

Whatever the origins, Whimpress emphasizes what he terms the “discontinuity” of the Aboriginal experience of cricket. In documenting and demonstrating the essentially ephemeral quality of Aboriginal experience of the game, he places the argument of the book between the oppositionist historians who emphasize the status of Aborigines as victims and the revisionists who stress the active nature of Aboriginal resistance or accommodation to European activity and culture. The majority of writing on Aborigines in cricket (by historians such as Rex Harcourt, John Mulvaney, and Colin Tatz) has adopted the former stance, arguing that there was a widespread popularity of cricket in Aboriginal communities which has been destroyed by racism.

One of the major strengths of this book is the way in which Whimpress presents and analyzes the experiences of individual cricketers, such as those mentioned earlier, and puts these narratives into the general context of social prejudice and legal discrimination facing Aboriginal Australians. Thus, in order to play first-class cricket, Gilbert had to obtain permission from the Chief Protector of Aborigines to move from the Barambah Aboriginal Settlement to Brisbane, deal with the ostracism of some of his Queensland teammates, and accept a lower match fee than his white colleagues. Regardless of his superior playing record, there is no evidence that Gilbert was ever seriously considered for the Australian team, despite the dearth of penetrative fast bowlers during his time in first-class cricket. In this context, Whimpress shows the kinds of role restriction that aboriginal cricketers faced.

However, Aboriginal rugby league and Australian Rules footballers faced similar pressures. What made the difference compared to cricket? Whimpress argues that “one of the reasons why Aboriginal involvement in cricket has lacked continuity is that there is a basic contradiction between the overriding values alleged to be symbolised by and inherent in the game, and the Aboriginal experience of it... Cricket was said to combine physical, mental and moral elements, but above all to stand for ‘fair play.’” He is persuasive in examining the ways in which racial stereotyping excluded Aborigines from full and continuous incorporation into the game. In this context, Chapter 2 provides a well-argued exploration of the issue, symbolized in the constant sniping at the legality of the bowling action of the three most prominent fast bowlers in the period under examination.

In addition to being a major contribution to the field, Whimpress’s book has the added attraction of being accessible to both specialists and general readers, as it is written in lucid and elegant English and not that maimed and fractured language which so bedevils the academic approach. As such, it will have a wider and more lasting effect.

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JARVIE, GRANT, ED. *Sport and the Making of Celtic Cultures*. London: Leicester University Press, 1999. Pp. ix + 198. Notes, index. £45.00 cb.

This book of twelve diverse essays takes as its theme the interactions between sport and the Celtic peoples of Europe. Chronologically it spans two millennia, while geographically it covers Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. There is nothing here on either Manx or Cornish sport, which is disappointing given the active research which is going on in these areas, but the volume nonetheless offers a varied array of subjects and treatments. Unfortunately, that each paper averages under 6,000 words limits the utility of some. Moreover, most consist not of new work, but of the reworking of existing bodies of research. Some are simply

condensed versions of earlier monographs, such as Art O. Maolfabhail's comparison of modern and traditional hurling practices. Others, like Hugh Dan MacLennan's essay on shinty's role in New Year celebrations, are extractions from broader works. At least one other—Alan Bairner's essay on civic and ethnic nationalism in Irish sport—is largely an attempt to update earlier work. For the most part these efforts are successful, though they retain the faults and errors of their original patterns, such as Marcus de Burca's reluctance to differentiate between cultural and political nationalism, or Joseph Bradley's grandiose claims for the Gaelic Athletic Association in Scotland when it remains the interest of an almost microscopic minority. On the other hand, Michel Lagree's praiseworthy piece on Breton sport makes innovative comparisons between various Celtic regions, and draws the interesting conclusion that Celticism in Breton sports contributed to the creation of a supposed "national character" that was inclusive rather than exclusive.

Four contributions stand out. The first is the introductory essay by the editor. It does a sterling job in defining the Celt, hinting at his distinctiveness, offering some ideas of the place of sport in the Celtic cultures, and briefly indicating the importance attached to sport. Fundamentally, though, it creates a setting in which the following essays appear almost as a coherent body. Equally successful is Gareth William's overview of Welsh sporting literature. Informally written, it is both amusing and informative. While decrying the quality of Welsh sporting literature in comparison to its American counterpart, it still offers a series of inspiring and instructive examples of the varying portrayals of Welsh identity in fact and fiction writing. Philip Dine's contribution opens with a canned history of Breton nationalism, going on to summarize the histories of cycling, wrestling and football in the region. He then notes the apparent contradiction of nationalist fervor centered on sports that were neither indigenous nor region-specific, and on sportsmen who were not native (who often proved to be essentially transient figures). Ultimately he seems to point up the relatively weak nature and minimal role of sport in Breton Celticism and nationalism. Finally, Lorna Jackson has provided an extremely thoughtful assessment of sporting development, practices and participants in the Scottish region of Argyllshire. Her research activity has been copious, but her conclusions remain justly circumspect, stressing only the extended continuities of the roles and actualities of sport in the area.

Overall Grant Jarvie deserves congratulations for his role in assembling this collection. Not only is his own written contribution a useful introduction to the book, but the copious cross-references give the entire work a strong feeling of continuity and cohesion. As a collection it is primarily a success. The nature of most of its contents will make it a useful reference for academics in the field, a suitable introductory text for those with peripheral or related interests, and a constant source of reference for the undergraduate student.

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