

Duncan Scott with Chris Bent, *Borrowed Time, A Social History of Running: Salford Harriers, 1884-1984*. Salford Harriers, Manchester, 1984, Appendices. pp.60. £2.95 or mail order £3.35 (includes postage) 1 from Salford Harriers, 45 Brosscroft, Hadfield, via Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 7HF.

In the last few years, there have appeared in the United Kingdom a number of publications which celebrate the centenaries of the different Harrier clubs founded in the late nineteenth century. For the most part, these books have been for the benefit of members and associated clubs. The history of Salford Harriers is in part representative of this development in that it focuses upon the great figures within the club, the major successes of the club, its changing fortunes over time, and the occasional in-house anecdote. However, it attempts to do more than this, to place the

story within the social, economic and political context of the last one hundred years.

In so doing, the book takes sponsorship as the theme to illustrate the major changes that have occurred. Whereas in the 1880s, sponsorship was organised individually, locally based, and of a social nature, in the 1980s it is corporately managed, nationally and internationally based, and of a commoditised nature. How, the authors ask, does the structure of a club change from a few dozen runners making their way around an unkempt municipal path, to 18,000 participants competing in front of one million spectators and ten million television viewers?

Ultimately, according to Scott and Bent, the answer lies in the nature of control and profit. If individuals are training fifty to one hundred miles per week they cannot be demonstrating at Greenham Common. If thousands of individuals are running, they present a ready-made market for shoe and dress manufacturers, for publishers of popular magazines, and for travel agencies.

Clearly this is an exciting and potentially productive theme to pursue. Nonetheless, while the authors raise the questions and provide broadly-based answers, they never really demonstrate how these changes occurred. Indeed, they seem to have difficulty in documenting the history of the club in the detail necessary to demonstrate the process of change. On the contrary, we are given tantalising tit-bits about the rise and fall of club membership, the development of alternative leisure activities during the inter-war years, the changes in life expectancies and infant mortality rates, the changing nature of work and training, and the development of athletic gear. Yet in no instance are these themes fully developed or integrated into an overall argument.

What we are left with is a sense of a club which largely owed its origin and development to the entrepreneurial and organisational activities of one individual (Harry Hardwick), which has produced its share of outstanding runners, especially prior to World War II, and which now appears to be undergoing a revival. We get no real notion of what it meant for the large majority of members who were working class. Nor are the changes within the club linked to the broader changes within the Manchester Region. This can be attributed in part to the limited range of sources utilised by the

author, and in part, I suspect, to their need to cater for two audiences: the immediate members and the scholars of sport. I do hope they rectify this situation and produce a much longer and more closely argued book in the near future.

John McGuire
School of Social Sciences
Western Australian
Institute of Technology