

Richard William Cox, *Index to Sporting Manuscripts in the UK*. BSSH and Sports History Publishing, 1995. Index. pp. xiv + 129.

In a Foreword to this *Index to Sporting Manuscripts* Tony Mason states that while there have been many worthwhile monographs on some sports, such as football, others including athletics, bowls, motor sports, rugby league and swimming have attracted less scholarly interest. Mason adds that not much headway has been made on a number of topics such as the study of ‘sport in urban communities and regions... the decline and fall of amateurism, sport and the armed services and sport and the poor’. Mason suggests that a past reason for neglect — a lack of adequate guides to a varied range of sources and their locations — is no longer valid because Richard Cox’s labours have made ‘that excuse increasingly unconvincing’ (p. vi). This impressive index certainly justifies such comments.

Richard Cox states that it is important for sports historians to realise that 'sporting manuscripts are not only to be found in the records of sporting organisations', they are scattered within general collections, in individual private papers, central and local government departments, church, university and school records as well as in the records of solicitors, trade unions, and businesses, many of which 'have no obvious connections with sport' (p. x).

This index was based initially on an examination of the published holdings of the National Register of Archives and of many public record offices, libraries, museums and sporting associations. Cox then sent off a questionnaire which was circulated to all the repositories listed in the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts' Record *Repositories in Great Britain* requesting details of any amendments and additions. While the majority of archivists responded positively, a few were unhelpful.

The result is a gold mine for researchers. Under the heading of 'Greater London', for instance, there were more than one hundred manuscripts listed. The following examples hint at the richness and variety of the material selected:

- 120.6 Inquest on man killed in Brawl on football field at South Mimms, 1583
- 120.9 Order suppressing Bull-Baiting 1750s
- 120.11 Maps showing sporting and recreational facilities in Middlesex c. 1951-56
- 120.13 Indictment of keeping a bowling alley, 1558, 1560
- 120.17 Boxing deaths during 1749
- 120.25 Peckham Congregational Badminton Club — Proposal for reformation of 1937
- 120.26 Papers of John McGregor - Canoeist, c. 1855-1892
- 122.11 Highgate Ladies Hockey Club... Minutes, address book and other papers, 1931-54
- 135.1 Rectory Manor Lawn Tennis and Bowling Club — Accounts, notices, of AGM's, rules and circular letters, 1898-1935

Cox has indicated that this invaluable guide will be updated in the *Sports Historian*, the journal of the British Society for Sports History.

This is fourth and final guide to primary and secondary sources on the history of British sport compiled by Cox. It would be good if someone

in Australia could undertake similar projects for sports history in Australia.

This Index should encourage sports historians to explore a wider range of repositories and to embark of a broader range of research projects.

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