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DANILOV, VICTOR J. *Hall of Fame Museums: A Reference Guide*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. xii, 275. Illustrations, index. \$69.50.

On reading that Westminster Abbey was really a hall of fame, my first impression was that here was an author with insight and imagination. I was wrong. This book is an exemplar of how not to provide an accompanying text to entries in a reference volume.

If you want a guide to a particular hall of fame, then under the relevant entry can be found information on the history, contents, address, phone number, opening

hours, and the cost of admission. Essentially most entries are a resume of the hall's brochure, though at least the data are brought together for all halls of fame, which the author has traced so that visits can be planned, especially if a trip to a geographical region is being undertaken. Danilov's introduction also provides a brief, but unanalytical, outline of the development of halls of fame in the United States. Thereafter, we are on an inclined plane to purposelessness.

Most of the introduction consists of textual lists of halls that fall into particular categories. That for "paid and volunteer staffs" details some museums that have "sizeable paid staffs," some "in the middle range as to the number of staff members," a number who have "only one or a few paid staff members," those who do not have "any paid staff," "nonexistent or minimal paid or volunteer staff," and those who "rely on services provided by a parent museum." Really, what is the use of this form of breakdown, which appears in a similar guise for other facets such as funding, governing bodies, criteria for induction, and memberships, especially when the lists provided are not complete, but merely examples drawn from the entries? As a full picture is not presented, it is impossible to deduce if one category is more representative of the whole than another. It would have been far better to provide a matrix covering all the variables for each hall of fame so that, almost at a glance, the major features of any museum could have been readily identified. It would not have needed some 70 pages of introduction to come to the conclusion that "hall of fame museums and exhibits differ widely in their founding, locations, governing, staffing, funding, attendance, and overall operations" (p. 48) and in their "facilities, collections, exhibits, programs, and other aspects of their operations" (p. 62).

The author deals with 274 halls of fame, 90 percent of them within America and the bulk associated with sporting activity. Had he stuck to the United States his coverage would be comprehensive, but to claim that elsewhere in the world only 30 such institutions exist—only 12 if Canada is omitted—is ludicrous. For Britain he includes two halls of fame: Westminster Abbey, because it is a place where "the nation pays tribute to its illustrious statesmen, poets, authors, musicians, scientists, military leaders, and other people of distinction through burial or monuments" (p. 231), and Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, because "all Wimbledon champions and every major player since the advent of open tennis in 1968 constitute an informal hall of fame" (p. 232).

If the first of these definitions is accepted, then there are many other cathedrals and religious institutions in Britain, which hail their famous dead; given that within the United States Danilov allows *both* regional and national halls of fame, why does he exclude the illustrious dead of (say) York or Bath? And if the Wimbledon Museum is a hall of fame, then so are the Lords' Cricket Museum, the Twickenham Rugby Museum, the Henley Rowing Museum, and the Newmarket Racing Museum, let alone the national Hunt Hall of Fame at Cheltenham and the Rugby League Hall of Fame in Leeds, neither of which are mentioned by the author.

The selected biography contains only 10 items, none of them from the *Journal of Sport History*, which has pioneered critical, but constructive reviews of the

operations of halls of fame. In contrast, this volume is totally uncritical and entirely descriptive.

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