

# Leisure



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The wonderfully evocative and poignant photographs in this book show our forebears at their leisure. The introduction of shorter working hours and bank holidays in the late Victorian era meant that for the first time many working people had time on their hands, away from the grind of daily life. In 1938 the Holidays with Pay act created the first statutory right to paid holidays and led to the growth of what we now know as the leisure industries. This book shows how people, often in their thousands and tens of thousands, made the most of their new found freedom. The early years of the Twentieth Century also saw the rise in the two mass entertainment industries which would go on to dominate English recreation for the next 100 years: cinema and football. The book includes unique archive images from the Odeon Cinema Collection, showing how the new technology of cinema was quickly embraced by the masses. It also shows the immense crowds the fledgling sport of football was already attracting - encapsulated by a sea of flat capped men sardined together on the terraces of a football ground. At the other end of the social spectrum we see the River Thames at Henley packed with boats for the Regatta, and hunters chasing down a fox. Most of all we see a nation beginning to break free from the shackles of industrialisation and the horrors of two worlds wars, and beginning enjoy itself.

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