

Cone, Carl B., ed. *Hounds in the Morning: Sundry Sports of Merry England*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1981. Pp. 216. Notes, illustrations. \$16.00.

The Sporting Magazine, published from 1792 until 1870, was England's first exclusively sporting magazine. Cone's work is a collection of pieces with accompanying illustrations from 1792 to 1836, designed to cover what he considers the real formative period of modern sport. He writes that "this collection of articles illustrates the variety, vigor, and joyous exuberance of the youth of the sporting life . . . Noticeably absent was the oppressive heaviness and surly seriousness weighing upon modern sports, amateur or professional" (p. 26).

While the articles Cone has chosen are appropriate for giving the flavor and scope of sporting activities of the landed gentry at the dawning of the modern era of English sport, considerable interest can be turned to his 26-page introduction and four-page conclusion, for it is here that he tries to paint a broad picture of what was happening in English sport at that time, summarizing the

significance of the period and the changes which signaled its end. He succeeds admirably, in part because he reaches, as any good historian must, far past the limited confines of sports interests outward across the fabric of English life as it passed through the Regency to the verge of Victoria's reign. Though his time-frame ends before she took the throne, as he points out, the pattern of "Victorian" ideals and practices was already becoming firmly established, needing only her later dour disposition to give it a name and image.

In his introduction and conclusion, Cone briefly discusses such ideas as sport as an expression of the national character, noting that sport was seen as justified because it demonstrated the English superiority and character, compared to other nations. The social distinctions were maintained in sports, for sport was at best a limited social equalizer. "The barriers between classes remained firm. . . An athlete might be recognized and applauded for his prowess but his social orbit was restricted . . . Sports had no mission to be a levelling influence, and men did not engage in them as a means of ascending the social ladder. English society did not aspire to egalitarianism" (p. 4).

Cone discusses the relative popularity and place of different sporting activities of the time, noting that the equestrian activities of the landed gentry were then considered the most prestigious. He briefly discusses the development of the first "star" sportswriters, such as Pierce Egan and Nimrod (Charles James Apperley), and their effect on the development of sports journalism. He comments also on the activities on the "margins" of sport, such as horse dealing and gambling, including the sporting press as a more "acceptable" marginal sporting activity.

The piece on the death of Lady Salisbury in 1835 is used to symbolize the passing of an era, the "youth of English sporting life in general . . . Her life of eight-five years almost exactly spanned the first period in the history of modern sports" (p. 201). By then England was undergoing vast social and political changes: It was a nation increasingly industrialized and urbanized as the new railways closed off the countryside, spelling the end to an England open for the traditional field sports.

Cone shows a nation rapidly changing from rural to urban, a shift of far-reaching consequences. The rural sporting ethos was passing away as the villages dwindled and the economic importance of the landed gentry decreased; the traditional sporting activities were coming to be more nostalgic than consequential in local life. Religious and civil influences were changing accepted practices from the old "bloody sports" to a taste for less cruel activities more fitting to the sensitivities of city-dwellers affected by growing straitlaced ideals. A new urban sporting ethos was developing, leading gradually to mass spectator sports and highly organized activities. A shift came about from taking the people to the event, as in the early seat of English sporting activities in

the villages and fields to taking the event to the people, moving the activities to large urban centers for the convenience of masses of paying customers

Cone's prior published works over several decades attest to the strength of his background in the England of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is a background refreshing to encounter in a sport historian attempting to give a theoretical description (however brief) of a critical time in the development of sport. His thoughtful, broad comments underline the need for the sport historian to be widely and deeply educated in history and the liberal arts, particularly social history—sport must be set in the context within which it appears, not lifted out and presented bare as a cherry minus the complicated sundae it decorated. We need to gain some sense of the life of the people and its effect upon developments in sport, as Fernand Braudel has long suggested for historical research. This is a very worthy effort, interesting to the student and thought-provoking for the scholar.

While this is scarcely untrod ground, covering as it does the central time-span of Robert W. Malcolmson's *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*, and leading into the time of Peter Bailey's *Leisure and Class in Victorian England, 1830-1885*, both of those valuable works are more concerned with sporting activities in social classes below that of the landed gentry shown by Cone. His work is welcome for its help in showing the sport of the gentry through their eyes, filling some of the functions Marcia Vale filled for her chosen time of 1580 to 1630 in *The Gentleman's Recreations*. Cone's broadly-sketched summaries of English society in transition and its effect upon sport's development make the reader wish to have those portions expanded at some later time, for we have too few sport historians with a genuine depth of background in the social history which they seek to examine. It is a blessed relief from the seemingly endless studies of Puritan philosophy and local baseball history with which we are bombarded. Thus, these brief excursions are small moments of joy for the student seeking to make some sense of the jumbled perplexity of the early modern sporting developments in England, so full of consequence for later North American sport.

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