Facts and Artefacts: Sports Historians and Sports Museums[1]

by Wray Vamplew
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPORTS HISTORY AND CULTURE
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

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Museums are containers of things. T. S. Eliot noted 50 years ago that "even the humblest material artefact, which is the product and symbol of a particular civilisation, is an emissary of the culture out of which it comes."[2] So it is with sports museums whose collections, if properly utilized, can tell us much about a nation's sporting culture and the social, economic, and political milieu in which it developed. Yet, generally speaking, sports historians have not made use of this potential resource. They visit as fans, but only a few enliven their teaching and enlighten their students by encouraging them to examine sporting artefacts and/ or attend exhibitions. Fewer still conduct research in sports museums beyond the archive and library. Why have sport historians been so reluctant to analyze and interpret those remnants of the sporting heritage as preserved by museums curators?

We might commence our exploration of this by first considering the nature of the sports museum. There are, indeed, several types.[3] One possible set of classifications can be based on a combination of geography and collection policy. Few sports museums can claim to be truly international, though with its overarching mission "to make visitors aware of the breadth and the importance of the Olympic Movement," certainly the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, aspires to such lofty goals.[4] The proposed Scottish National Football Museum at Hampden Park in Glasgow intends to be international in scope but may have to concern itself with domestic priorities in the beginning.

By far the most popular sport museums are those that represent a nation's sporting development, the history of a club, or, more common still, those that

consider a single sport. Two of the oldest museums that represent a nation's sporting development are in Prague and Helsinki, Finland, more recently museums have been developed in Paris and Basel. The Singapore Sports Council's museum, initiated by Desmond Don in the early 1980s, offers an introduction to the development of colonial sport in this part of the former British Empire,[5] and the Australian Gallery of Sport in Melbourne has a particular focus on Australia and the Olympics. Inevitably more numerous are the national museums devoted to a particular sport. The United Kingdom alone has institutions for rugby, rowing, horse-racing, golf, and tennis, with at least three for football. In Italy, despite a late start into sports museums, there are now three contenders vying to establish a major cycling museum.[6] However, the real leader in this field is the United States with its penchant for national halls of fame for every sport imaginable.

Although less popular and less visible, club museums exist partly because of a pride in the club's achievements and history. But more recently, club museums, especially in the case of the major professional organizations, have begun because of a growing commercial awareness that fans are prepared to pay homage to their heroes. In Britain, Manchester United's museum at Old Trafford attracts around 150,000 paying customers a year.[7] Most of the leading European soccer clubs have their own museums, but many of them function more as visitor centers, serving the public relations needs of the clubs, than as sports museums proper. The one-off exhibitions are displays by museums and galleries not normally associated with sport. At the elite level the British Museum took advantage of the Barcelona Olympics to look at sport in Ancient Greece; the Tate Gallery had an exhibition of early sporting paintings; and the Victoria and Albert Museum held a display of sporting trophies, although it had to close early because of a lack of interest. In Washington, D.C., the Holocaust Memorial Museum has developed an exhibition on the Nazi Olympics.

Museums around the world that are concerned with occupational history, ethnicity, or other specialities have held the occasional sports-related exhibition, such as the "Work Hard, Play Hard" at Britain's National Coalmining Museum, which celebrated the age-old link between sport and mining communities. These have not been without their problems. Richard Cox, sports bibliographer par excellence, has postulated that some of the best collections of sports books are to be found within the massive general collections of major libraries.[8] Yet curiously most non-sports museums appear to have very few sporting artefacts on their accessions register, and even those are rarely documented in detail[9]

Several local authority museums in Britain have used sporting exhibitions "to try and improve local community involvement in their museum,"[12] thus acknowledging that sport was part, often an important one, of life in the area. Local museums, such as the Museum of Liverpool Life and the Bourne Hall local authority museum dealing with the Epsom locality inevitably have had to integrate sport with local history because they are near the sites of the Grand National and Derby horseraces.[10] Other museums, however, have exploited an interest in sport specifically to attract visitors. In England the Old Grammar School Museum in Hull held a display of the history and significance of sport in

Hull and Humberside; the Woodhorn Colliery Museum exploited the fame of nearby Ashington hero, "Jackie" Milburn, to examine the role of football in the region; and the Derby Museum's "Rams in Focus" had the dual objective of presenting the "local football scene, past and present" and "attracting a wide audience to the museum."[11] Local sports history can, however, have more than local relevance for, as sports historians develop their hypotheses about a nation's sports, the local level is surely the place to test their universality. And what could be more local than the club which, from the participant's point of view, is far more significant than elite level sport? Here we need less of the "Glory, Glory" genre and more on the club as a social institution, the site of much masculine voluntary work.

There are also many private collections of sporting memorabilia, usually at the small-scale, hobbyist level, though occasionally large enough to rival museum collections and become an investment rather than a consumption activity. Like art connoisseurs, some of these collectors are willing to loan artefacts to museums, but unfortunately others prefer to keep their collections solely for themselves. And, there is a miscellaneous category comprising such items as the taxidermy collections of hunting, shooting, and fishing enthusiasts, club trophy rooms, and the memorabilia put together by sports bars erupting throughout the world, whose proprietors often have little understanding of the significance of what they have collected and no idea how to conserve it apart from hanging it on the wall.

Overall, then, the artefactual representation of the sporting past is undertaken by a wide variety of institutions, some more reputable than others in the way that they approach sporting heritage. In the same way that there is no typical sports museum, there is a variety of sports historians. We have writers at the professional level who author books on such topics as the football grounds of Europe, the journalist who appreciates having his historical facts correct, the museum curator who displays sporting artefacts, and scholars who earn their living teaching and researching aspects of sports history. Then there are the amateurs who probably outweigh the professionals in number and often in factual knowledge—particularly their knowledge of their favorite sport's statistics and the detailed history of the club of which they are an enthusiastic fan. Almost as often though, amateurs do not have the broader historical knowledge to contextualize this information. There are also myriad memorabilia collectors. It follows that it is no use asking for a sports museum, however defined, to cater to the needs of the sports historian because there is no such animal.

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There are several specific reasons why academic sports historians reject museum resources. For one, sports museums cater to the nostalgia market and have, almost without exception, institutionalized the concept of a "golden age" in virtually every sport. Errors of fact and interpretation persist and myths are perpetuated despite historical research to the contrary.[13] Indeed, the very location of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., is based on the false historical

premise that the game originated there.[14] In contrast, the Rugby Football Museum at Twickenham, England, takes the view that myths, as well as facts, must be addressed and acknowledges with skepticism that allegedly William Webb Ellis created the game of rugby, though the museum of rugby equipment attached to Gilbert's factory and Rugby School itself still refer to the 1890s as the time the rugby tradition began.[15]

One predominant complaint is that the presentation of information is too simplistic and fails to demonstrate the subtleties of historical argument. The major reason for this is the clientele of sports museums: the general public. Consequently, the display policy is likely to require that displays "keep it simple" and "keep it short."[17] It follows, both from the point of view of the academic sports historian who seeks more context and the amateur who seeks more detail, that there is an inadequate provision of information. There is also the danger that in minimizing the textual information, credence may be given to some of the myths that haunt sports history. Perhaps nonsports museums have more excuse for their ignorance. At the high art end of the cultural spectrum, for example, the Tate Gallery sporting paintings exhibition presented a particular view of rural England; sport basically consisted of killing animals or racing horses with no mention of folk football or even of cricket.[16] The only way to contextualize the information and to provide more detail is either to support paper publications or to develop the storage of information (e.g., statistical data) in accessible electronic form, as is being done by the International Rugby Hall of Fame, which has the world's largest electronic database of rugby on touchscreen computer.[18]

Artefacts are too often displayed without sufficient explanation. Too frequently the academic historian is tempted to ask "so what?" or "why did this happen?" A display of helmets and other equipment at the Pro Football Hall of Fame provided little guidance on the time frame of innovation or its effectiveness.[19] Baseball ephemera were displayed at Cooperstown with "nothing analytical in the way of how and why music, cards and stamps are tied into American culture."[20] By concentrating on the exhibition of cups, medals, uniforms, and equipment and treating their artefacts solely in archeological terms, curators run the danger of fetishizing sports history.[21] Moreover, as John Schleppi has pointed out in relation to those museums that are merely extended trophy cabinets, "trophies have a great similarity."[22] Even within the sport that they commemorate, a collection of equipment and apparatus can fail to "evoke the cultural heritage of techniques of the body"; they do not show how the objects were played with.[23]

The failure to present the sporting artefact in a wider context often stems from a lack of curatorial skills. Many of the smaller museums are, in fact, one person affairs, the result of a lifetime's devotion to a particular sport and the hoarding of associated memorabilia. These are collections, not museums run by curators. They know the minutiae of their sport but cannot set it into any nonsporting context, be it political, economic, or social. Many such curators are too far in the sporting woods to see beyond the trees; they list achievements but provide little supporting or contextual historical or cultural information. The Olympic Museum, in contrast, missed a golden opportunity to enlarge upon the

political symbolism of the size and design of medals. It preferred, instead, merely to display them en masse. Several curators felt unable to challenge the conservative views of the trustees, sporting bodies, or clubs that employed them and who often saw sport solely in terms of competitive, adult, male-dominated activity.

Fortunately some sports museums have gone beyond the conventional boundaries of their sport. The National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., has a Civil War gallery; the Kentucky Derby Museum devotes a special section to the Afro-American contribution to thoroughbred racing; and both the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame and the San Diego Hall of Champions takes the role of disabled athletes seriously. The curator of the Pierre Gildesgame Maccabi Sports Museum in Israel is adamant that the real worth of his artefacts is the "light they shed on the Jewish contribution to physical culture,"[24] and the inaugural director of France's National Sports Museum has stated his conviction that sports museums must be intellectually honest and present sport "with sympathy but not bias, without obscuring any facet of a subject, without amputation."[25] Yet, many major museums continue to focus solely on the artefacts, as with the New Zealand Rugby Museum where, according to the curator, "basically we accept anything we are offered that relates to rugby."[26] Here are highlighted the achievements of the sport that has become that nation's icon of masculinity, but no attempt is made to come to grips with the important sociocultural theme of gender fixing.[27] Similarly, a recent exhibition at the Pump House People's History Museum in Manchester associated with the European '96 Football Championships celebrated the game and its fans but "stopped short of attempting any critical exploration of the cultural phenomenon of football support."[28]

The nonsports museum may have an advantage where context is concerned, for example, the recent exhibition on the Nazi Olympics developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.[29] Although the presentation of material was very traditional (flat panels that featured reproductions of photographs, posters, and newspaper articles), it was powerful and successful because it was set within the context of the Holocaust itself. Nevertheless there is still a danger when the *raison d'être* of a particular museum leads it to present a picture from a specific political stance. In Adelaide, Australia, the Museum of Ethnicity put on an excellent exhibition on "Fair Play," which demonstrated conclusively that aborigines, European ethnic groups, and women had not had a "fair go" in Australian sport. However, it was essentially a qualitative account that highlighted the few who had made it to the top despite the formidable barriers which they had to overcome. It did not point out or explain why, for example, aborigines were overrepresented in Australian Rules football, the rugby league, and, above all, in boxing where, although only comprising about 1% of the Australian population, they have produced 15% of Australian boxing champions.[30]

Whereas much recent work of sports historians has examined both participation and exclusion, sports museums in general and halls of fame in particular join the part of the sporting world that is obsessed with winners and winning. Jingoism at national and club triumphs abounds,[31] and insufficient

recognition is given to the more typical competitive sports experience: losing. More attention should be devoted to the "also rans," those who come in fourth place, the defunct clubs, and the apprentice jockeys who never had to give up their claiming allowance. It is noteworthy that a special exhibition at the Olympic Museum on the marathon began with a quote from Emil Zatopek that all marathon runners were winners but then conspicuously failed to list any Olympic marathon participant who failed to last the distance.

Commercialism and modern museums are bedfellows, much to the chagrin of some sports historians. Certainly, as Garth Paton has observed, the tourist appeal of halls of fame and club museums "can overshadow historical objectivity."[32] Writing of the Hockey Hall of Fame, Bruce Kidd noted that it is "unabashedly commercial—appropriating the past not only for legitimation, but aggressive commodification and consumption."[33] Academic visitors often cringe at the contents of the ubiquitous museum shop. Yet sports museums have to generate income and, for most of them, this means attracting customers who pay for entry or sponsors who, in turn, want to maximize attendances.[34] Funding is a perennial problem of most sports museums and in practice, the not-for-profit incorporation label often translates into operating losses. Indeed the director of the Swiss Sports Museum has claimed that he has never "come across a single sports museum capable of paying its own way"[35] A study of major specialized sports museums in Britain undertaken in the early 1990s revealed that they "either have been, or are continuing to be, heavily subsidised by outside fundholders such as sports governing bodies, prestigious independent sports clubs, local authorities and regional tourist boards."[36] No one ever got rich catering solely to the needs of historians.[37] Hence, we have to accept naming rights for galleries and displays, kitsch items in the shops, and the occasional hard sell or there will be fewer resources available to the curators.

The financial imperative is not the only reason for attracting the general public or at least the sports enthusiasts among them. Most museums have a mission to educate and this too encourages them to cater to a broad market.[38] Indeed, these customer groups are likely to become even more diverse and even less academic as new markets are sought both for commercial and educational reasons. Sport attracts many people who would react adversely to the concept of a museum, so how is this to be changed? The Hampden Park Football Museum, for one, intends to target males age 18 to 30 through the placement of suitable historical material in the Scottish tabloid press and by leaflet drops in public houses. The same museum at an exhibition associated with the European Football Championships piloted its replication of youth culture via the adoption of a magazine format. The contents display enables any section of the display to be dipped into without a need to take an overview. Many museums now understand that museum visitors should not always be expected to come to the museum and promote outreach programs with touring exhibitions to schools, libraries, and sports venues. It is, of course, in the interests of sports historians to encourage the enlargement of the client base of sports museums, for therein lies the possibility of a greater awareness of sports history.

Sports museum curators are in a powerful position to influence the general public's perception of sports history; they choose what to display and what not to exhibit. Their personal bias and knowledge may not reflect the perceived historical process and care ought to be taken to be more open about curatorial decisions.[39] This is particularly relevant where sports figures are concerned. Kidd has criticized the Hockey Hall of Fame for not making public its selection policy regarding the players and administrators it chose to honor, consequently presenting a situation in which they "are presented as if chosen by divine intervention."[40] The Olympic Museum in Lausanne similarly provides no rationale as to why certain athletes are depicted as stars of the Olympic Games. The National Hunt Hall of Fame in Cheltenham, England, deliberately has no voting procedures with the intention that choices will create controversy and, thus, publicity.[41]

The philosophy of many sports museums is to "educate through entertainment."[42] The director of Prague's Museum of Physical Training and Sports aimed his displays both at "ethical education and at the satisfaction of the emotions ... to instruct the visitor but also—and primarily—to *please* them."[43] Part of the mission of the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in Saratoga is "to convey the excitement of thoroughbred racing to the broadest possible audience."[44] Hence, it has endeavored to recreate the racetrack at the tote board, in the paddock, and behind the scenes in the jockeys' rooms. A survey of British sports museum curators showed that they generally believe that the introduction of action into their galleries is vital to convey the fast-moving nature of sport, but how to achieve it is another matter.[45] Although some scholars believe that "the entertainment orientation rather than a stricter historical focus might be considered a shortcoming," entertainment, properly used as a resource, can be imaginative. The Hockey Hall of Fame's full-size, walk-in replica of the Montreal Canadiens' dressing room, for example, features an interactive video that enables visitors to experience a simulated training room, as does the International Tennis Hall of Fame, which gives visitors the opportunity to play against tennis stars. The Ski Museum in Lahti, Finland, has virtual reality devices that allow visitors to experience winter sports without the wind and cold. Entertainment can also be educational. In Saratoga, an electronic display illustrates the tracing of bloodlines, a practical tool for sports history! Such devices could stimulate an interest in sports history, though the link may at times appear tenuous. We should not dismiss too readily the entertainment aspect of sports museums, for this is surely also a function of sport.

A major complaint voiced by sports historians is that museums are too uncritical in their approach to sport. Many sports museums, even at the elite level, eschew the controversial; they are reluctant to give the whole picture and deliberately omit things from history. World champions are presented without blemish, and world championships are presented without political context. Halls of fame in particular are driven by "the ever present emphasis on finding heroes...[which]... overshadows the less showy need for historical accuracy."[46] The tendency of museums is to celebrate the rise of a player from rags to riches but rarely to dwell his or her slide into obscurity, alcoholism, poverty, or social

dysfunction. Revelations that famous players were also physically abusive to spouses or were recreational drug abusers or rapists receive the response that this occurred off the field and was not related to their sporting performance. An example, but not an isolated one, is the National Italian Sports Hall of Fame's lack of response to the problems faced by Jennifer Capriati or Lyle Alzado. The failure to accept the dark side of sporting heroes further perpetuates the myth first started by the Muscular Christians that sport promotes good character. Instead of history, the museum visitor faces a "miasma of wooly [sic] commentary, mawkish sentiment, and cardboard portraits."[47] There are exceptions. The Arsenal Football Club Museum, like the players themselves, has faced up to Paul Merson's gambling and drug problems and Tony Adams' alcoholism. In acknowledging their existence, however, it has stressed the courage of the players in recognizing their problems and emphasized that the club had stood by them.[48] Other museums have ignored the poor social behavior of lesser personalities by adopting the Stalinist practice of never acknowledging their existence at the club. Manchester United's museum, like all others, glosses over the dismissals of unsuccessful managers. [49] Few clubs in British football seem prepared to face up to the collective disorder; some of their supporters are hooligans.[50]

Halls of fame are shrines where fans come to worship their heroes; no false prophets must be allowed to preach. Do fans really prefer the happy ending?[51] This is questionable. What newspaper would adopt that approach? Surely a scandalous story sells copies, and the development of fanzines in Britain certainly suggests that club-level fans prefer the true picture to a sanitized version. The rendition of bland official statements that pass for most match programs serve the public relations interests of the club board rather than keep fans aware of what is happening. Could it be that the same directors prefer their version of history to be bowdlerized? Presumably this also applies to the executives of halls of fame who care too much for the image of the sport that they serve to risk it being undermined by historical evaluation. Discussions at conferences and seminars suggest that this partial use of history has often been the result of a commercial decision brought on by the belief that the fans of the sport might be upset by the intervention of real history into the fantasy world of nostalgia. As Bruce Kidd notes, "halls of fame represent established interests presenting partial views within a closed discourse of Olympian truth."[52] The curator of the Museum of Western Australian Sport, however, despite her willingness to present material with "no idolatry of elite athletes," found that "there is no desire to even know about these people outside their sporting lives."[53]

It is not just the sports museums that fail to deal with controversial issues in sport. Whereas the Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibition dealt with both the boycott issue of 1936 and the possible friction between Jewish and black athletes, it shied away from any comparison with later boycotts or looking at what the International Olympic Committee president was doing in the 1930s.[54] But some museums have attempted to face up to reality. Political change has encouraged the South African Rugby Museum to come to terms with the history of segregated audiences.[55] The Sporting Life Exhibition in Hull, Canada, presented "the negative

aspects of sport alongside the achievements and successes." The curator argued that even if the "debate is controversial and painful," riots, disasters, violence, drugs, and cruelty to animals have had an "historically important" role in sport.[56] In contrast to the Hockey Hall of Fame, which glamourizes the labor situation,[57] the International Tennis Hall of Fame notes the fine line between pushing young players to great achievements and creating burnout.[58]

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Are we, then, at an impasse—sports historians cocooned in their literary sources and critical of the approach and performance of the museums, curators willing to add sports historians to their clientele but restricted by finance and philosophy to catering for a broader audience (perhaps to the detriment of sports history)? As we approach the millenium is there any way in which curators and historians could come closer together?

Perhaps we should simply accept that sports museums can serve fragmented markets[59] and that for the academic sports historian it is the conventional historical sources existing in libraries and museum archives that are important. There are some outstanding collections available. In Finland, the Sports Museum Foundation has brought together a museum, an archive with almost a "kilometre of documented information," and a library of more than 20,000 volumes.[60] The Berlin Sports Museum has a library of 40,000 books, many dealing with distance running, for which it was named the AIMS Museum of Running.[61] The Mystic Seaport Museum has 50,000 books and periodicals and more than 600,000 manuscripts.[62] The USGA Museum and Library at Golf House, New Jersey, features a library of over 10,000 volumes, the largest such collection in the world.

Sports museums could certainly assist their research efforts (and, of course, that of their own staff) if they combined their exhibition efforts with the preservation of such traditional historical primary and secondary sources. Many are doing so, including the Australian Gallery of Sport which adopted such a policy when it inherited the Melbourne Cricket Club's library. It must, however, be acknowledged that museums do not exist for that minority of the population called "sports historians" and that somebody must foot the bill for collection and storage. It is doubtful that sports historians or their societies will be rushing to the head of the sponsorship line. Similar arguments apply to the development of oral history archives and videotape libraries.

Most academic sports historians generally prefer text. Some are numerate, but few make adequate, if any, use of artefacts and the like. As professionals, sports historians certainly need education to broaden their methodology both in teaching and research. What is required for sports historians is that they step outside the archive room and into the exhibition galleries, to add another dimension to their work. Sports museums can help us change by complimenting our literary text approach by emphasizing the visual, a component often neglected in the world of sports history scholarship. Photographic elements, for example, showing changes in stadia design, playing costumes or crowd composition, could

be used, as could works of art detailing impressions of sport from one person's view or artefacts in the form of costume, equipment, or technological developments. A starting point may be to encourage them to utilize the photographs in the archives—80,000 of them in the Berlin Sports Museum, at least 100,000 in Prague's Museum of Physical Training and Sport, and more than a million of maritime sport in the Rosenfield Collection at the Mystic Seaport Museum. Indeed, even the most minor of sports museums appears to have a collection of sports-related photographs.

The new generation of historians, trained to teach with multimedia aids, may be more receptive to the visual than the chalk and talk of the *ancien regime.* Leadership by example could also play a role. Many of the curators might also consider themselves to be sports historians, and as such, they should be making more use of their own resources to produce less textbound sports history, Two aspects of sport may also be better demonstrated in a museum exhibition than in a narrative form. Performance, the crux of sport, certainly can be better appreciated using the video archive,[63] the interactive simulation of tennis using computer-designed, old-fashioned equipment, or by actually participating in traditional games and sports.[64] Excepting the finest historical writers, the drama and uncertainty of sport possibly can be better captured by recorded commentary or telecast. No text, moreover, could possibly capture the passion associated with fans' chants and songs, the focus of the collection at the Hampden Park Museum.

If curators, particularly of nonsports museums, made more use of trained sports historians in developing their exhibitions, a positive link could be forged that might have beneficial effects for both parties. Sports historians clearly can help set straight both the sporting and historical record. They can also provide the relevant background to assist museums in determining their collection policy, whether it is simply a matter of suggesting that a particular sports trophy has historical significance or writing detailed reports on the history of sports or sporting events as museum consultants. They can also offer help in determining the authenticity of artefacts: did the Spanish basketball player Fernando Romey really wear size 22 shoes?[65] Sports historians can help fill the lacunae caused by curators, particularly in nonspecialist sports museums, who have been trained in museology rather than in sports history. This can lead to errors in fact and interpretation; sports history is not an immutable stock of knowledge, and what was accepted ten years ago may have changed by now.[66] Updating their stock of knowledge should be considered as important as regularly updating their exhibitions.

Sports historians could also be encouraged to particiate in the educational programs of the museums; most of us, after all, are educators as well as historians. Possibly we could assist curators in distinguishing between education and an audio-visual experience. A number of professional museum curators feel that the Olympic Museum, in an effort to "avoid an over static display,"[67] has gone overboard on passive and interactive videos to the extent that "the various screens counteracted one another and rather marginalized the few objects that were on display"[68]

Although sports historians can appreciate the contribution that sport museums make to the preservation of our sporting heritage, there is a question of the extent to which a museum should be a laboratory rather than a reservation. Roland Renson, the authority on Flemish folkgames, addressed this issue in the context of game demonstrations with authentic or replica equipment. He states that "the best way to preserve. . . traditional games is to play them."[69] How should sports historians view places like the Mystic Seaport Museum, designed as "a living and working replica of the past,"[70] or Saratoga, which aims at the "recreation of the sights, sounds and drama of racing"?[71] Should we reject them as pseudo-history or get onboard and use our research to promote greater authenticity?

In an age of technological literacy, perhaps we should be concentrating on the development of virtual museums rather than real sporting museums. The Victorians used plaster casts and photographs to distribute artefacts internationally. Today we can use technology—CD-ROM collections of sporting icons and sites on the Internet-to give global access. Supercomputers are capable of massive data storage not just of statistical and bibliographical material but also of digitized photographs and videos of sports performances, all of which could be downloaded by users visiting the site.[72] Greater accessibility to a nation's sporting heritage could be brought about by the arrangement of virtual visits to other museums whose collections are stored in electronic form so that hands-on access would be gained without the dangers of handling the artefacts.[73] This idea possibly might be easier to sell than most to both curators and historians, for these professions are changing. The new generation of sports historians, perhaps like the new generation of any activity, are better trained and equipped for technology.[74] Many museums too have already accepted that technology can aid their educational objectives and use portable CD-ROM guides to supplement the usual labelling of exhibits and self-guided tours. It is also clearly acknowledged that technology can contribute to the entertainment side of the exhibits. Most leading museums now have websites, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library has begun to place archival search engines on the Internet.

Sports museums are the public face of sports history and, indeed, halls of fame are at "the intersection between history and nostalgia."[76] Steven Pope noted that "there continues to be a vast gap between what sports scholars do and what the larger public consumes and conceives of as sports history."[75] Many professional sports historians nevertheless are also sports fans. They accept that there is a place for nostalgia, for devotion to one's sporting heroes, and for celebratory history. Clearly sports museums are the venues where these elements can be presented. Yet, as historians, we want to see accuracy and context. To rephrase the comment of Richard Holt,[77] is there really any reason why sports history exhibitions cannot be good history? Celebration need not be without critique. There is a major challenge to be faced in bringing the tough social issues of class, age, gender, and ethnicity into the public history domain of sport. The transition from academic to public history is a difficult one, but opening the eyes of the public to a different view of sports history can only serve the interests of the profession. Criticism need not eschew celebration; sports history exhibitions could

also be entertaining history, Sports museums are the best places to replicate the performance, drama, romance, passion, and emotion of sport, something many sports historians fail to do when they move from reality to the record.

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1. In addition to reading journals devoted to museum activities and others concerning sports history, information for this paper was gathered by writing to and/or visiting about 200 sports museums throughout the world and contacting sports historians on the Internet, by personal communication, or at seminar presentations. The bibliographies of a random sample of sports history books on the shelves of the International Centre for Sports History and Culture at De Montfort University were examined to ascertain what use was being made of museum materials by the authors,
2. T. S. Eliot, Notes *Towards the Definition of Culture* (1947) as quoted in Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things* (London, 1996), p. 1.
3. One point reinforced by the responses of some curators is that sport has some culturally specific aspects. Alexander Prince Hohenlohe politely pointed out that he regarded "hunting or stalking more as a passion passed from ancestors to successors rather than a sport." Alexander Prince Hohenlohe to the author, April 30, 1997. Spanish museum administrator, Enriqueta Sim-Fort noted that contemporary bullfighting is "more an art than a sport." Enriqueta Sim-Fort to the author, April 1, 1997.
4. *Discovering the Olympic Museum: Visitor's Guide* (Lausanne, 1994), p. 6.
5. John Saunders to the author, October 8, 1996.
6. Riccardo Grozio and Sergio Giuntini, "Sports Museums," *Panathlon International* (January/February 1997), p. I.
7. Michael Wright, "Glory, Glory, Man United," *Museums Journal* (June 1996), p. 22.
8. Richard Cox, "Sports Archives, Libraries and Museums in the UK—What Should be the Policy?" *Sports Historian* 16 (1996), p.157.
9. Among the very few football items in Glasgow Museum is a donation from an old player documented as "5 international FC shirts from the 1930s." On the same page of the accessions register three-quarters of the space was devoted to a description of wallpaper saved from a tenement flat! Richard Williams, "Capturing the Hampden Roar: Creating a Scottish National Museum of Football," North West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries Conference, October 18, 1996.
10. Robert Mason, "A Load of Old Balls," *Museums Journal* June 1996, p. 24.
11. Richard Halliwell, "More Than a Game," *Museums Journal* May 1991, p.18. Ged O'Brien, Director of the Hampden Park Football Museum, believes that "every football exhibition put on in a museum has been a resounding success and broken all records for the respective institution." Letter, January 31, 1995.
12. P A. C. McCormack, *A Consideration of the Development of British Sports Museums* M.Soc.Sci. (Ironbridge Institute, 1993), p.133.
13. There is, however, no excuse for sloppiness in presentation, as in one temporary exhibition at the Lausanne Olympic Museum where adjacent panels on Olympic marathons contained conflicting information on the number of runners in the Paris and St. Louis races, or at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney where an exhibit purportedly dealing with the Second World War included a magazine from 1946.
14. Dean A. Sullivan, *Early Innings: A Documentary History of Baseball 1825-1908.*
15. William Baker, "William Webb Ellis and the Origins of Rugby Football: The Life and Death of a Victorian Myth," *Albion* 13 (1981).
16. *British Sporting Art,* April 11-July 2, 1995.

17. The Director of the British Golf Museum argues that a text panel should be only 250 words at a maximum, though he does allow that several text panels could be alongside each other. Peter Lewis in a lecture to MA Sport and Recreation: Historical and Cultural Appraisal students at De Montfort University, September 24, 1996.
18. Scott A.G.M. Crawford, "New Zealand Rugby Museum," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 23, no. 3 (1996), p. 339.
19. John Neville, "The Pro Football Hall of Fame," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 18, no. 2 (1991), p. 206.
20. Marc Onigman, "The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum," *Journal of Sport History,* vol. 17, no. 1 (1990), p. 113.
21. I owe the phrase to Richard Williams, a curator at the Hampden Park Football Museum.
22. John R. Schleppi, "The Kentucky Derby Museum," *Journal Sport History* vol. 20, no. 2 (1993), p. 317. Yet the work of John Burnett at the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh shows what can be done to set trophies into context. See, for example his publications on "The Marchmont or St Ronan's Arrow" and "A medal of the Newtongrange Lothian Cricket Club, 1887" in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 125 (1995), p. 1175-1191.
23. Roland Renson, "The Comeback of Traditional Sports and Games," *Museum* vol. 170, no. 2 (1991), p. 81.
24. Joseph Hoffman, "Recalling Judaism of Muscles," *Museum* vol. 170, no. 1 (1991), p. 73.
25. Jean Durry, "Sports in a Museum?," *Museum* vol. 170, no. 2 (1991), p. 64.
26. Letter from Bob Luxford, April 2, 1997.
27. Crawford, p. 339.
28. John Davis, "The Beautiful Game Show," *Social History Curators Group News* 40 (Autumn 1996), p. 15.
29. Roy Rosenzweig, "The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 24, no. 1 (1997), pp. 77-80.
30. Richard Broome, "Professional Aboriginal Boxers in Eastern Australia 1930-1979," *Aboriginal History* vol. 4, no. 1 (1980), p. 50.
31. P. Honkannen, "The Sports Museum of Finland," *Museum* 160 (1988), pp. 222-223.
32. Paton, p. 89.
33. Bruce Kidd, "The Making of a Hockey Artifact: A Review of the Hockey Hall of Fame," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 23, no. 3 (1996), p. 329.
34. There are some exceptions. The Cheltenham National Hunt Hall of Fame offers free entry because they regard the exhibition as a useful add-on for attracting wedding receptions, conferences, etc. Interview with Edward Gillespie, Cheltenham's managing director, August 21, 1996.
35. Maximilian Triet, "A Sports Museum is also a Business," *Museum* 170.1 (1991), p. 83. In his research towards his brief for establishing the National Hunt Hall of Fame, Edward Gillespie says he quickly realised that a museum was not a money-making concern. Interview, August 21, 1996. See also McCormack, p. 48.
36. McCormack, p. 89.
37. In Britain the national lottery has opened up the chance of funding from the nation's gambling, but these are usually subject to public accessibility being given priority. Both the Football Museum at Preston and the Hampden Park enterprise have received several million pounds from this source. There is also the possibility that new sports museums may be funded, including those for country sports, as heritage money convinces the landed gentry that their family history is also the nation's history. I owe this point to Professor Grant Jarvie.

38. Already 25% of the visitors to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne are either children or youngsters. Grozio & Giuntini, p. IV.
39. A point raised by Dr. Joyce Kay.
40. Kidd, p. 331.
41. Interview with Edward Gillespie, August 21, 1996.
42. *National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame Catalogue* (1989), p. 4.
43. Tomas Grulich, "Prague: Sport as History," *Museum* vol. 170, no. 2 (1991), p. 69.
44. Garth Paton, "The National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 24, no. 1 (1997), p. 87.
45. McCormack, p. 61.
46. E. John B. Allen in *Journal of Sport History* vol. 21, no. 3 (1994), p. 306.
47. Nicholas Dawidoff, "Fields of Kitsch," New *Republic* August 17-24, 1992. Cited in S.W. Pope, "Sports Films, Halls of Fame Museums: An Editorial Introduction," *Journal of Sport History* 23 (1996), p. 311.
48. Interview with Iain Cook, Arsenal EC. Museum Curator, 11 August 1997.
49. Mark S. Wylie, Curator Museum &Tour Centre, Manchester United F.C. Letter 14 August 1997.
50. Athough the Manchester United Museum has covered aspects of this in temporary exhibitions there is no mention of it in the permanent displays. Wright, p. 22.
51. Barbara Melosh in Warren Leon & Roy Rosenzweig, *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Appraisal* (Urbana: 1989), cited in Pope, p. 311.
52. Kidd, p. 332.
53. Letter from Sarah Murphy, January 9, 1997.
54. Rosenzweig, p. 79.
55. Tom Graham, Project Manager, South African Rugby Museum. Letter, April 1, 1997.
56. Jayne Tyler, "Displaying the Game," *Museums Journal* June 1996, p. 27.
57. Kidd, p. 332.
58. Nancy E. Spencer, "International Tennis Hall of Fame," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 23, no. 3 (1996), p. 337.
59. The mission statement of the International Tennis Hall of Fame Museum is to make "the gallery experience multigenerational by appealing to children, adults, families, athletes, spectators, those from urban, suburban and rural backgrounds, as well as those from foreign lands" and its library and archives collection is to "serve grassroots tennis fans, officials of the sport, social historians, print media journalists, radio and television journalists, the entertainment industry, students of all ages, faculties of educational institutions, authors, publishers genealogy researchers, museums and libraries."
60. Information supplied by Kenth Sjoblom, Sports Archives of Finland.
61. "The Berlin Sports Museum." *Sporting Heritage* 1 (1995), pp. 117-118.
62. Scott A.G.M. Crawford, "Mystic Seaport Museum," *Journal of Sport History* vol. 24, no. 1 (1997), p. 84.
63. Mark Wylie, the curator at Manchester United, has lamented that as late as mid 1996 "for a sport that's about movement we have nothing moving to show anyone" and the introduction of films are part of his development program. Wright, p. 22.
64. I am grateful to Roland Renson for information on such are-creation at the Sportsmuseum Vlaanderen in Belgium.
65. Actually he did, as a visit to the Adidas Sports Shoe Museum will show.

66. This is often a problem with volunteer guides who have an idea that history is fixed in a time warp. Letter from Bernard Whimpress, Curator Adelaide Oval Museum, January 8, 1997.
67. *L'Oeil. Lausanne Musée Olympique: Art, Sport et Culture* (1994), p. 8.
68. McCormack, p. 79.
69. Renson, pp. 79-81.
70. Crawford, "Mystic Seaport...," p. 84.
71. Paton, p. 87.
72. The author is currently involved in the Higher Education Library Image Exchange project in which compilations of images will be made available online over SuperJANET, the British universities' computer network. Although the HELIX project is concerned with social and political history generally, about 1,000 images relating to sports history will be utilised in the pilot scheme.
73. The Canadian National Research Council has developed a high resolution, three dimensional, four colour scanner which, it is claimed, will allow the inspection of 3D reconstructions of objects more closely than they could be examined in a museum. *Daily Telegraph,* 7 May 1996. Such technology if affordable, would be welcomed by curators in, for example, sub Saharan Africa where "the display and handling of an object exposes it to...serious and numerous...dangers which include often torrid heat, omnipresent humidity, pervading dust, rodents, and insects of all shapes and sizes." Julien V. Minavoa, "The Olympic Museum of Benin: What it can do with what it has," *Museum* 170.2 (1991), p. 90.
74. On this see Jan Tolleneer, "Electronic Information Techniques for Sports History Research and Teaching," *IV Congress of the International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport,* Lyon, July 1997.
75. Stephen W. Pope, *The New American Sports History* (Urbana: 1997), p. 21.
76. Pope, "Sports Films," p. 310.
77. Richard Holt, "Sport and History: The State of the Subject in Britain," *Stadion* vol. XVIII, no. 2 (1992), p. 288. There are, of course, some high-quality publications associated with exhibitions with illustrations based on the collections displayed, though these are essentially two-dimensional.