

BOOK REVIEWS

Andy Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c. 1870-1814*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000, Pp. xi + 240. ISBN 0-7083-1637-9

Merthyr is a town overshadowed by its history. Once one of Britain's most important iron towns and Wales's largest urban area, the modern visitor leaves with a sense of a place in terminal decline but with a continuing pride in a significant past. In 1831, the Merthyr Rising saw twenty killed in riots, the authorities lose control of the town and the red flag raised by a rebellious crowd. The grim social conditions that gave rise to the uprising also saw Merthyr gain a reputation for drink, prostitution and crime, as people tried to escape or forget the darker sides of urban life. Croll's book, a revised version of his doctoral thesis, examines the subsequent late Victorian and Edwardian 'efforts of a group of dedicated "civic" boosters to civilize the town's public spaces and its inhabitants'. Central to this work, argues Croll, was the 'the taming and regulation of popular culture'. Urban meaning, the book persuasively contends, was rooted in the uses that public spaces were put to and popular culture was a highly visible and audible usurper of those spaces. Thus, rather than being on the margins of public life, popular culture was central to the quest for civilization and, as such, it should be integral to urban history.

The book explores this taming and regulation of popular culture through a variety of lenses: surveillance, shame, crowds, music, religion, commercial leisure and sport. The civic project that embraced these spheres was shown such commitment by the middle classes that Croll sees it as an expression of middle class consciousness, values and morality. The middle classes may have fashioned the civic landscape but others inhabited it with them and class is thus naturally a recurrent theme in the book. The coverage is theoretically informed without ever indulging in verbose excess or exclusiveness. Foucault's ideas of fractured power, for example, are profitably employed to argue that all urban classes could be both subjects and objects of the civilizing project. Croll is openly influenced by postmodern readings of class, seeing it as an integral but not exclusive category of analysis. His resulting argument, that other identities such as gender, religion and ethnicity were important in the drive for rational

recreation, may not be groundbreaking but it is, nonetheless, important. This becomes apparent as Croll shows that what constituted the rational and respectable was not always agreed upon within the civilizing middle class. As in so many towns, professional sport in Merthyr provided one of the most potent and contested examples.

It is the chapter on sport that will naturally be of most interest to readers of this journal. Merthyr had its senior rugby and soccer but we are also reminded of the diversity of late Victorian and Edwardian commercial sport. Skating rings, billiards halls and cycle tracks all cropped up in Merthyr; so too, as circus acts, did boxing and the 'famous tramp cyclist', while sport features entertained cinema audiences and the crowds at fetes and galas could cheer athletic races. Croll's demonstration that sport was part of a wider entertainment industry, rather than a clearly demarcated cultural forum, is an important reminder to sports historians who, though always keen to locate sport in wider social and political contexts, sometimes overlook the more immediate realm of leisure history.

Similarly, sports historians may be familiar with the tone of Nonconformist attacks on Merthyr's 'fatal epidemic' of pugilism, but they should also note that attacks on commercialized leisure were far from just limited to professional sport. The theatre, cinema and the circus all received their fair share of acerbic rhetoric. Indeed, like Dave Russell and Gareth Williams before him, Croll illustrates how even more respectable recreations like music could be hotbeds of unruliness and intense civic rivalry. The resulting parallels drawn with sport are both powerful and informative. Ever keen to step beyond simplistic analysis, Croll also shows how respectability as well as money drove the commercialization of leisure. This undercut the ability of Nonconformists to condemn such recreations and ensured that people could happily attend both chapel and cinema, choral concert and football ground. Croll's resulting conclusion that this enabled sport to become 'another feather in the cap of the civic projectors' will not be news to sports history but his location of the argument within a broader view of popular culture and public space remains an illuminating one.

Although overall the book is well placed in a wider historiography, the chapter on sport is not as located within the literature of sports history as

it could have been. There are notable essays on sport and civic identity/culture by Jeff Hill, Richard Holt and Jack Williams that might have given Croll some profitable avenues and parallels for exploration. Similarly the section on northern union in Merthyr does not refer to Tony Collins' work on rugby league. None of this particularly holds back the analysis but it does indicate how sports history often does not reach the attention of the more mainstream historians who it should provide insights for.

Merthyr's early-mid nineteenth-century experience may have been unusual but its later civilizing project was not. There was nothing unique about what people saw in its public highways and byways. Walking through the streets of a town gave people an image of the place. The continuing presence of drunks, prostitutes and youths on street corners suggested that the civic project was failing. Crowds of well-behaved football and music fans celebrating the triumph of a local team or choir suggested otherwise. This book is a lucid, penetrating and entertaining account of the fears, contests and aspirations that popular culture in public space generated. It is relevant and informative far beyond Welsh, sports and leisure history. Popular culture, and not least sport, was fundamental to people of all classes' experience and understanding of the urban. *Civilizing the Urban* is a stimulating example of how its history can be located within, as well as contribute to, broader strands of urban and social history.

Martin Johnes

St Martin's College, Lancaster

Noel Dyke (Ed.), *Games, Sports and Cultures*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2000, Pp. 224. ISBN 1-85973-312-3 (cloth) £42.99, 1-85973-317-4 (paper) £14.99.

The links between sports history and anthropology have been exploited from at least as far back as J.A.Mangan's 1981 investigation into the ritual, non-verbal symbolic anthropology of school sport, and the associated rhetoric of athleticism. More recently writers like John MacAloon or Gary Armstrong, in their work on the Olympics and association football respectively, have shown how sport can be a matter of serious anthropological investigation.

Like sports historians, social and cultural anthropologists have faced problems of marginalisation within their discipline, and a inclination amongst some to see sport as ephemeral and inconsequential. One of the strengths of this volume is the way that it provides its readers with evidence of the ethnographic opportunities and theoretical challenges provided by systematic and rigorous anthropological attention to sports and games and the ways in which they are played, celebrated, or exploited, and impact upon a wide variety of aspects of social life.

Another of its strengths is the way in which it seeks to move beyond a more conventional United States or European perspective. Its ten chapters present a well-researched range of settings covering China, the Waiwai Amerindians, India, Western Australia, Canada, Sweden, and Japan as well as the USA. It also possesses a wider focus than many sports books, covering both individual and team sports including archery, kabaddi, ice-hockey, track and field, gymnastics and basketball.

As a historian I found some interest in many of the theoretical approaches, including the study of nostalgia, celebrity, liminality and social drama, boundary maintenance and identity formation, or social constructionism and symbolic anthropology. All of these can potentially be drawn on and applied in a historical context. However the essays themselves are largely present-focused, and although the blurb describes it as ‘an accessible book’, the mixture of approaches unavoidable in a book of this type means that some pieces are couched in technical anthropological discourse that requires some effort for the non-specialist reader.

The first three chapters, by Noel Dyke, Susan Brownell and George Mentore are theoretical and methodological in their approach. Dyke presents the case for more anthropological work on games and sports well, while Brownell’s interest in theoretical approaches to Chinese involvement in the Olympic Games and the emergence of Chinese nationalism is a useful tailpiece to Fan Hong’s 1997 work on the liberation of women’s bodies in China between 1840 and 1949. Mentore’s examination of a formalized archery contest amongst the Waiwai of southern Guyana and northern Brazil shows some interesting parallels with the modern Olympic Games.

The politics of identity often figure prominently in sport, and the two chapters on this topic have a more historical approach. Alter, who has written perceptively on Indian wrestling, turns his attention to kabaddi, arguably more an Indian 'national' sport than cricket or hockey, and the cultural complexities of anti-colonialism and nationalism in sporting terms.. While Australian soccer is an area already well explored by Wary Vamplew, Bill Murray and others, Philip Moore's chapter on Western Australian soccer raises interesting issues about the game's relationship with the game of Australian Rules Football, differing notions of ethnicity, and the politics of culture.

The third section focuses on the less well developed area of the organisation and cultural meanings of sport for families, children and young athletes. Dyke's chapter illustrates well the gap between the real life-experiences of young athletes in Canada, and the rhetoric of the bureaucracy associated with organised community sport activities. Lithman, in a complex piece on children's elite sport in Sweden challenges the view that their sport develops any community sense of identity or belonging, arguing that the cultural meanings it enshrines are more individualistic. Perhaps the most accessible piece in this section is the chapter by Melford Weiss in the social world of American women gymnasts. This uses case studies of two women to compare the gymnast's experience of international travel, intense but ambivalent relationships with coaches, and pressure to succeed, with the cultural world of other adolescents. It brings out clearly the differences in socialisation, and potential impact on adult life of the gymnastic career.

The final section analyses sport as cultural performance. Those of us who enjoyed the 1989 Hollywood film *Field of Dreams* might be surprised to learn from Charles Springwood about a Japanese freelance essayist's successful attempts to build a replica of the Iowa baseball diamond in Hiroshima, which now attracts some domestic tourism to occasionally staged games. 'If you build it', he suggests, 'then the anthropologist will come', a welcome touch of humour in a perhaps overly-serious book. The final chapter, by Synthia Sydnor, examines sport, celebrity and liminality using the different readings which have been offered of the Michael Jordan monument in Chicago. This is an approach which bears comparison with Jeff Hill's readings of the Cup Final, and could be fruitfully adopted to memorials to sportsmen such as Matt Busby in a British context.

There is relatively little material available to the general reader on sports anthropology and even less which adopts this broad approach. So the book provides a useful insight into modern anthropological approaches and forces the reader to look beyond an often narrow range of popular sports and internationally successful sporting countries.

Mike Huggins

St Martins College, Ambleside

David Farrar & Peter Lush [Eds.] *From Fulham to Wembley: Twenty years of Rugby League in London*, London, London League Publications Ltd. 2000, Pp. Intro, Fwd, + 244 + app. £8.75. ISBN: 0-9526064-4-5.

This book provides an ideal companion to Harold Genders' *The Fulham Dream* (also reviewed in this issue). Edited by two recognised rugby league writers, both of whom are fans of the club, it brings together the views and recollections of several groups and individuals for whom an adopted sporting culture very quickly became a way of life. If Genders' book re-lives the building and subsequent roller-coaster existence of the club itself, then Farrar and Lush succeed in portraying the almost heroic contribution of some of its supporters in their roles as financiers, publicists, ticket-sellers, turnstile-painters and part-time ground staff that made the club's survival possible during an existence which has been to say the least somewhat nomadic.

It is perhaps not generally realised just how near the club came to extinction _ not just once but several times _ and the very idea of professional sportsmen playing for nothing, just to help keep the club afloat would seem even more absurd today than it did then _ but it happened!

Fulham was the first new club introduced into the rugby league since Blackpool Borough (now Chorley Lynx) in the season 1954/55. Blackpool finished third from bottom in its first season and has fared little better in the various guises it has assumed since then. Fulham however, went straight to the top and although some cynics still hold the opinion that a London club has no place in the Rugby League, the plain fact is that it has fared much better (albeit with some preferential treatment at times) than many of the clubs in the game's traditional heartland.

The editors have put together a very readable account of how the dedication of individuals and small groups has repeatedly and doggedly refused to allow their club to die and enabled Harold Genders' dream of 1980 to survive against not inconsiderable odds for more than twenty years. This will certainly strike a chord with those who have seen their own clubs _ in whatever game _ suffer the agonies and indignities associated with the struggle to avoid extinction.

Frank Galligan

British Society of Sports History

Harold Genders, *The Fulham Dream: Rugby League tackles London*, London, London League Publications Ltd. 2000, Pp. Intro, Fwd, + 85 + app. £6.95. ISBN: 0-9526064-9-6.

Whether or not you happen to be a fan of 'that Northern game', the story of how rugby league was transplanted from its home along the M62 corridor and survived far longer than it was thought possible is a fascinating tale. That the idea was conceived and commissioned largely as a result of the ingenuity and persistence of one man _ in relative secrecy at the outset _ makes this small book all the more readable.

Harold Genders, former rugby league player and construction industry executive, achieved what no-one thought possible by putting a team together from scratch in less than six weeks, which not only held its own against some of the game's biggest clubs but also managed to gain promotion to the top division in its first season.

To many outside the game, Fulham may have simply been considered something of an oddity : a rugby league team grafted onto an established but struggling football club that was looking to maximise its revenue potential. To those inside rugby league circles the birth of Fulham was received with a mixture of resentment, amazement, ridicule and fascination. The value of this compact publication is that it tells the tale from the inside and in doing so provides an insight not previously available into the successes and failures of what _ at least in the early years - was literally a band of travelling players for whom 'home' games were actually around 200 miles away from home whilst 'away' games were literally on their own doorstep.

Frank Galligan

British Society of Sports History

David Hinchliffe, *Rugby's Class War. Bans, Boot Money and Parliamentary Battles*, London: London League Publications, 2000, Pp. viii + 197. £9.75 ISBN 1-903695-00-0

As is well known, for almost exactly a century the Rugby Football Union eschewed any contact with its northern off-shoot Rugby League: those who played league were banned from union. The only exceptions were schoolboys and members of the armed forces, in war time and the days of national service. The notional reason for this was rugby league's inevitable link with professionalism, though as Tony Collins (*Rugby's Great Split*, Cass 1998) has shown, the real reason was much more to do with social class. Until the 1980s even any *amateur* rugby league player was banned from union, though this did not apply to ex-professional soccer or even American football players.

Such sporting discrimination was, as far as I know, unique and became increasingly offensive to those affected. David Hinchliffe, MP was one of these and did much to try to organise parliamentary opposition to it. He experienced discrimination at first hand. Much of the early part of the book is his own story, and it illustrates the cruel reality of such exclusion. He played league at school (a secondary modern; at the grammar school they played union), amateur league as an adult in Wakefield and was warned off playing union as a result. Restrictions like these result in tragedy and farce and are matched by others. Ray French (television commentator and sometime international player of union and professional league), a school teacher, was excluded from the Lancashire Schools Rugby Union Committee in 1984, after 23 years service. A good many Welsh players were barred from rugby club houses back home having 'gone north' to play professional league, some even for playing an unpaid trial game. All the while 'shamateurism' in union - concealed payments to top class players - was known and condoned. The real hostility of the Rugby Union was to the *game* of Rugby League, not to its partial professionalism.

From his position in parliament Hinchliffe did his best to break down this sporting *apartheid*, introducing two Bills to outlaw such discrimination.

The background to these efforts is told with clarity and reasonable economy in this book. But he is under no illusions that he and his parliamentary colleagues made much real difference; few in the establishment knew or cared much about his game. Rather it was the power of the media barons Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer that forced the hand of the Rugby Football Union. Faced with the threat of a second split in the game with a televised 'circus' of southern hemisphere players (and no doubt quite a few from the northern countries as well) the 'old farts' of Twickenham became aware, as it were, of a change of wind and were forced to bend with it. The game, with some residual institutional reluctance, went open in 1995, almost exactly a century after the 'great split'. But the story does not end there. Divisions grew between the administrative establishment at Twickenham and the leading clubs (and their financial backers), as well as between the English Rugby Union and the other home countries over television rights. Rugby League had its own troubles, again over selling its soul to media magnates. The game went through a virtual metamorphosis for the sake of television coverage to a Super League played in the summer by teams with silly names. Hinchliffe chronicles all of this neatly, in what is arguably the strongest part of the book.

The two codes ceased to be at loggerheads: league matches have been played at Twickenham, Murrayfield and union club grounds, players have moved freely. The great irony is that rugby league seems to have gained very little, if anything. Some noted players have returned to union, lucrative salaries and, in some cases, international caps. These have been augmented by first time 'converts' like the mercurial Jason Robinson and Iestyn Harris. More especially Rugby League coaches have been recruited by Rugby Union and have had an enormous impact on the style and success of England's international fifteen as well as some club sides. The author allows himself the luxury of speculating about the future of the games and whether they might combine. While some anticipate the demise of rugby league Hinchliffe points to the influence of league on the game of rugby union shown by the adoption of many innovations, rules and tactics from rugby league, as well as poaching players and coaches. Rugby union is immeasurably the better for it. Rugby league continues to be a popular spectator sport. Attendances at Super League games exceed those at first division rugby union matches. Though the professional game remains

confined to its northern enclave (London Broncos excepted) at an amateur level rugby league is now played in all parts of the country, in universities, even the armed forces. And yet rugby union continues to attract most media attention, receive more lottery funding and generally represent the sporting 'establishment'.

This book is clearly history from the point of view of the victim and it is a well written and readable account. The detail of research on the recent period (especially the turmoil since 1995) is impressive. The story of the great division between the two codes, and the persistence with such discrimination for so long, has yet to be written from the point of view of the Rugby Union, however. Quite why this great game, which has carried such social esteem, and can truly be said to have represented the social establishment, felt so threatened by an alternative code of rugby for a century remains a curiosity.

Roger Munting

University of East Anglia

Geoff Lee. *One Winter: Romance, Rock 'n' Roll and Rugby League in the Swinging Sixties*, Manchester, The Parrs Wood Press, 1999, Pp. 184. £7.99. ISBN: 1 903158 01 X.

Set in a fictional area close to the northern town of St. Helens, this book uses rugby league as an occasional prop rather than as a main backdrop. Lee writes engagingly, but perhaps more so for readers who might recognise something of their own youthful years in the dialogue and settings of industrial southwest Lancashire than those whose roots lie in cobble-free streets and somewhat leafier suburbs.

The setting and its characters remind us however, that not far away from the bright lights, the beat clubs and newly emerging discotheques of the swinging sixties was the industrial landscape of a hundred years earlier that for many was still the focal point in their lives.

It is not just a book about rugby league, nor is it really about the swinging sixties. It is a story of a soccer-playing rugby league fan with feelings - a juxtaposition that rightly helps to deconstruct the often stereotypical

perception of northern youth as monosyllabic, monocultural and beer swilling - and addresses relationships in the workplace, the home, the local pub and occasional visits to Knowsley Road, the home of St. Helens RLFC. It unfolds neither drama nor crisis - at least none of any epic proportion - and its single romance is (thankfully) allowed to run its course free of heaving breasts, heart-rending sighs and captivating gazes.

It is unpretentious, well written and eminently readable.

Frank Galligan

British Society of Sports History

Andrew Quirke, *Knowsley Road: Memories of St. Helens Rugby League Football Club*, London, London League Publications Ltd. 2001, Pp. Pref. +196. £9.95. ISBN: 1-903659-04-3.

This book is a 'must' for the avid 'Saints' fan but will also provide enthralling reading for genuine rugby league followers and those academics for whom the various recreational sub-cultures of the north of England hold some fascination. An insight into some of the harsh facts of life with which players are confronted and the often ruthless disdain with which some are treated is facilitated by means of a series of recollections of the great players, coaches and others who have been, and in some cases still are, associated with one of the game's foremost clubs.

The text includes contributions ranging from those of Jack Waring and Duggie Greenall, legendary centres whose careers collectively spanned the 1930s, 40s and 50's; Tom Van Vollenhoven, the South African 'flier' whose name is immortalised in St. Helens folklore; the 'great' Alex Murphy and most recently, those of Ian Millward, who in a very short time has already become the club's most successful coach since its formation in 1873.

It is not merely a collection of statistics (often meaningless unless contextualised) but illustrates through personal recollections the intense part that rugby league plays in the lives of both its stars and its followers. The author/compiler, Andrew Quirke, is himself a lifelong 'Saints' supporter and has served the club as a fan on the terraces, as 'in-house' radio

commentator for the visually impaired and as editor of the club's fanzine and an independent website for several years.

Although not essentially a history of the club, the book succeeds in contextualising the period from the mid-1930s right up to 'Saints' incredible seasons of 2000 and 2001 and is all the more interesting for the contributions of the not-so-famous back room staff in addition to those of the club's many stars who have become household names to rugby league followers.

Almost unavoidably in such a publication there are a number of somewhat repetitive references to topics such as the 'magnificent playing surface', local derbies against Wigan and eulogies on Murphy, Van Vollenhoven, Meninga and others. This smacks just a little of the hagiographic (what else would we expect from an avid 'Saints' fan?) but does not essentially detract from the value of the book as a very readable insight into Saint Helens Rugby League Football Club and the central place it has commanded in the lives of the many generations who have worshipped at the Knowsley Road shrine.

Frank Galligan

British Society of Sports History

Shona M. Thompson, *Mother's Taxi: Sport and Women's Labour*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1999, £19.50. ISBN 0-7914-40605.

The aim of this book is to demonstrate the contribution that women make to institutionalised sporting practices through their domestic labour. In pursuing this objective the author used semi-structured interviews with forty-six women whose lives are influenced by organised tennis in Western Australia. The women interviewed for the study were identified in one of three groups: mothers of children in the junior State Squads; women married to tennis-playing husbands; and women who were playing members of the Veterans Tennis Club of Western Australia. The argument at the heart of the thesis asserts that the domestic labour associated with tennis has a significant impact on lives of these women but is invisible, or unacknowledged, within organised sport. Thompson asserts that women's

labour associated with tennis ‘contributes to the maintenance and reproduction of sporting structures and practices’ (p.2), and also to the gendered nature of these institutions and practices within the broader social context of Australian life.

The argument is developed over six chapters: the introduction establishes the background to the study, and locates the research within interpretive critical and feminist sociology of sport; being the mother of a sports player; being the wife of a sports player; being a sports player; rewards and rationales; and gendered institutions - service gendered institutions. The chapters on mothers, wives and women players, are each organised around the dominant themes arising out of the semi-structures interviews conducted with the particular group of women concerned. The forms of labour contributed by these women are those is that which is traditionally incorporated within the context of motherhood or wifehood such as laundry, managing meals and diet, child-care, and driving children to out-of-school activities. The research reveals that marital and family relationships could be strained by tennis commitments, particularly in the case of those women who did not participate in tennis culture but whose husbands played tennis as their main leisure activity. Family arrangements such as holidays and the conflicting interests of care for other children or women’s employment responsibilities were often experienced as secondary to tennis culture.

The case of the veteran women players offered an interesting contrast to the experiences of the mothers and wives of players. The author is able to show how the women’s leisure appears to be a world free from domestic labour. Yet closer investigation reveals that their tennis is institutionally structured to accommodate child-rearing and home-making duties. Many of the women players acknowledged that their leisure activity had been compromised at particular times of their lives to fulfil their domestic responsibilities. Within the voluntary club structure of tennis in Western Australia women, players and the non-playing wives of players, took on roles in this ‘public’ setting that could be associated with domestic labour such as making teas, organising gala dinners, and entertaining administrators. In this respect, women’s leisure incorporated domestic labour.

These case studies of the specific groups of women and their relationship

to tennis could stand alone as substantive research. One of the strengths of the book lies in Thompon's analysis of these case studies. Drawing together, comparing and contrasting the experiences of the different groups of women the author provides a more rounded insight of women's contribution to, and structured experience of organised tennis in Western Australia. The penultimate chapter focuses on why the women do what they do. More precisely the author considers the rewards that the women perceive they get from the contributions they make to organised tennis. It is noted that the rationales emphasise the aspirations of motherhood (e.g. seeing their child do well, or develop the child's self-esteem) or with wifehood, supporting their partner in both his work and leisure. The final chapter offers a theoretical perspective on the overall study, reinforcing the ways in which women's contribution to this particular sport reinforces the lived experience and the ideology of traditional gender relations and heterosexuality.

The analysis takes a feminist sociological perspective, but it does not undermine the contributions the women make to the sport of others, and the constraints this places on their own leisure. The author has utilised the words of the interviewees effectively to illustrate the experiences of these women, teasing out the ways in which they see their labour facilitates the sporting activity of their children and their partners. The author acknowledges the limitations of the study in terms of the social class, ethnic background and sexual orientation of the women at the centre of the study.

This is a good solid study, clearly developed from qualitative primary research. The findings are carefully presented and organised. The presentation of detailed notes on methodology, the background to tennis culture in Western Australia and additional notes on the women who contributed to the research are presented in a collection of appendices. The structure and style of the book is attractive to an academic and non-academic audience and makes visible the ways in which the power and agency of women is often submerged to service the leisure of others. Policy-makers and administrators might also take cognisance of the limitations and elitist nature that may be institutionalised in organised sports when they become too dependent on the labour of white middle class minority of women who 'voluntarily' service the sport of 'their own'.

Irene A. Reid

University of Stirling

Ian T Thorpe, *Ball Sense and Nonsense*, Bishop Auckland: Pentland Press, 2000, Pp. 27. ISBN 1 85821 765 2 (paper) £5.

Amongst the sources they consult, sports historians are well-used to reading the biographies and autobiographies of sportsmen and women, reports of sporting activities in the press, or statistical material on sport. Beyond the occasional ritual reference to the ringing ultimate line of Newbolt's 'Vitai Lampada', poetry about sport probably penetrates the sporting consciousness less often. This book of light and humorous poetry, written by a practicing teacher with a keen enjoyment of sport, offers a different angle, and is aimed at 'the serious and not so serious sportman and woman' has just been sent for review. It should be seen as a future historical source, rather than a work of history, and reflects the inter-disciplinary readership of the journal. Its twenty-one poems offer a personal perspective on the diverse and perverse problems, frustrations and difficulties faced by aspiring players of a wide range of sports, including darts, baseball, football, rugby, cricket, tennis and netball. These are done tongue in cheek, although this can at times prove wearing. The best are those that focus on a particular game, where you sense a personal commitment that communicates to the reader, such as 'The Annual Teacher-Pupil match' (a formerly 'traditional' seasonal feature of school life, the role of which is yet to be fully considered by researchers). Poetry in schools has been given a somewhat higher status in recent years, partly due the government and OFSTED's stress on literacy, and this may be reflected in the writer's use of a variety of poetic forms, from limericks to rhyming couplets, although one or two, such as 'An A to Z of Sport' can seem a little like exercises as a result, and rhythmically a bit wooden.

In their attempts to study sport seriously, sports historians have generally neglected the important evidence about attitudes and beliefs about sport which sporting humour provides. Certainly I have only recently begun to recognise the importance of this theme. The sporting cartoons in the popular press, or in *Punch* or *Viz*, or indeed the humour in this little book of poems, give all of us the opportunity to widen the range of sources we exploit.

Mike Huggins

St Martins College, Ambleside

Tolleneer, J. & Renson, R. (eds.) *Old Borders, New Borders, No Borders: Sport and Physical Education in a Period of Change*, Aachen, Meyer and Meyer, 2000, £17.95, ISBN 1-84126-052-5

The International Society for Comparative Physical and Education and Sport (ISCPES) has done a great deal to broaden academic studies of PE and Sport into comparative international frameworks and raise the awareness of the international study of these subjects. This volume provides further evidence of the society's appeal as a forum for the discussion and exchange of information to the wider international community.

The book actually comprises of the proceedings of the 11th ISCPES conference held at the University of Leuven, Belgium in July 1998. It provides forty contributions but the reader will be disappointed if they expect full length academic papers. Some of the contributions are over twenty pages but others are no more than five, lacking footnotes or references, with the average length being ten pages. As one might expect, the contributions vary greatly in quality and one must question why some of the 'papers' were actually published, given that they only diminish the quality of the some of the better pieces of work. If the answer was that the editors wished to accurately reflect the proceedings of the conference, so be it, but it would surely be worth mentioning this on the front cover. Publication some two years after the conference can hardly be construed as a rush but it is clear that the omission of between ten to fifteen contributions would not have diminished the quality of the final product. In contrast there are a number of pieces that would have benefited from the chance to develop their arguments, which would have presented more rounded and coherent collection of work.

The book is divided into five sections. Part one consists of the three keynote speakers who set out to examine the potential of comparative studies for their own disciplines. Bale suggests that there are increasing similarities between the methods of sports geographers and comparative scholars and that further research could consider how to intertwine these two disciplines yet further (p.28). Chick reflects upon one example of

comparative methodologies and considers how to further utilise cross-cultural comparative research in order to construct more sensitive ethnographic and anthropological studies. Holt argues that 'as social science takes a more self-critical stance, the idea of taking a historical as opposed to a conceptual or methodologically determined 'approach' seems increasingly attractive' (p.49). This first section is certainly the most consistent in terms of approach and quality, causing the reader to reflect upon the need to demonstrate awareness of the advantages and also the limitations in the methodologies that they adopt in their own work.

The second section, purporting to deal with the dialectics between globalisation and localisation is perhaps the weakest overall, although Jones continues to provide some well-considered insights into the continuing development of sport in China. The third section is entitled 'The Past Explaining the Present' although the individual authors don't seem to have followed that theme explicitly. However, Bloyce (baseball) and Vamplew (horse racing) make good, if slightly brief contributions on familiar ground, whilst Combeau-Mari and Dumont provide a fascinating paper comparing sport in the French Colonies from 1925-1950 by taking Guadeloupe and Reunion as their examples. Section four is the curiously titled 'Sports challenging the world' and contains an eclectic range of contributions. Hartmann-Tews' paper on 'Sport for All!? Variations of Inclusion in Germany, France and Britain', is perhaps the best example of a paper that would have benefited from the opportunity to develop a full-length chapter. By only 'scratching at the surface' the author poses as many questions as she answers in what, potentially, was an extremely thought-provoking piece of work. The final section examines the 'world confronting physical education'. Here, the papers are consistent in length and give a more coherent reflection of the conference although, again, there are variations in quality.

Having finished the book, I was left a little empty and as if this was one of the first 'coffee table' textbooks I had come across. It's fine to dip into occasionally and a chapter can be read during a quick break, but as a textbook for students or academics it provides little in the way of deepening our understanding of comparative studies or issues. Furthermore, the book provides a warning to future conference organisers. Whilst an outcome of many academic gatherings is to produce publications, the

quality of that work needs to be at a level that will benefit its reader in more than just a superficial manner.

Marc Keech

Chelsea School, University of Brighton

Ivan Waddington, *Sport, Health and Drugs A Critical Sociological Perspective*. London E & FN Spon 2000 Pp. x + 214 . ISBN 0-419-25190-1 (hbk) £ 55. ISBN 00 0-419-25200-2 (pbk) £ 19.99

The sports historian does not always require a sociological framework to build upon; the benefit of this work is not so much the recommendation or development of formal theory as the drawing of a line, forcing the reader - including, probably, many historians and interested observers - to re-assess a number of fundamental issues. Some of these have perhaps been well-rehearsed already, at a number of levels from pub via classroom to international level, but Waddington presents a useful distillation from a wide range of sources.

The target audience is apparently English, although American works are frequently cited. There are a small number of somewhat laboured sociological explanations early on, but these fade out and Waddington's own enthusiasm and informative style then come through. The narrative flows easily; in his Introduction Waddington confesses to weaknesses for professional soccer and cycling, and these loom large - but constructively - in the text.

There is a somewhat dense Introduction, drawing-on the work of Elias and setting-out a sound justification for his own approach of rigorous detachment - or, rather, as detached as possible; Waddington points out at an early juncture that sport by its very nature generates a high degree of emotion. The chapters divide clearly into two groups, to concentrate on aspects of, respectively, health and drugs and their relation to sport. The second section is approximately twice the length of the first, which - it could be suggested - is a fair weighting for their relative importance at present. The overall effect is of a series of essays rather than a linked narrative.

Chapters 1-2 re-assess the popular picture of sport as a universal good, in

particular contrasting the British sporting experience and perceptions with the reality apparent in government attitudes and health literature. Not only are injury costs contrasted with perceived benefits, but the evolution of official policy is examined in detail. Chapter 3 reflects in a general way on children's experience of certain sports. It succinctly raises the newcomer's awareness of the damage to children from both an over-emphasis on body shape and inappropriate training regimes, overlaid by the possibility of sexual abuse. This section is the most general, relying as it must on comparatively few first-hand accounts and comparatively isolated reports from a number of media. Chapter 4, based around his own research for the (English) PFA, covers rôle conflicts for medical staff in soccer, and could easily sit within the first pair two chapters. This makes for possibly the most eye-opening reading for the student of sport (especially of coaching), not only for its range of sources but also the widespread ignorance of managers made manifest. Chapters 5-10 present a more connected survey of the rôle of drugs in sport; this includes an extensive and well-documented summary of the events around the 1998 Tour de France.

The Conclusion usefully recapitulates the themes of the individual sections, although it does not attempt any linking between them. The second half is especially effective at summarising the current (mid-1999) state of proposed legislation.

There is little history to engage with, and that is as scene-setting to a wider analysis, making the discussions accessible to a variety of levels. The value for a historian lies in the unusual perspective - amply justified in his opening pages - of not adopting the usual uncritical stance of "enthusiast-as-chronicler", but rather by building-up as dispassionate an analysis as possible. The back cover states that "Students and lecturers alike will find this an immensely readable and challenging resource"; the historian will find it a useful primer and reference point for a number of today's significant preoccupations.

Andrew Ruddle

UMIST

Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race*, Oxford, Berg, 2001 Pp.ix+231. £42.99 (hb), £14.99 (pb). ISBN 1 85973 304 2; 85973 309 3

There are books which tell a good story, books which have good ideas, and books that are very well written. Not always do these virtues come together in a single book. In this one, happily, they do. Jack Williams has taken up the subject that threatened to become a 'no go' area for sports historians, so difficult and sensitive is the subject matter. He has produced a study which advances immeasurably our understanding of the contribution of sport to issues of social exclusion, identity, and multi-culturalism. From now on, when faced with students who want to know how sport and race might be studied, we can safely say: 'look at Williams'.

To the casual observer cricket might appear to stand up well to the test of racial tolerance. Players of all kinds have united in the camaraderie of the field of play and the dressing room. There has been no colour bar as there was, for example, in American baseball. It was through cricket that Learie Constantine, one of the great icons of twentieth century racial toleration, achieved the fame that spurred his moral influence. But, as Williams makes all too clear, cricket has long been suffused with a racialism which worked to prioritise the *white male* and the *English*. These cultural categories became the 'normal', against which all other manifestations of cricket were judged as the abnormal, the inferior, the 'other'. This ideological process operated in both open and hidden forms. For example, it emerges in the course of a long chapter on the response of the cricket establishment to South African apartheid, that there was an open and acknowledged belief that 'bridge-building' achieved more than boycotts, and that 'politics' should be kept out of sport. Maintaining links with a racist system was justified on the grounds that the South African regime might through these contacts be persuaded gradually to liberalise. Contact was further justified in terms of something rather more emotive: loyalty and friendship. As Jack Bailey, the assistant secretary of the MCC in the late 1960s, has said: 'the cricket world was strongly inclined to getting on with the game with South Africa leaving politics to the politicians. It was, and always will be, an attitude of substance, if your brief is the administration of your sport and the well-being of your sport and your penchant is *loyalty to good, time-honoured and trusted friends* [my italics] and if you believe that contact is more productive than isolation.' (p. 63) This could be read as an appeal for white English solidarity (cricket being a white English game in South Africa). But its repercussions went further. It was

not recognized (or perhaps privately it was) that such support might actually serve to *strengthen* apartheid, in which white English solidarity was a mightily oppressive force.

Some people could think in this way because of the other, more hidden, aspect of cricket racism, which Williams deals with chiefly in the first two chapters. By the early part of the century racism had become deeply embedded in cricket discourse, that is to say the way people thought, wrote and spoke about cricket. This discourse made its own particular contribution to racial attitudes that were commonly held in society. It took a supreme effort of the intellect to disengage from them, and thereby *not* to assume an implicit 'commonsense' view of the world in which western, developed, rational, male and above all *white* standards were seen as the pinnacle of human achievement. Though millions had been killed and maimed on the Western Front in the name of such standards they still continued to exercise a powerful hold. Thus, for example, Neville Cardus was not being malicious or even consciously racist when he wrote in the 1930s of Learie Constantine: 'we know that his cuts and drives, his whirling fast balls, his leaping and clutching ... are racial; we know that they are the consequences of impulses born in the blood, heated by the sun, and influenced by an environment and a way of life much more natural than ours'. (p. 36) In a similar vein Ranjitsinjhi, the great Indian batsman of the early twentieth century, was perceived by observers to be a player whose talents defied the coaching manual. Ranji's unorthodox ways _ he invented a new stroke, the leg glance _ were attributed to mysterious arts that had their origin in eastern culture. He was mysticism and spirituality in contrast to western scientific rationalism. He was also an aristocrat, or claimed to be, and this might have been an interesting line for Williams to pursue in the light of recent work by David Cannadine. Were race relations in cricket, as in imperial society generally, different when it came to dealing with members of native aristocracies, upon whose collaboration the Empire depended for much of its political legitimacy? Constantine was merely the son of a sugar plantation worker; his grandfather had been a slave. Though received warmly in tolerant Nelson (where in any case he was the only black man) he was refused a hotel room in London during the war because, as the manageress pointed out, he was a 'nigger'.

Nor, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is this thinking necessar-

ily a distant historical curio. There is more than a whiff of it in the current media presentation of Mr Dalmiya of the Indian Cricket Board, whose attempts to re-negotiate his Board's deals with English cricket have evoked a response from some quarters which draws on the old notion of the educated Indian with ideas above his station – the 'westernised oriental gentleman'. E.M. Forster was parodying this in *A Passage to India* nearly 80 years ago. It has, nonetheless, been pervasive in the recent representation of Pakistani cricketers and West Indian fast bowlers, two of the in-depth case studies presented by Williams. In the former, Pakistani cricketers are often conceived as 'cheats' who have subverted the whole idea of cricket as the repository of decent behaviour. In the latter, West Indies cricket's remorseless use of fast bowling which resulted in a long period of success in the 1970s to early 1990s, is seen as having defamed and brutalised a beautiful game. 'Tant pis', said the West Indians, but our victories gave pride and self-confidence to black people and helped erase the racial condescension in which we had long been held.

There is, therefore, much to think about in this original book. It shows how cricket has been an important fabric in which ideas of race have been woven and re-worked for many years. It thus presents an excellent justification, should one be needed, for why sport should be studied. It displays a remarkable amount of original research, which is deployed, moreover, in a direct and honest way. There is no attempt to conceal or side-step difficult issues. Yet the material is handled in a true historian's manner: the task is to explain *why*, rather than to denounce. Thus what, given the topic, could so easily have descended into polemic remains firmly in the realm of the analytical. This is not to say that moral imperatives are absent. Quite the contrary. They emerge very clearly from the text. But they do so from Jack Williams's scrutiny of the sources. There is no need, as Nye Bevan once said, to gaze into the crystal ball when you can read it in the book.

Jeffrey Hill

De Montfort University, Leicester