

Harry C J Phillips, *Tennis West: A History of the Western Australian Lawn Tennis Association from the 1890s to the 1990s*. **Playright Publishing Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1995. Appendices, bibliog., illus., index. pp. xiv + 370.**

Tennis, which was one of the earliest of modern sports to be played by both sexes, has always been regarded as both a healthy and attractive social activity and there were few places, even in the remotest areas, that did not have a tennis court alongside a church, mechanics' institute or community centre. In *Tennis West*, Harry Phillips has provided a most comprehensive and detailed account of tennis in Western Australia, although Phillips acknowledges that his focus is on the Western Australian Lawn Tennis Association (WALTA, while other associations and non-affiliated clubs are not fully covered.

A feature of *Tennis West* is its organisation and presentation. Phillips, a political scientist and historian, has placed the history of a most significant sporting association within a social, geographic, economic and political framework. This aspect, however, is belied by the chapter headings and sub-headings, which are detailed in the Contents. For example, Chapter 14 — 'McGibbon to Mursel 1938-1948' — is presented under the sub-headings of 'Classic Events', 'The State Open', 'Coaching', 'Umpires', 'Shield Tennis', 'Country Affairs' and 'Wartime Activities'. Within those twelve pages, though, is a fascinating account of the decade which includes: the appearance in Perth of two German tennis greats, Bron Gottfried von Cramm and Henner Henkel and accusations of homosexuality on the tennis circuit. There is also acknowledgment of the role of the Catholic Tennis Association, which clearly followed the dictum that tennis was a 'family game', thereby challenging the thesis of prominent Australian tennis historian and ASSH member Graeme Kinross-Smith that the game in Australia was 'probably primarily a Protestant pursuit,

surrounded by the business ethic and the concomitants of the Masonic Lodge'. Other themes raised in the chapter include a controversial decision, by the WALTA President, not to field a Linton Cup team because it would not be strong enough; and the abandonment of State championships during the War when exhibition matches, staged to raise patriotic funds, avoided contests between amateurs and professionals because the 'benefits likely to be derived . . . would not be commensurate with the risk involved' (WALTA Minutes, 1941).

The inclusion of quality and meaningful photographs (approximately 200) enhances the publication greatly; many are head-and-shoulders but interspersed are some outstanding action and facility pictures. The extensive bibliography and the appendices including tables of WALTA office-bearers, champions, rankings etc., all adding to the comprehensiveness of this outstanding record and analysis of a most significant sports-governing body.

Congratulations are extended to the author, the publisher and, of course, to the WALTA.

Ian Jobling
Department of Human Movement Studies
The University of Queensland