

At the beginning of the twentieth century soccer was the most popular game in the western world. In the space of a few decades it had become the most widely supported team game in Britain, watched and played by more people than any other sport. Yet here was a game with strong traditional folk roots; a game with a history which stretched back to the late Middle Ages. In the course of the nineteenth century football was transformed, mainly within British public schools, and then became the codified and disciplined game of urban working men. The passion for the game spread from one town to another; a passion which, though familiar today, was new in the years after 1870. Thereafter the game spread rapidly to much of the world: Europe, South America and a host of other societies. This book tells the story of the rise of this remarkable British game – and the way it became the game of the masses across the world.

In the wealth of literature about football published in recent years, no other book provides so concise and colourful an account as *The People's Game*. First published in 1975, the book was completely rewritten when reissued in 1994 to incorporate the findings of scholars and writers on the game over the past 20 years. It is a revealing account of football, but also an insight into those broader social changes which made the game so attractive during the last century. This edition features a new chapter investigating the most recent developments in the world of football.

James Walvin is a professor of history at the University of York and has written extensively on modern social history and the history of slavery in the Americas.