

Book Reviews

COX, RICHARD WILLIAM **The Internet as a Resource for the Sports Historian.** Frodsham, Eng.: The British Society of Sports History and Sports History Publishing, 1995. Pp. vi, 62. Figures, appendices. £7.50 or \$10 pb (BSSH members £5.00 or \$7.50). Sports History Publishing, 13 Bradley Lane, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6QA UK

COX, RICHARD WILLIAM **History of Sport: A Guide to the Literature and Sources of Information** Frodsham, Eng.: The British Society of Sports History and Sports History Publishing, 1994, Pp. x, 101. Notes, appendices, index. £16.50 or \$25 pb (BSSH members £10.00 or \$15).

COX, RICHARD WILLIAM **Index to Sporting Manuscripts in tHUKe** Frodsham, Eng.: The British Society of Sports History and Sports History Publishing, 1995. Pp. xiv, 129. Index, £16.50 or \$25 pb (BSSH members £10.00 or \$15).

Works such as these three by Richard Cox sometimes receive short shrift by experienced scholars—often wrongly so. All of us who entered the field so many years ago sought guidance, needed guidance at that time: Where do I start, what are the good sources, where are the rich, untapped repositories? Just as historians of American history start with the massive sources of the Harvard Guide to American History (1974), sport historians need a starting point. These three small but valuable works provide such a starting point for students and specialists in British sport history. Each has its particular value to the specialist.

Perhaps the least valuable, but only in its initial appearance, is the first work, a slight volume on *The Internet as a Resource for the Sports Historian*. For the historian already well versed in using the Internet, it has little to offer. For the neophyte (its target audience) it will be valuable, for it gives a clear, well-illustrated, and blessedly brief explanation of how historians can use the Internet as a resource.

Rather than divide the work into chapters, it simply follows a line of successive major topic areas from the simple and general to the more specific and advanced: the Internet (an overview), Communications (categories or domains of usage), Resources (the major types of sources), Telnet, ftp, On-Line Shopping, Computer

Assisted Learning, Globally Distributed Network Information Delivery Systems (Gopher, the World Wide Web, and WAIS), Navigating the Internet (a discussion of various browsers and search and retrieval tools), followed by Specific Applications for the Sports Historian.

A brief bibliography lists some of the more popular how-to books on the Internet. The appendices include some useful sample sites to visit and a subject index to a number of non-commercial sports web servers and sport usenet groups (arranged alphabetically by sport).

While *The Internet as a Resource for the Sports Historian* will be of limited use to an experienced user of the Internet, it will be very useful to new or inexperienced users and could be a good supplementary resource for an introductory course in research methodology.

The second work, *History of Sport: A Guide to the Literature and Sources of Information* is a valuable resource even for the experienced historian. It is divided into five parts: Quick Reference Material, Secondary Sources, Primary Sources, Sources for Specialist Areas of Research, and Brief Notes on Sources of Information for Specific Topics of Sports Historical Research. It was the first of four volumes planned to document primary and secondary sources on the history of British sport.

The initial impression of the reader may be confusion: While it is well-organized, some similar items may not be where the reader expects to find them. For example, guides to the literature of several individual sports are given on page 4, but others appear on page 12 as one-off bibliographies. In short, the reader may have to wander a bit to ensure finding all of the desired leads to sources.

On the other hand, the range of discussed sources is extremely wide, including topics such as oral evidence, pictorial records, artifacts, ephemera (such as match tickets and programs), maps, plans, and drawings. The brief discussions of specific topics of research add a useful note, including such topics as sports architecture, sports costume, sport and gambling, sport and gender, sports industry, and sports training (noting that little historical research has addressed this seemingly major area of interest).

Despite the occasional difficulty in locating some information, this work is an important contribution to the field. It is difficult to disagree with D.J. Foskett's comment in the Foreword that although Dr. Cox disclaims an attempt at a systematic structure for his Guide, the arrangement is clear, so that specialists will find no difficulty in arriving at their particular sections, and will owe Richard Cox a considerable debt for providing signposts and gateways to so many interesting fields (p. vii). While the ease may be less than he suggests, the debt is not.

The third work, *Index to Sporting Manuscripts in the UK* is the final of four works on sources for British sport history. As the title indicates, it identifies and indexes collections of manuscripts in both national repositories and local record offices, as identified through April 1, 1994. It is a critical work for the researcher, providing directions to a wealth of primary material scattered throughout the British Isles. The collections are divided into two levels, the national and the local repositories, and within those levels further divided according to region (England, Scotland, Wales, plus the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland in the

national repository group), then alphabetically ordered by the county in which each collection is located. The collections are indexed (in 17 double-columned pages) both by the name of the repository and by the name of the organization whose records are represented.

The value to the serious researcher of a source such as this one cannot be stated too strongly. Perhaps the most difficult task of the historian beginning a major research project is determining where useful primary materials may be found. At the same time, a serious concern is whether any critical resources have been overlooked. This work fills a critical gap in the scholar's library of resources.

The author's introduction describes further resources for information on archival collections while explaining the limitations of such sources. Sport has not been taken seriously by many directors of archives, resulting in fewer collections (and fewer records of surviving collections) than in many other areas of concern to social historians. Furthermore, as Cox notes, whilst the records of a not-so-famous or historically significant sports teams/venues/tournaments, etc. [sic] may be included in the index because they were housed in a public repository, those of important organizations in the history of British sport are sometimes not. Thus the game records of Temple Newsham Estate are included, but the sporting records of Rugby School are not. This is not because such records do not exist (in fact in this case they do), but because they have not been deposited in a public collection (p. xi).

This shortcoming in the resulting index should be clarified in the title of the work, such as changing it to *Sporting Manuscripts in Public Collections in the UK*. It is not so much that the index is less valuable but that the title may mislead the researcher who has not carefully examined the introductory discussions. At the same time, this is an ongoing endeavor by Professor Cox, who has been toiling in the bibliographic vineyard for upward of two decades. As he notes in the preface, all of these bibliographic works are updated annually. *The Sports Historian*, the journal of the British Society of Sports History.

Taken together, these works, along with an earlier bibliography of secondary sources of sport history, constitute a major contribution to historical research in British sport. It is all the more impressive considering the difficulty of finding willing publishers for such specialized works. As Cox remarks in these books, he had hoped to provide samples and examples of the source materials, but today's publishing world frowns upon what it considers such expensive academic frivolity.

Cox deserves our appreciation for these contributions to the field. While they themselves do not advance our knowledge of British sport history, they widen the gates for other sport historians, whose work will be far better because they have these resources to point the way.

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