

# Olympics or Tests: The Disposition of the British Sporting Public, 1948

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The years immediately following World War II witnessed a boom in attendance for the major spectator sports and popular entertainments in Britain. Season long attendance records that have never been exceeded were set in football and cricket. Record numbers of spectators turned out for horse-race meetings, despite French success, and for boxing, despite the vulnerability of British heavyweights. Record amounts were gambled on horse and dog-racing and the growth of the football pools was meteoric. Away from the sports field, cinema and dance-hall attendances grew to unprecedented heights.’ The basic reasons for this post-war boom in spectator sports and entertainment are clearly identifiable. For many people such activities furnished relief because, ‘in 1945 there were six years of grief, boredom, frustration and slaughter to make up for’.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, rising wages and post-war gratuities boosted disposable income but shortages and rationing stringently limited viable targets for increased spending.<sup>3</sup> Cars, clothing, food and consumer durables of all kinds were either rationed or so scarce as to be almost unavailable. Thus, a good part of additional spending went on entertainment of all kinds. Anticipations, expressed as early as 1946, that this bubble of demand would soon burst were not in fact fulfilled for a number of years.

Although the election of the Labour Government in 1945 certainly constituted a change in political direction, serious doubts have been cast on judgements that this was accompanied by a desire for social revolution. In their everyday lives, most Britons seemed more intent on picking up the pieces and resuming familiar routines than on pursuing radical new departures. Historians have commented on the, ‘lack of a “fresh start” mentality’, and the popularity of ‘demands for a return to normality

rather than something radically different'.<sup>4</sup> It is hardly surprising that in sports, activities that tend to harbour, indeed cherish, traditions and traditional ways, the general disposition toward the known and familiar was sustained, even intensified. While the popularity of speedway racing may be viewed as an exception, nevertheless, Paul Addison's judgement holds good that 'the post-war boom in leisure witnessed the zenith of the old and established pastimes rather than the introduction of new ones'.<sup>5</sup> The post-war aspirations of sports' organisers and followers were fulfilled by the re-establishment of familiar patterns and styles of competition and the calendar of the major events. Even the Government viewed 'the "as soon as possible" resumption of temporarily shelved traditional sporting events as a matter of major importance'.<sup>6</sup> Getting back to normal was itself a difficult enough task given the dislocations and damage inflicted during the war and the problems that beset the British economy in the immediate post-war years. The considerable energies that recovery necessitated were directed overwhelmingly along traditional lines. Furthermore, the guiding control of such efforts remained predominantly in the hands of those who had directed British sport in the pre-war era. Whatever the drive for change that may have influenced the political realm, it made little impact on British sport.

The prevailing tastes of the average British sports' follower were not only traditional, they were also parochial, or at least domestic. The bread and butter furnished by competition in the Football League and the County Cricket Championship, the two or three day meets of the Flat or National Hunt season, or the weekly greyhound racing programs, were spiced by particular 'national' events such as the Grand National, the Boat Race, the Cup Final or the Derby. Television had yet to bring a wider range of international sporting events onto the menu from which the sports follower chose to partake. International events only intermittently diverted Britons from preoccupation with domestic sports concerns. In fact, the very term, international, was most commonly applied to competition between the English, Welsh, Scots and Irish. A

significant exception to this general pattern was provided by the summer-long tours of visiting cricket teams, particularly the Australians. Matches against the counties and the five game Test series were essentially 'domesticated', brought within the ambit of the average sports follower's concerns. The summer of 1948 provided an interesting test of the willingness of the British sports fan to reach beyond prevailing domestic routine and respond to the staging in London of a major international sports event. A Test series against Australia and the Olympic Games clashed for attention and support and while the success of the former was never in doubt a last minute crisis threatened to envelop the latter. The balance of this article will develop the various aspects of this contrast.

### **The Austerity Games of 1948**

The official decision to hold the summer Olympics of 1948 in London was announced in February 1946.<sup>7</sup> From the outset there existed a general awareness that post-war circumstances would result in a more modest staging of the Games than had been the case in 1936. However, it is unlikely that many people would have forecast the severe degree to which war-time austerity would throw its long shadow into the late 1940s. Few could have anticipated the general level of post-war economic difficulties which afflicted Britain, intensified by the savage winter of 1946-7 and the convertibility crisis of late summer 1947. Contemporaries were not to know how austere the background to the Austerity Games was to be.

The planning of the Games never involved any projects for the construction of major new facilities. The Empire Stadium and Pool at Wembley provided the primary venues, with the greyhound racing track to be replaced with a cinder track and some other relatively minor alterations to be made.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, at other venues within, and outside, London, improvements and adaptations for Games events were minimal. At the Herne Hill cycling venue new timing and photo-finish equipment were installed and new permanent stands constructed. At Henley, the rowing course was slightly widened.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the modest outlays on preparations and the avoidance of government expenditures on them, such activities, and indeed the Games themselves, became targets for criticism particularly during the recurring economic crises of 1947. At the time the Government was moving to discourage mid-week sporting events in the Spring of 1947, and again at the beginning of the 1947-8 Season of winter sports. An opportunity developed for the opposition press, and particularly Lord Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard*, to criticise the Games to which the Government had committed itself at an early stage. With unwarranted references to, 'large-scale construction work', and, 'grandiose and luxurious schemes', the sense of contradiction between Olympic preparations and the stringent economic circumstances facing the British people was exaggerated and a case for abandoning the Games was established.<sup>10</sup> Later, attacks were made from the opposition benches in Parliament on some of the arrangements for accommodating visiting athletes in the absence of an Olympic Village, a 'luxury' abandoned in the face of economic difficulties. Such attacks were accompanied by questions as to the wisdom of holding the Games at all.<sup>11</sup> How far significant reservations over the Games reflected public thinking is difficult to determine, although some newspapers published polls showing two-thirds support for continuing with preparations.<sup>12</sup>

### **Fears for the Success of the Games**

Although not heavily stressed at this stage, one argument against the Games that was to become relevant in the summer of 1948 was a doubt about the degree of public interest in Britain for many of the sports included in the Olympic program.<sup>13</sup>

Even in newspapers such as the *Daily Herald*, which was not hostile to the Government or the Games, fears were expressed during the summer of 1947 that the following year's Olympics and the Australian Cricket Tour might become victims of the crisis.<sup>14</sup> Such press readings of the situation were not without substance. Serious concerns existed in official circles in regard to both events. During the late summer of 1947

both the Olympic Organising Committee and the British Broadcasting Corporation approached the Government for assurances that the Olympics would take place. Such assurances were given, but only after discussion at the highest Government levels.<sup>15</sup> Planning for the Australian Tour was interspersed with correspondence between the MCC and the Home Office, first on the general topic of a ban on mid-week sports and then more specifically on whether the Test matches should be of four or five day's duration. The Home Office, very sensitive about accusations that 'the poor man's sports' were being penalised and favour shown to 'the more privileged past-times', of which cricket was considered one, was finally persuaded to accept five day games because of earlier commitments to the Australians.<sup>16</sup>

As a degree of economic recovery was achieved in 1948, concerns whether or not the Games or the Tour would take place at all were replaced by an air of crisis regarding the financial viability of the former, in sharp contrast to the assured prosperity of the latter.

In relation to the financial commitments involved in staging later Games, the outlays on the 1948 Olympics were modest indeed. The total budget of the Organising Committee came to little more than £750 000. Of help in keeping this figure low was the fact that both the Government and the Armed Forces provided a range of facilities and services free of charge or at very favourable rates. The same was true of numerous private organisations and local government authorities.<sup>17</sup> The absence of major capital projects also served to keep the cost of staging the London Olympics within modest proportions. Nevertheless, in the context of Britain's economic situation in the period leading up to the Games and the consequent appeals for Britons to display self-sacrifice and restraint, even the modest amounts laid out were of significance. Lord Burghley, Chairman of the Organising Committee and most consistent public spokesman for the Games even used these economic difficulties to endorse the holding of the Games in London. 'British prestige will be enhanced by our running the Games. Foreign visitors will say how

wonderful that Britain can face crisis and still put on a great show like this.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the prestige gained, it would count for little if the Games turned into a financial failure.

From an early stage it was recognised that the, 'principal item of revenue was the sale of tickets'.<sup>19</sup> In its turn, this dependence created another problem, how to cover considerable outlays incurred well ahead of any significant ticket sales. Here the solution was found in the form of various advances and guarantees provided by Wembley Stadium Ltd, to the total of £200 000.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the Government undertook the preparation of accommodation for visiting athletes with the understanding it would be reimbursed by the Organising Committee once ticket revenues began to come in.<sup>21</sup> While the Government's primary motive for supporting the Games rested on the belief that tourist, and particularly dollar, earnings would be stimulated, these would not impact directly on the financing of the Olympics nor would they serve as income in advance of the event.<sup>22</sup> With minimal revenues to be derived from sources like television that were later to be so lucrative, there was no escaping that ticket sales would ultimately determine whether or not the Games would be a financial success.

### **Marketing the Games**

The term financial success itself needs to be examined, particularly as it reflects the thinking of those involved in the Organising Committee on how the Games should, or should not, be 'marketed'. These judgements were, in their turn, influenced by mandates from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) who endeavoured to ensure that the Games were 'promoted not so much as a commercial venture but in the best interests of sport'. The consequence was that 'many means of raising money are not permissible'. For Burghley's Organising Committee it was not possible, 'to view the Games as a coldly calculated business proposition of which the principal motive is to make a profit'.<sup>23</sup> Thus, while never indifferent to the financial limitations within which they had to operate, the Organising Committee was not primarily driven by a

determination to make the Games profitable. While Lord Burghley emphasised that the Games were 'a non-profit making concern', a real danger developed in the summer of 1948 that they would make a loss.<sup>24</sup>

Plans for the allocation and sale of tickets reflected this 'non-business' approach. Initial plans for ticket allocation were made in October 1947, but actual distribution was not expected until April 1948 and even printing was not to take place until March. There was to be a three way division of tickets. As mandated by the IOC, 50 per cent were to go overseas and be distributed through the national Olympic Committees of the participating countries. This requirement appears to have been justified by the notion that there existed a demand for tickets among participants, officials and followers of the various Olympic sports and that this would sustain the 'international' character of the Games in the stands as well as on the fields of competition. The strength of such demand was essentially taken for granted and tickets were allocated, not sold. The process of distribution involved administration, not marketing. Much the same set of attitudes was reflected in the handling of the domestic 50 per cent of tickets. 16 2/3 per cent of tickets were assigned for distribution through the respective governing bodies in the United Kingdom. It was claimed that the Organising Committee 'are trying to ensure that those most closely connected with the seventeen sports to be held receive some sort of priority'. The balance of 33 1/3 per cent of tickets were available to the general public who were advised not to apply until appropriate announcements were made by the Wembley Box Office. This inference that the British public were at the back of the line was difficult to miss. In meeting applications from all sources priority was to be given to series bookings, those for single days of competition were to have a lower priority.<sup>25</sup>

By early December 1947, further details of ticket allocations were announced and the general public was able to apply from that date. However, it was order forms, not money, that were to be submitted and it was not expected that tickets would be distributed until April or May

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1948.<sup>26</sup> The tone of these official announcements and the procedures for obtaining tickets were not suggestive of aggressive salesmanship. Rather, the style reflected that of a controlling authority dispensing barely deserved favours; a style with which the British public had become all too familiar in dealings with officialdom at all levels.

From the outset, one rationale offered for the system of distribution adopted was that it would minimise the number of tickets falling into the hands of 'spivs'. The Organising Committee was credited with the statement that 'We are going to make it so difficult to get hold of tickets that the "spiv" will find it much too hard work'.<sup>27</sup> When, in March 1948, it was announced that tickets were being printed, a similar theme was developed. It was emphasised that an intricate design had been adopted to avoid duplication and that applications for tickets were being examined with, 'microscopic care', to avoid sales to 'totes' or, in North American terminology, 'scalpers'.<sup>28</sup>

Until the end of May 1948, a general optimism prevailed regarding ticket sales. Reports in the press and at the annual general meeting of the Amateur Athletic Association indicated a strong demand for tickets from overseas, from affiliated bodies and the general public. The demand from the USA was particularly strong, amounting to over £100 000 worth of tickets, well ahead of Sweden, source of the second largest foreign demand at £30 000. Athletics, boxing and swimming events were reported to be almost fully booked.<sup>29</sup> An air of optimism pervaded official statements regarding ticket sales and to this point the Organising Committee's restrained salesmanship was not a significant impediment to the attainment of financial success.

### **Concerns over the Financial Viability of the Games**

This situation changed quite dramatically at the end of May 1948 with the Games barely two months away. 'Cancellations poured in all at once from the USA involving a considerable sum of money and placing a great strain on the Box Office officials and staff.'<sup>30</sup> The collapse of demand for tickets emanated not only from the United States themselves

but also from American forces serving in Europe. Some reports had as much as £120 000 of ticket orders evaporating, leaving no events sold out and nearly half of Wembley's capacity of 82 000 available for the Opening Ceremonies.<sup>31</sup> Though shortages of food and accommodation were occasionally cited as causes of this adverse trend, the main reason was the unease provoked by the deepening international crisis over Berlin. The disappearance of a significant element of overseas demand created a situation where financial success came to depend more on the rapid sales of tickets to the British public. This in turn created two problems; one of a technical nature, the other stemming from misgivings over the extent and depth of public interest in the Games. The first could be solved quite quickly, the second was to generate concerns over the financial viability of the Games right up to the eve of the Opening Ceremonies.<sup>32</sup>

The technical problem arose because the main Wembley Box Office had been 'set up to deal in the main with bulk issues'. If sales to the British public were to be emphasised then facilities, 'had to be expanded to deal with a vast volume of small individual applications'. This was largely achieved by the last minute decentralisation of the sales process and the employment of a wide range of ticket agencies, in and outside of London.<sup>33</sup>

A much more formidable question was whether the demand itself, not previously cultivated with any enthusiasm, could suddenly be called into existence, as if it were fully grown. Here doubts about the British public's interest in the Games and the power of 'domestic' counter attractions came to the fore. Put very simply, would the public's enthusiasm for the Olympics be sufficient for them to absorb the sudden shortfall in ticket sales? There was legitimate cause for concern because doubts about the intensity of public interest were long-standing. Disappointing attendances at major athletic meetings at the White City, London, in 1947 had raised questions about potential following for the Olympics.<sup>34</sup> In August 1947, a letter appeared in the *Times* comparing

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the excitement already being exhibited in Helsinki over their hosting of the Games in 1952 and British preoccupation with the familiar round of professional sports, most notably dog-racing and football.<sup>35</sup> Such comparisons were sufficient cause for concern that they drew a response from Sir Noel Curtis-Bennett, Vice-Chairman of the British Olympic Association. After indulging in many of the usual platitudes regarding the Games' beneficial impact on international relations, he saw fit to observe how 'few people in this country realise the intense reverence in which the Olympic spirit is held throughout the world'.<sup>36</sup> Similar fears about the 'parochialism' of British sporting interests were reflected in June 1948 in a *Times*' leader previewing that summer's series of Test matches against the Australian cricketers led by the legendary Don Bradman. It was observed that:

in a summer scattered with sporting festivals like plums in a pudding, the five Test Matches against Australia still take first place in domestic affection and interest and not even the international and record breaking rivalries of the coming Olympic Games can stir up the same delightful anxieties.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of June, concerns were being expressed about the lack of visible preparations for the Games and even the Government seemed ill-disposed to display enthusiasm, declining to permit floodlighting in parts of central London as had been done for other public events.<sup>38</sup>

The situation developing in June and July 1948 placed considerable onus on the Organising Committee's press relations. A Press Officer had been appointed by the Committee in January 1947. Initially working with a sub-committee specifically assigned to deal with the press and with publicity issues, the Press Officer, RF Church, was later required to report directly to the Executive Committee and especially to the Director of Organisation, EJ Holt.<sup>39</sup> It is not clear if this reorganisation was, at least in part, a response to criticism of press relations. Certainly such relations, as they operated in the summer of 1948, were both condemned as a significant factor in the slow development of domestic ticket sales

and praised for playing a critical role in overcoming the very same problem. Some alleged that it was the indifference of the British press which set the tone for public apathy and that both only evaporated as the Games themselves got underway. It was observed that press relations were offhand in style and that there was little meaningful liaison with the press. The result was that London newspapers 'do not wax enthusiastic about the Games and several barely mention them'.<sup>40</sup> Some observers saw a clear link between the indifference of the press and that of the public. 'For weeks London had seemed cold and indifferent to the great spectacle being mounted in its midst. Ticket sales were slow. Newspapers had space for the Test cricket and dog and horse-racing but little for the Olympics.'<sup>41</sup>

### **Last-minute Reprieve**

The official Report of the Organising Committee interpreted the situation, and particularly the role of the press, very differently. In retrospect, it explained the slow development of domestic demand as a product of the public's impression, 'that tickets for the principal events would be difficult to obtain'. In June 1948, the Executive Committee instituted a new policy opening up sales to the general public and, with press cooperation in publicising ticket availability, it was possible to 'recreate demand'.<sup>42</sup> Evidence that the transition to a revised marketing strategy was not as smooth and effective as portrayed in the Report was provided by the fact that the *Times* only began to publicise new ticket outlets one week before the Games were due to begin and by the Organising Committee's own admission that 'it was not until immediately prior to the opening of the Games that it became probable that the new demand would overtake the overseas cancellations'. The last-minute nature of this 'reprieve' is substantiated by press comment.<sup>43</sup> Once the Games actually got underway, sales boomed and the Organising Committee was suddenly talking of profits to be ploughed back into amateur athletics in Britain. Attendances, particularly at the main venues, remained high

throughout the Games and a financial disaster had been averted, if only by a narrow margin of time. Even the press was alleged to be caught up in the wave of belated enthusiasm. 'The most glowing articles appeared even from the ranks of the bitterest critics and, despite the counter-attraction of a disturbed political situation, more space was given to the Games than to any other single event since the end of the war.'<sup>44</sup>

### **Olympics versus Cricket Tests**

Why did it take so long for public enthusiasm to rise to a point where the demand for tickets proved the salvation of the Organising Committee? The weather may have played some part. Although the Games opened at the end of the month in a heat wave, the first half of July was reported in some parts of Southern England to have been the wettest on record.<sup>45</sup> Others argued that slow sales were the product of the traditional British aversion to advanced publicity and American style ballyhoo. This tradition was intensified by 'privations and a severely restricted standard of living ... the pinch and plainness of their struggle for survival', which left little time for a sustained period of anticipation.<sup>46</sup>

This reasoning draws one's attention to comparison with the strong counter-attraction of the Australian cricket tour. Despite England's thorough defeat in Australia during the winter of 1946-7 and what was developing as the 'doleful experiences in the West Indies' in early 1948, the Australian tour did succeed, unlike the Olympics, in engendering a lengthy period of anticipation, witnessed by heavy advanced ticket sales for the Test matches. The diverting privations to which some attributed the lack of Olympic 'fever' seemingly did not preclude lengthy and excited contemplation of the Test series in 1948.

When the 'formidable list of names' of the touring Australians was announced in the British press on 12 February 1948, it was thought by some to make up 'as good a side as Australia has ever sent here'. But, based partially on success against South Africa in 1947, there was optimism that English standards were recovering and a close contest could be anticipated.<sup>47</sup> Such feelings were reflected in concrete terms the

next day when it was announced that all reserved tickets for the Saturday of the First Test had been sold, four months in advance.<sup>48</sup> By early March heavy sales were reported for the other Tests; by the fourth of the month no reserved tickets remained for the first four days of the Oval Test, still five months away.<sup>49</sup> Anticipations of high attendances were to be comprehensively fulfilled. The record for attendance at the five days of a Test in England was set at Lord's during the second game of the series. It was immediately broken in the Third Test at Old Trafford and raised even higher in the Fourth at Leeds.<sup>50</sup>

The popularity of the 1948 Test series was in part a product of the general boom in attendance at post World War II sporting events. It should, however, be re-emphasised that the boom was selective and generally traditional in its application. Tests with Australia were part of the, so very attractive, familiar routine of 'domestic' sporting competition. The Olympics were simply not seen in comparable terms, they were not part of that routine, that familiar pattern. They were an international event staged in Britain, not a British event. Impressive and attractive though they might be once they actually arrived before the British public, the Olympics were not relished in anticipation by the majority of sports followers in Britain.

In addition to the attraction of the known interest in the series was stimulated by the strong tradition of rivalry between England and Australia, rivalry which incorporated both mutual regard and a sharp competitive edge. Later diminished somewhat by the emergence of strong West Indian sides, England versus Australia was still the pinnacle of cricketing competition in 1948. In complaining of the weakness of the side sent out in 1947-8, one West Indian official observed that 'it seems that England does not mind being beaten by other countries as long as she does well against Australia Everything must be subjugated to those tests which is profoundly unwise.'<sup>51</sup> The *Times*' cricket correspondent endorsed this judgement when previewing the 1948 season. 'All cricketers feel that extra throb, whether it be of challenge or admiration, when an Australian team takes the field.'<sup>52</sup>

There is no doubt that the knowledge, common to spectators and players, that the Tour marked the close of one of the greatest of cricketing careers, that of Don Bradman, added further to the anticipation of the 1948 season. By contrast, anticipation of the Olympics was not stimulated by the expected presence of 'stars'. The twelve year interval from the previous Olympics, combined with British unfamiliarity with many of the sports involved, to assure that there were few 'big names' to serve as magnets for public interest. While the Games were to produce historically notable individual performances, such as those of Fanny Blankers-Koen and Bob Mathias, these did not generate appeal in advance.

Hailed as an 'imperial occasion', the Australian tour nevertheless revealed at times differences in cricketing philosophy and these in turn introduced an element of acrimony into this 'family' affair.<sup>53</sup> The attraction which the series held in prospect and sustained well despite poor English performances, stemmed from traditions of a rivalry which, though often friendly, had from time to time become rather intense, if not hostile. Memories of the 1932 'Bodyline' series still served to fuel outbreaks of less than fraternal feelings. Certain aspects of England's tour to Australia in 1946-7 did nothing to diminish the potential for ill-will.<sup>54</sup> Such traditional 'edge' was not missing from the 1948 series. A *Times*' leader article in previewing the series saw fit to commend the tourists as, 'less dour perhaps this time than usual'. Nevertheless, when Australia batted on with a big lead in the First Test it was seen as reflective of their 'attitude to a five-day Test match'. They progressed, 'with ruthless determination and, at times, painful slowness'.<sup>55</sup> A preview of the Fourth Test included the hope 'that the game will be played in a spirit free from a certain waywardness of humour which greatly spoiled the pleasure at Manchester'.<sup>56</sup>

Bradman himself, described early in the tour as 'not as aloof as in the past', was eager to avoid controversy and refuted allegations that Australians took the game too seriously.<sup>57</sup> However, when he reflected on the tour certain elements of controversy did creep in. He argued that

Australia's slow batting in the First Test was the product of Yardley's negative tactics in captaining England.<sup>58</sup> Bradman also criticized the absence of a sightboard at the pavilion end at Trent Bridge and the behaviour of members in the pavilion who booed Keith Miller when he bounced a ball at Hutton. Later, the Old Trafford crowd was the target of criticism for cheering Sid Barnes' serious injury in the Third Test.<sup>59</sup> Such contrasts in approach, and the controversies they occasionally provoked, gave an 'edge' to the Test series. While this might distress the purist, it served to generate and sustain the appeal to other followers of the game. Conversely, the absence of such established rivalries and feelings limited the appeal of the Olympics, certainly in advance of the event. It is not intended to imply that the Tests actually took spectators away from the Games and caused, in a direct sense, the difficulties in stimulating domestic demand for tickets. But it is clear that, for various reasons, in the British sporting climate of 1948 the Tests were much easier to 'sell' than the Olympics.

In much of the long-term planning for the Olympic Games of 1948, the Organising Committee was relying for critically important ticket sales on overseas demand. The developing Berlin crisis struck a late, and potentially fatal blow at that strategy. The belated switch to an emphasis on the domestic sale of tickets was eventually successful but success came at the very last minute. That escape from financial failure was by such a narrow margin of time is explained by a combination of tradition, parochialism and the attraction of known names, characteristics which drew the public interest much more intently to the Australian cricket tour than to the Olympic Games. It is interesting to contemplate if the same balance of attraction would hold good at the end of the twentieth century. One suspects not!

## NOTES

1. Paul Addison, *Now the War is Over*, Jonathan Cape, London 1984, pp. 124-5 and 135; T E B Howarth, *Prospect and Reality, Britain 1945-55*, Collins, London, 1985, p. 66; Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*,

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- Harmondsworth, London, 1982, p. 75. The 'Betting Boom' even provoked the Royal Commission on Gambling in 1949.
2. Addison, *Now the War is Over*, p. 113.
  3. Addison, *Now the War is Over*, p. 114.
  4. Peter Hennessy, *Never Again, Britain, 1945*, Vintage, London, 1992, p. 116; Bill Williamson, *The Temper of the Times*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 29.
  5. Addison, *Now the War is Over*, p. 114.
  6. *Daily Herald*, 15 Nov. 1945.
  7. *Times* (London), 15 Feb. 1946.
  8. Plans for a second swimming pool to be constructed within the Wembley complex were abandoned in Spring 1947 when costs became 'prohibitive'. *Report of the Organising Committee, London*, 1948, p. 40.
  9. *Times* (London), 26 Oct. 1946; *Daily Herald*, 10 Nov. 1947; *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 42 The stands at Herne Hill were described as 'the only major constructional work of a permanent nature carried out at the instance of the Organising Committee'. The new access road to Wembley Stadium would also have to be considered in this category.
  10. *New York Times*, 4 Sept. 1947; *Evening Standard*, 2 Sept. 1947.
  11. *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 441, cols. 239-40, 2124-32 and 2417-8.
  12. *New York Times*, 6 Apr. 1947.
  13. *Evening Standard*, 2 Sept. 1947.
  14. *Daily Herald*, 11 Aug. 1947.
  15. Public Record Office, (PRO), CAB 124/767, BBC to General Post Office, 10 July 1947; Morrison to Atlee, 23 Aug. 1947; and Morrison to the Board of Trade, 17 Sept. 1947.
  16. PRO/HO/45/24289, Memoranda of 18 June and 1 and 15 July 1947; MCC Committee Minutes, 14 Apr. and 25 Aug. 1947.
  17. *Report of the Organising Committee*, pp. 19 and 26-9. Government help was essential but did not, officially, take direct financial form. However, a fine line existed between financial and non-financial assistance. To complicate matters, relations between the Government and the Organising Committee were not always perfect. PRO/WORKS/16/1697, Memoranda 17 Sept. and 10 Nov. 1947. PRO/WORKS/16/1892, Minute, 25 Apr. 1947.
  18. *Evening Standard*, 6 Sept. 1947.
  19. *New York Times*, 6 Apr. 1947.
  20. This included underwriting some of the improvements at the Stadium against ticket sales. PRO/CAB/124/767, Ministry of Works to the Lord President, 23 Aug. 1946. Some even believed that this was financed personally by the Managing Director, Mr, later Sir, Arthur Elvin. *Sussex*

- Daily News*, 29 July 1948.
21. *Hansard*, vol. 448, col. 99, 26 Jan. 1948.
  22. PRO/CAB/129/8/141, Foreign Secretary to Cabinet, 6 Apr. 1946.
  23. Report of the Organising Committee, p. 26.
  24. *New York Times*, 21 Mar. 1947.
  25. *New York Times*, 12 Oct. 1947; *Times* (London), 8 and 11 Oct. 1947, and 26 Apr. 1948. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 129.
  26. *Daily Herald* 2 Dec. 1947; *Times* (London), 3 Dec. 1947.
  27. *Evening Standard*, 7 and 10 Oct. 1947.
  28. *Daily Herald*, 23 Mar. 1948; *New York Times*, 29 Mar. 1948.
  29. *New York Times*, 11 and 22 Apr. 1948; *Times* (London), 29 Mar. and 26 Apr. 1948. A major allocation of tickets to the USA was certainly in accord with the Government's hopes for substantial earnings of hard currency arising arising the Games. It is not clear if it was the direct result of policies designed to that end or merely allocation proportionate to the number of organised sports bodies. PRO/GAB/124/767, Morrison to Atlee, 23 Aug. 1947.
  30. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 136.
  31. *New York Times*, 14 July 1948; *Daily Herald*, 13 July 1948.
  32. Report of the Organising Committee, p. 136.
  33. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 136.
  34. *Athletics*, vol. II, no. 22, Sept. 1947. At the same time, officials of the AAA were looking to the Olympics, in which the track and field program was still very central, to stimulate interest in their sport. AAA Minute Book, General Committee Meeting, 7 Dec. 1946.
  35. *Times* (London), 12 Aug. 1947.
  36. *Times* (London), 14 Aug. 1947.
  37. *Times* (London), 10 June 1948.
  38. *Times* (London), 26 June 1948. *Hansard*, vol. 454, col. 899, 26 July 1948. The absence of flags and other decorations seems to have impressed itself on the minds of visitors. *Sussex Daily News*, 3 Aug. 1948.
  39. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 105.
  40. *Times* (London), 21 and 27 July 1948; *Daily Herald*, 29 July 1948; *New York Times*, 24 July 1948.
  41. *New York Times*, 30 July 1948.
  42. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 136.
  43. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 136. *Times* (London), 21 July 1948; *Sussex Daily News*, 29 July 1948.
  44. *Report of the Organising Committee*, p. 105. Extensive reading of newspapers for the period 1945-8, would lead one to question the accuracy of this last assessment, but the general tenor of the description is not misleading.

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45. *Brighton and Hove Gazette*, 24 July 1948. Average daily hours of sunshine in Brighton between the 1 and 22 July was 3.5, well under half of the sixty-seven year average.
46. *New York Times*, 29 July 1948.
47. *Times* (London), 12 Feb. 1948. A general air of optimism about England's chances survived well into the 1948 series. It was hard for many to believe that it was not possible, 'in this cricket-loving and cricket-playing country of ours to field a team to equal, if not better, anything Australia can produce'. *Daily Herald*, 16 Apr., 16 and 31 May 1948. It is not the purpose of this article to produce any definitive and general assessment of this tour. Only certain aspects will be discussed specifically those that provide the sharpest comparisons with the Olympics.
48. *Times* (London), 13 Feb. 1948.
49. *Times* (London), 4 Mar. 1948.
50. *Times* (London), 14 and 28 July 1948.
51. *Daily Herald*, 6 Feb. 1948.
52. *Times* (London), 16 Apr. 1948.
53. *Times* (London), 10 June 1948. In the eyes of many English sports followers, the Australians displayed some of the 'excessive' seriousness and competitiveness about their sports that were most particularly associated with the Americans. Nevertheless, in any contest involving Americans and Australians, English sentiment lay with the latter. Bradman himself witnessed this phenomenon in the Wimbledon Men's Singles Final between John Bromwich and Bob Falkenberg. Donald Bradman, *Farewell to Cricket*, Hodder and Stoughtan, London, 1950, p. 187.
54. Bruce Harris, *With England in Australia: The Truth about the Tests*, Hutchinson, London, 1947. MCC Committee Minutes, 14 Apr. 1947, p. 161 and 7 May 1947, p. 167.
55. *Times* (London), 14 June 1948.
56. *Times* (London), 22 July 1948. The 'image' of Norman von Nida, the Australian golfer, served to re-inforce this particular sense of the 'Aussie' personality. *Evening Standard*, 7 and 12 Sept. 1947.
57. *Daily Herald*, 23 Apr. and 3 May 1948; Bradman, *Farewell to Cricket*, p. 160.
58. Bradman even drew on the commentary of the eminent English cricket writer, Neville Cardus, to support his case. Bradman, *Farewell to Cricket*, pp. 178 and 188.
59. Bradman, *Farewell to Cricket*, pp. 177, 179 and 191.