

Daly, John A. *Elysian Fields: Sport, Class and Community in Colonial South Australia: 1836-1890*. Adelaide, South Australia: The Author, 1982, Pp. 229. Bibliography, illustrations, notes and index. \$28.95 (Available from the author at 81 Onkaparinga Rd., Bridgewater, South Australia 5155. \$2 mailing charge.)

South Australia was unique among the Australian colonies in being established as a free settlement without any transported convict labour. This had a distinct effect on the development of society there and hence, according to Daly's analysis, on the pattern and character of the colony's sporting activity.

Sport came off the boats with the first English migrants to South Australia in 1836. Within a year or so of the founding of the colony the people of Adelaide, South Australia's capital, had witnessed cricket matches, horseracing, rifle-shooting, hunting and a boating regatta, all of them established English sports. In pursuing these activities, of course, the immigrant Englishmen (by definition women were excluded from such manly sports) were no different from the Scots who organised Caledonian games, from the Irish who celebrated with St. Patrick's Day sports, or from the Germans who brought their skittles and crossbows with them. However, the numerical superiority of the English, coupled with their determination to establish a "new Britannia in the Antipodes," made sure that their sports dominated and became accepted as South Australian. One point not fully explored by Daly is the extent to which

developments in English sports later in the century, particularly commercialization, professionalization, and gamemoney spectator sport, were also transferred to the colony.

Some of the English, however, were seeking more than a nostalgic link with home. They wished to recreate the English class structure in South Australia and saw sport as a means of demonstrating their social superiority. Partly this was done by keeping some sports, such as polo and hunting, socially exclusive by means of costs and strict social vetting, but later the patronage of lower-class sports clubs and associations was used as a means of displaying their social position. By reference to contemporary statements and by an examination of club and committee membership lists Daly constructs a strong case for the existence of class distinction in South Australian sport. He also shows that the supposedly inferior classes did not react with deference to the flaunting of this symbolic supremacy: no doubt wearing hunting pink to chase kangaroos or full morning dress to hot, dusty race-meetings effectively distinguished the elite from the masses, but it also opened them to ridicule. Two points, perhaps, would have been worth following up. First, other groups were also acting as patrons to working-class sport: employers wanting to promote company loyalty, publicans wishing to attract a drinking clientele, trade unions cementing their membership, and various religious sects offering their brand of Muscular Christianity. Secondly, the formal political role of the elite could have been examined: to what extent were they responsible for subsidies being given to horse-racing and rifle-shooting and for the legislation of the on-course totalisator which revolutionized the South Australian racing industry?

Most of the book concentrates on metropolitan sports, perhaps inevitably so because of the dominant role of Adelaide in the organization of South Australian sport, but Daly does not neglect the country towns. He shows that success or failure in the sporting arena became the yardstick by which many communities judged themselves, particularly when the opponents were from a neighbouring location. Some of the friction which arose clearly demonstrates that nineteenth-century country sport was modern international sport writ small.

Within his self-imposed framework, Daly provides an excellent case-study of sport and society. It could have been improved by a comparison with the other Australian colonies—though perhaps this is really another book—to bring out the particular contributions of South Australia's sex-ratio and extent of religious non-conformity. The major omission from the book, however, is not the author's fault but that of the available source material. Although Daly has searched diligently for data, the selective reportage of the unearthed material means that we learn a good deal about organized sport but much less about informal sport. Whether the majority's participation in sport was by scratch games of cricket and ad hoc football kick-about is not known, and perhaps never will be.

Serious sports history is relatively new in Australia and as yet cannot be part of the cumulative historical process in which scholars build upon the

work of their predecessors. Inevitably many publications still concentrate simply on setting the record afloat, but, although John Daly has compiled a mass of material, for which sports historians will be grateful anyway, he goes beyond a chronological catalogue and provides an analytical study. As track coach of the Australian Olympic team it was appreciated that he knew his sport; it is now equally clear from this revised Ph.D. dissertation that he knows his sport history. He is to be congratulated on the production of this fine book, illustrated by a superb collection of photographs, which shows that sport in South Australia was not just fun and games but had major social significance.

Flinders University of South Australia

Wray Vamplew