

**Book Reviews**

**Max Howell, Reet Howell and David W. Brown, *The Sporting Image: A Pictorial History of Queenslanders at Play* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989). Illus., index pp. 121, \$34.95.**

**Bill Murray, *Glasgow's Giants: 100 Years of the Old Firm*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1988). Illus., pp. 224. £7.95.**

The Howells and David Brown have assembled another fine collection of illustrations, a sequel to their previously-published illustrated *A History of Australian Sport*.

The authors have searched far and wide to assemble pictures from a wide range of sources including the more obvious and accessible places, such as Mitchell, John Oxley and Fryer (University of Queensland) libraries, to collections at a number of other secondary and tertiary institutions, local historical societies and private collections (including, we notice, the Murray Phillips private collection). The authors have also made good use of weekly newspapers, such as the *Queenslander*, which always had a large number of sporting illustrations. The result is a very compelling and varied blend of photographs, cartoons, pamphlets, and newspaper headlines. Well written captions enhance the presentation and extend the text.

The subjects covered are equally varied. There is a comprehensive range of pictures of sport in the city and the bush, men's, women's and mixed sport, major and minor sports, and formal and less formal sport. Some illustrations are ideal for capturing the atmosphere of sport. The packed poolside and gallery at a women's competitive swimming meeting at Booroodabin Baths, Brisbane, in 1904 conveys the great public interest in this sport at this time. There is an equally interesting picture of a sizeable and mixed crowd

watching an inter-club fixture at Townsville Tennis Club in 1900 which provides a sense of the emerging competitive element in lawn tennis. Such a picture contrasts nicely with the all-male audience at a billiard saloon - 'the refuge of the working man' - in 1905.

The pictures will also be very useful for exploring further the changing techniques and orthodoxies in games. There are a good number of tennis pictures which suggest how different the game was then. An illustration of a tennis game in progress provides information of position of players, the lack of movement in the game and clothing worn. Changing techniques and orthodoxies in games are little explored themes although Phil Mosely had some interesting material on the British versus the European style of play in Australian soccer.

With many pictures from the late 19th and early 20th centuries this book has a great deal of material on a largely neglected area of Australian women's sport - costume and dress reform - an excellent research subject for an article/thesis/book. The costumes of many women playing tennis, golf and cricket at the turn of the century appear so cumbersome - full-length skirts, and large hats - that movement must have been almost as restricted as that of Joan Sutherland in a performance of the *Merry Widow*. But by the second decade of the 20th century, dress reform was underway and some women cricketers were playing in trousers (although they settled eventually for culottes). There were striking changes in the attire of women in swimming and tennis.

Although there is limited space in this slim volume for text, there are some pertinent topics covered: in addition to chapters on individual sports there are a number of thematic chapters which explore the rise of clubs, the influence of schools and ideology, women's sport, ethnic sport and sport and war.

It is also encouraging to see that we are beginning to come to terms with some of the regional variants in Australian sport - a task begun by John Daley in *Elysian Fields* and continued by Brian

Stoddart in his short work on Western Australian sport and continued by Andrew Lemon who has examined some of the different colonial traditions in Australian thoroughbred horseracing. The authors in this book have some interesting things to say about the rise of football in Queensland: Australian Rules was the main game in the 1870's, it was not until the 1880s that Rugby became the dominant code.

The price of this slim volume seems rather steep but one has to accept that to achieve excellent reproduction throughout the book requires superior quality paper.

I believe that Bill Murray had his priorities right in publishing his academic account of the Old Firm first and then bringing out a more popular work - 'a critical celebration' - to coincide with the centenary of the 'Old Firm'. A number of us have found in the past that it is difficult to write (at the instigation of one or another publisher) for both audiences at the same time. There is always the danger of not totally satisfying either audience.

This book should appeal to a wider audience as it deals with the great players, events, trials and tribulations of each club and includes team and result lists and even Murray's all-time Celtic and Ranger XIs. The use of material from the 'incomparable picture library' of the *Glasgow Herald* will certainly help attract a wider audience.

Some of the pictures convey the sectarian atmosphere of the competition far better than words. I particularly like the young Ranger supporter wearing a shirt with the slogan 'Proud to be a Prod' and that of a vendor outside Celtic Park selling the faithful a range of symbols to support the Club from Celtic badges and images of favourite players alongside rosaries, crosses and images of the pope. Then there is another picture of a Mass at Celtic Park which was 'put in the disposal of the catholic hierarchy' in the same way that Rangers made Ibrox available for Orange Order or any other suitable Protestant cause. Other illustrations, like that of the dyed in the blue

Ranger fan - with a Union Jack hearthrug - convey the intensity of fan loyalty.

Bill Murray being Bill Murray there is no attempt to hide from any controversy, even in a popular work, though it is Rangers who seem to get more of the brickbats - presumably they deserve it more. Murray castigates the 'squalidness of Rangers' attitudes to Catholics for instance: 'there is something rather pathetic in the spectacle of players having to clear their prospective marriage to a (lapsed) catholic with the management' (p. 123).

There is also some fine analysis of the fans on both sides - the making of a bigot - and delving into the roots of sectarianism through literary sources and football songs.

There is also some suggestive material on the images of both clubs on and off the field. There are interesting contrasts between the respectable establishment Rangers, who play in a no-nonsense uncompromising and hard style on the field with the scruffier immigrant Irish, battling for recognition, who play with much greater flair and initiative and disregard for convention.

*Glasgow's Giants* provides a good model for a popular history. It has much inside material about stars and major games to appeal to the fans of football but at the same time it is provocative and searching. It will generate further debate as it should about central issues relating to this competition - sectarianism in particular.

Both these books underline how important illustrations are to sport history in its academic and popular manifestations. We should all work assiduously to collect the best possible illustrations for any published work on the history of sport. We should insist that publishers include a good range of illustrations in any sports history monograph - both academic and popular.

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