, the opulent amusement park located in central Copenhagen, and the delegates were each given a ticket for free entry. 59 Delegates were also given steamship tickets to the Festival’s after-party, held at Skodsborg, just north of Klampenborg. 60 Robinson’s accounts of the Skodsborg dinner – and another dinner in Copenhagen the night
before – featured Queen’s Park in the central role, with Carl Melchior, one of the DIF’s top officials, proposing a toast to the ‘Scottish Football Team’, and Charles Campbell, after a speech, toasting the Danish football squad with ‘Highland honours, much to the astonishment and amusement of the Danes’.  

It was the environs north of Copenhagen, such as the leafy, well-to-do holiday villages of Skodsborg and Klampenborg, as well as footballers’ first approaches into Copenhagen from the north of the Øresund (via Hull and Kristiansand), that Scottish commentators attempted to place within the framework of the familiar. For the west of Scotland’s footballers, the Øresund and its shores were used as a stand-in for the Firth of Clyde and its coast, one of Scotland’s premier tourist regions, and a short distance from its largest city, Glasgow. The region certainly had its fair share of activities, and many of them were shared by the different footballers who went there, including: deer hunting on the King of Denmark’s land, based around his grand hunting lodge, Eremitageslottet (The Hermitage); nearby golfing at Københavns Golf Klub; and fun and games at the nearby Dyrehavsbakken (‘The Deer Park Hill’), an amusement park located on the royal estate. The golf course, in 1911, in fact had as its professional a Musselburgh native. At the start of Celtic’s June 1912 voyage to Scandinavia, ‘Man in the Know’ noted that: ‘even our invalids were able to crawl up on deck a few hours before landing and view the glories of the Sound, which was just our own Firth of Clyde over again’. Of Queen’s Park’s first journey to Denmark, Robinson wrote of ‘Skotsborg’ as being ‘doon the water’. Scottish Referee, on Celtic’s 1912 trip to Denmark, referred to ‘Scotsbord’ as ‘A LOVELY WATERING PLACE’. Rangers, on their 1913 trip to the country, walked from Skodsborg, ‘a delightful holiday resort’, into the forests south of the town going towards Klampenborg. ‘It was a really delightful walk through vast wooded territory’, proclaimed the author for the Glasgow News piece, ‘which, had it not been for the beeches instead of firs, would have reminded us of Bonnie Scotland’. On that same trip, Rangers’ players, along with their hosts, drove to Lyngby, and from there sailed to Frederiksdal. One can read too much into this recognition, however: the familiarity of landscape was not reserved solely for Denmark. After the Danish leg of Celtic’s 1912 tour of Scandinavia, Celtic’s visit to Norway prompted similar observations. The member of Celtic’s party who gave his thoughts to Scottish Referee wrote that ‘cruising in and out of the islands which make up the fjords is a perfect treat, and makes one think of the Kyles of Bute at their
(In general, this participant was more convinced of the kinship between Scotland and Norway, also stating that: ‘The people here are much the same as “oor ain folks”, and are much more reserved than the Danes, quieter in all their actions and ways’.68)

The sights and sounds of Copenhagen itself were taken in more on their own terms, though even here, the footballers did not stray far beyond the well-established tourist routes. After its use in the International Festival in 1898, Tivoli Gardens certainly featured in these accounts. Hearts were entertained at the De Strasse Hotel opposite the Gardens after their defeat to their Danish hosts in May 1912.69 The Celtic team would meet up with their Danish opposites at the amusement park a month later, during their tour.70 Rangers’ members, along with their hosts, certainly enjoyed Tivoli Gardens whilst in the city in June 1913: ‘most of our time’, stated the Glasgow News’ correspondent ‘was spent on the Joy Wheel, [with] players of both sides trying their luck to the amusement of everybody around’.71 The clubs mentioned other sites in their travels, such as the Royal Library and the Thorsvalden Museum.72 Rangers’ players’ June 1913 account of their shopping even hints at the highly gendered, masculine environment these tours took part in:

> On Saturday we spent the morning looking for presents to take home. This is about the worst job – after flittings. I may tell you we are two minutes’ walk from the “Buchanan Street of Copenhagen” [a major Glasgow shopping thoroughfare], and it took the best of two hours to make our purchases.73

But no other Copenhagen location was as central to the narratives of the footballers and their charges as the Carlsberg Brewery. Rangers, during their 1911 visit, were given a tour of the Brewery by one of its employees, Mr. Hennison, ‘who was born in Greenock, and has a warm side to Scotland’.74 When Hearts visited Denmark in May 1912, they too received a tour, despite the death of the King Frederick VIII a few days before.75 Celtic, in their visit to the Brewery a month later, were noted as taking a special interest to its ‘wonderful machinery’, with several members of ‘The Trade’ being present. (Quite a few of Celtic’s members continued to be associated with the public house or whisky trades.) Celtic’s members also noted the philanthropic aims of the Jacobsen family, who owned the Brewery, and patronised various projects of the Danish government.76
Conclusion

Scottish commentators at the time sensed that there was a possible future in this kind of international football. Even after Queen’s Park’s 1898 tour, Scottish Sport’s A Misanthrope had a prophetic vision of a globalised game, albeit within a highly regional, European context:

...before long we will have clubs advertising for players thus: – ‘No one need apply who cannot speak every European language; preference given to those who can swear at a referee in Gaelic, and tell a linesman he’s a blanketty blank of blanket in the various German dialects.’ We’re getting on; we’re getting on!’

Celtic manager Willie Maley, meanwhile, was far more explicit in foreseeing a future where international club football played a central role. However, whilst Maley remembered Celtic’s pre-First World War tours fondly, his ultimate dream was a very different one, which he fulfilled in 1931:

[Aside from various sites in Europe] Celtic have also visited America and Canada, where in 1931 they made a tour of New York, Baltimore, Chicago, Brooklyn, Boston, Fall River, Detroit, Pawtucket, Toronto, and Montreal.

This tour had been the dream of the early Celtic pioneers, and those privileged to travel on this occasion can never forget the hearty welcome received from their exiled friends from Scotland and Ireland. It was a real breath of home to those folks over the water and an event that will be a life-long memory to all concerned.

So, while Maley could certainly see the wider commercial potential of such tours when targeted to the right audience, ‘European’ football, even as late as the 1930s, was still not yet seen a prize worth fighting for, or anything beyond a recreational opportunity for Scotland’s and the UK’s major clubs.

This article, while examining what could be described as a dead end in the history of ‘European’ football, has nevertheless established that British football culture, by 1900, was increasingly beginning to acknowledge and seek sporting contacts with an ‘outside world’, towards a variety of ends. It also establishes that Danish and other Scandinavian football clubs and associations had their reasons for seeking out highly lucrative and occasionally politically important relationships with the UK’s major clubs. Perhaps most importantly, however, it establishes that forms of cultural exchange took place amongst the British and Scandinavian footballers who interacted with each other: be this through pragmatic
footballing knowledge, tourism, or in mutual critiques of foreigners’ otherness which existed in the newspapers of respective countries. Given the diverse summer programmes assembled by Copenhagen’s major football clubs by the early 1910s, and given the other destinations visited by British clubs during this period, one can assume that this article is a highly incomplete example of what is out there with regard to the potential of transnational research during this period of football’s history.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded through the Annie Dunlop Endowment at the University of Glasgow, School of Humanities.

I am very grateful to Allan Bennich Grønkjær for all of his assistance with this project. I am also grateful to David Speed, historian of Heart of Midlothian FC, for lending me some of the club’s historical materials.

I am also indebted to the following people for their help with this piece: Dr. Catriona M.M. Macdonald and Dr. Martin MacGregor at the University of Glasgow; Dr. Kay Schiller at Durham University; Professor Matthew Taylor at De Montfort University; Professor John Bale and Professor Verner Møller at Aarhus University; Roy Hay at Deakin University; and Richard McBrearty at the Scottish Football Museum.

References


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International team matches in *italics*.

Sources: RAK, 10519, Dansk Boldspil Union (DBU), Årsberetninger (annual reports) (1910-1969): DBU Aarsberetning 1910; DBU Aarsberetning 1911; DBU Aarsberetning 1912; DBU Aarsberetning 1913; DBU Aarsberetning 1914.
Figure 1. Scottish Referee’s view of Queen’s Park’s 1903 voyage to Denmark

Source: Scottish Referee, 29 May 1903.
Figure 2. Middlesbrough versus a DBU select in Copenhagen.

Source: Politiken, 10 May 1907.
Figures 3, 4, and 5. Sketches from Celtic’s tour of Copenhagen, 1907.

Source: Politiken, 4 June 1907.
Nejrøvante Skotter

Det vidste nokså, at det Hold, der kunde stilles med fra dansk Side, ikke var så store som Ouslagers, men at det skulde få så mange Præg som 5 Maal mod 1 var ikke Ventet. Til Undskyldning tønner, at der maatte laves om paa det faldte Øjeblik, fordi et Par Spilere sendte Affrod, men alligevel — de kunde have klaret sig bedre, om de havde taget fat med noget mere Energi.

Om Kampens Forløb henviser vi til Referatet S. 2.
Fra den sidste Skottekamp i gaar.

Et Held for Skotterne.


"Om Spilletens Forløb henviser vi til baasstænde Referat."
Figure 6. Queen’s Park in Copenhagen in 1908.

Source: Politiken, 16 May 1908.
Figure 7. Action shots of Rangers during their 1911 tour.

Source: Politiken, 9 June 1911.
Figure 8. Civil Service FC in Copenhagen, 1912.

Source: Politiken, 6 May 1912.
Figures 9 and 10. The price advertised for tickets for Celtic’s second 1912 match in Denmark is cheaper than the first.

Sources: Politiken, 1 June 1912; Politiken, 4 June 1912.
Figure 11. Rangers, marching to Scandinavia for their 1913 summer tour.

Source: *Scottish Referee*, 30 May 1913.
Figure 12. Queen’s Park meet the future King of Denmark, 1900.

Source: *Politiken*, 23 May 1900.
1 Quote from *Evening Times*, 3 June 1914. This paper also uses elements from a previous conference paper by the same author: ‘Scottish football, Europe, and “North Sea” cultural exchange’, given at the annual meeting of the British Society of Sports History, Glasgow, September 2012.

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13 McDowell, ‘Queen’s Park FC in Copenhagen’.

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15 McDowell, ‘Queen’s Park FC in Copenhagen’.


17 McDowell, ‘Queen’s Park FC in Copenhagen’.

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