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MEDIEVAL SPORT IN LONDON *c.*1150–1450

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We are fortunate in having an eye-witness account of sporting activities in London for the early part of this period. William FitzStephen, secretary to Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was present when Thomas was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral on 29 December 1170 and remained with him during the attack. Like Thomas Becket he had been born in London and evidently took great pride in his native city as he wrote a glowing account of it, appended to a biography of his master.[1] He wrote with vigour and in picturesque detail about those aspects of London life that he knew well, particularly in his descriptions of 'the sports of the boys'. Not unnaturally, as a monk, he has little to say about the girls, other than telling us that in summer 'maidens merrily trip along the ground under the uprisen moon'. Sports provided training in the skills needed for the defence of the City or the service of the King, and for hunters who provided food.

Military training

The sports were seasonal, associated with the holy days and religious festivals that marked the Church's year: Shrovetide, Sundays in Lent and Easter. Most of the activities that FitzStephen describes have a warlike aspect and include an element of danger, preparing the young men for later participation in military combat. He says, '… but youth is an age eager for glory and desirous of victory, and so young men engage in counterfeit battles that they may conduct themselves more valiantly in real ones'.[2] There were mock naval engagements in the Easter holidays, when a tree was fixed in the middle of the river with a target on it and young men standing in the prows of moving rowing boats tried to hit it with lances. If they failed they were tumbled into the river to the amusement of spectators lining the banks and the bridge. Every Sunday in Lent 'after dinner, a company of young men enter the fields mounted on war-like horses' and the citizens' sons rushed out of the gates in crowds, equipped with lances and shields and pikes, 'the iron heads removed for the younger sort' (a rare concession to safety) and held sham fights.[3] When the king happened to be near the city, courtiers and youths from the households of earls and barons attended, and raced their horses against each other. The leaping, archery, wrestling, stone-throwing and slinging of javelins indulged in during the summer holidays also helped young men to achieve accuracy in using weapons and improved their agility and physical fitness.

The winter holidays brought bloodthirsty encounters between foaming boars and

huge-tusked hogs fighting for their lives and the spectacle of bulls and boars being baited by dogs. These seem to have had no practical purpose, other than to harden the spectators to scenes of gore, cruelty and violence. But best of all, cold winters brought the opportunity for skating when the great marsh (Moorfields) north of the walls froze over, providing more opportunities for aggressive competition. The shin bones of animals bound under the feet were used as skates. The skaters propelled themselves with poles tipped with iron, striking the ice so that they were carried along with great rapidity 'as a bolt discharged from a crossbow', sometimes skating towards each other and striking each other with their poles. When they fell 'whatever part of their heads comes in contact with ice is laid bare to the very skull'.[4]

There was an undercurrent of violence in school sports too. At Shrovetide 'the boys of the respective schools bring each a fighting cock to their master and the whole of that forenoon is spent by the boys in seeing their cocks fight in the schoolroom'. After dinner all the young men of the City went out into the fields to play at 'the well-known game of football'.[5] Each school had its ball and the tradesmen according to their crafts. FitzStephen gives no detail about the organisation of the football matches, but as annual events they could hardly have been impromptu. The writer dwells upon the spectators — aged men, the fathers of the players, and wealthy citizens who came on horseback and whose 'natural heat seeming to be aroused by the sight of so much agility, and by their participation in the amusements of unrestrained youth'.[6] By 1423 'the footballplayers' were sufficiently organised to hire the Brewers' Hall on two occasions, presumably for some kind of jollification.[7]

Horse sales were held every Friday at the Smoothfield (Smithfield) outside Newgate and impromptu races were held among the best horses to show off their 'elegant shape, noble height, nimbly moving ears, erect necks and plump haunches'.[8] The young jockeys controlled them with a curb bridle, spurs, the whip and threats.

Hunting

Sports also honed skills useful in hunting animals, essential for providing food. Citizens had hunting rights over Middlesex, Hertfordshire, all the Chilterns and Kent as far as the River Cray. These ancient rights, with the boundaries less specifically defined, were mentioned in a charter given to the City by Henry I[9] and confirmed by Henry II in 1155[10] (amazing in view of the royal control of hunting and the Forest Laws).

North of the City beyond the pasture and tillage lay an immense forest with dense thickets and coverts, abounding in fallow deer, boars and, according to FitzStephen, wild bulls. The ancient woodlands that now crown the heights of northern Middlesex are remnants of that forest. Hunting was universally popular at all times and the prey was pursued and caught in various ways. A medieval archer badge from the Museum of London collection (Fig 1), one of several found in London, depicts a deer huntsman standing about to shoot his arrow, with his hunting horn slung across his body and an

Fig 1. Pewter badge of an archer

ornamental garter at his knee. A huntsman with a dead hare over his shoulder and accompanied by dogs is carved on a misericord in Gloucester Cathedral. Falconry was generally confined to people, both men and women, of high rank in the 12th century and extended to all freemen in the time of King John (1199–1216). FitzStephen said, 'Most of the citizens amuse themselves in sporting with merlins, hawks, and other birds of a like kind also with dogs that hunt in the woods'.[11] Small bells of medieval date, made of copper alloy, have been found near Bankside and other sites in London. The two halves are soldered together with a small iron pea inside that rattles when the bell moves. Such bells might have been attached to the leather jess fixed round a hawk's leg, but could equally belong to horse harness. Richard Paternoster is known to have supplied 800 such bells for harness used at a joust in Windsor Great Park in 1278 at a cost of 3 shillings per 100.[12]

Archery was especially important as it was used for killing animals as well as for military purposes. The City was already divided into wards in the 12th century, each with an alderman responsible for organising its defence by the inhabitants. Edward III (1327–77) issued a writ to the sheriffs of the counties banning the playing of handball, football or stickball, shinty or cockfighting, or other such vain pursuits, on pain of imprisonment, to encourage archery practice, rather than debauched pastimes.[13]

Problems caused by sportsmen and spectators

Sport was not universally popular, especially with landowners who suffered damage to their property from unruly players and spectators. Most of the sports mentioned by FitzStephen took place 'in the fields' outside the City walls. St John's Priory of the Knights Hospitallers and St Mary's Nunnery, founded in 1140 by Jordan and Muriel Brisset, were encroaching on the fields of Clerkenwell, restricting the open area, and the crowds attending sporting events were not always welcome to the new residents. In 1301, the Prioress, Agnes de Marci, complained of damage to her property by spectators at wrestling matches and plays who broke hedges and ditches around her cornfields and pastures and trampled down corn and hay. King Edward I ordered the mayor and sheriffs to proclaim publicly in the City that 'such wrestlings and games' were forbidden.[14] Problems continued, perhaps because some of the wrestlers were servants of the Prior of St John and of the Mayor of London.[15] In 1405 'the citizens came with a horrid tumult and a blazing trumpet to the house of the nuns of Clerkenwell and having applied to it a fire, which they brought with them they set ablaze the gates together with the bars and posts and hedges, and destroyed all the enclosure of the same nuns, alleging only on their behalf, that they were wont sometimes to play there and to practise wrestling and other such things'.[16]

At the end of the 14th century, Robert Braybroke, Bishop of London, was troubled by sportsmen at St Paul's. 'Others, too, by the instigation of the devil, do not scruple with stones and arrows to bring down the birds and pigeons, and jackdaws which nestle in the walls and crevices of the building; others play at ball or at other unseemly games, both within and without the church, breaking the beautiful and costly windows to the amazement of the spectators.'[17]

Acknowledgements

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NOTES

1 I have used the translation of FitzStephen's 'Description of London' in John Stow's *Survey of London* (Everyman's Library, 1956 edn), 501–9.
2 Fitzstephen in Stow, 509.
3 *ibid*, 507.
4 *ibid*, 508.
5 *ibid*, 507.
6 *ibid*, 507.
7 C Barron *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200–1500* (2004), 216.

[8] FitzStephen in Stow, 505
[9] C Brooke, G Keir & S Reynolds 'Henry I's charter for the city of London' *Journ Soc Archivists* 4, 575–6.
[10] C Brooke & G Keir *London 800–1216: the Shaping of a City* (1975), 40.
[11] FitzStephen in Stow, 509.
[12] Pers comm Jackie Keilly.
[13] J Clark 'Londoners at arms: from the Viking wars to the Wars of the Roses' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 61 (2010), 235–43.
[14] W O Hassall *Cartulary of St Mary, Clerkenwell* (1949), 260.
[15] W J Pinks *History of Clerkenwell* (1881), 7.
[16] St John Hope *Charterhouse Register for the Year 1405* (1925), 42.
[17] H H Milman *Annals of St Paul's Cathedral* (1868), 84.

FROM FEATS OF ARMS TO AMATEUR SPORTS: CHANGING ATTITUDES TO EXERCISE IN TUDOR AND STUART LONDON

Rosemary Weinstein

Introduction

This overview considers the sports enjoyed by Londoners during the Tudor and Stuart period, and examines the circumstances of the time which helped them develop. The 16th century was a time of considerable political stability, so that even the defensive walls around the City of London became unnecessary. There was less emphasis on the military training of young men of all social classes. This influenced the role of the tournament chiefly as a chivalrous spectacle rather than a war game, and the practice of archery as an amateur sport. The longbow itself became superseded by the newly introduced handgun. New ideas about the importance of sport for its own sake were being introduced from Renaissance Italy and further developed by English writers to stress the health giving benefits of vigorous exercise. Such ideas chimed well with the growing popularity of tennis with all citizens and by the later 16th century of bell-ringing. The legendary Field of Cloth of Gold — a tournament largely devised by Henry VIII for a meeting with the French king, Francis I near Guisnes in northern France in June 1520 — was a masterpiece of planning competitive events between the two nations on a large scale. One hundred years later, 'Captain' Robert Dover instituted his Cotswold Games at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire (*c.*1612) — a mixture of courtly and folk events. This took place at Whitsun (Pentecost) in May in the teeth of growing Puritan opposition to such festivities on holy days, and continues to the present day.

Sports and gambling were closely intertwined, provoking further tensions with Puritans; everything from tennis to horseracing was affected and hastened the rise of professional sportsmen, whereas other sports such as pall mall and archery remained domestic and amateur.

The Tournament: from military exercises to amateur sports

Those who could afford 12 pence, which was three-quarters of a day's wage for a journeyman, for a seat in the stands, might attend the royal tournaments and jousts at Westminster. Here was entertainment and propaganda designed to show the monarch as leader and cultivate loyalty and allegiance to the crown. This was particularly important at the beginning of the 16th century when Henry VIII, as a newly crowned (1509) king, wanted to be seen as an equal of Francis I of France and the Emperor Charles V. He did so by acting in a kingly fashion and spent lavishly, especially on royal pageantry, palace furnishings, arms and armour, and dress.

An especially grand event at the beginning of his reign is illustrated in the Westminster Tournament Roll of 1511 showing Henry jousting in an elaborate tournament to celebrate the birth of a son to himself and Catherine of Aragon. Sadly the boy was short-lived. Henry is shown in one-to-one combat with a knight on the other side of the tilt barrier. This single combat was increasingly the norm rather than teams of armoured men charging each other in a war game as in the medieval period. The urgency of training for military purposes was giving way to an interest in cultivating skills and graces in sport for their own sake.

No tournament rivalled the splendour of that of 11–22 June 1520 called 'The Field

of Cloth of Gold', held in a no-man's-land between the English outpost of Guisnes and the French border town of Ardres in northern France, when Henry and his company of some 6,000 men met Francis I and his followers to compete in a series of friendly jousts, tourneys and foot combats in the spirit of the ancient Olympics. A late 16th-century oil painting of the event in the Royal Collections shows the tents of cloth of gold, palaces erected in Renaissance style, huge field kitchens, and the tournament field itself. Despite the lavish outlay and friendly intentions, England and France were at war again within two years (Starkey 1991, 50).

For such spectacles and to give as diplomatic gifts, Henry needed fine armour. One of his most important contributions was to establish an armoury at Greenwich in 1515, consisting of German and Dutch armourers who followed the earlier successful introduction of Italian and Flemish craftsmen working independently in Southwark. For the first time England could produce armour of a comparable standard to the finest continental pieces. A number of these Greenwich armours survive in the Royal Armouries at the Tower, including that for foot combat which Henry wore at the Field of Cloth of Gold, distinctive with its deep skirt or 'tonlet', an alteration Francis I specified (Gunn in Starkey 1991, 52). By the 1530s Henry was turning his attention away from the tiltyard towards other sports such as tennis, although jousts at Westminster continued until the Civil War and the tiltyard barrier remained a feature at Westminster as late as 1658 as shown on Faithorne's map of London (Barker & Jackson 2008, 10) to be replaced by Horse Guards Parade.

Archery

Archery like the tournament was changing from being a means of defence to a sport, and the longbow was being overtaken by the crossbow and musket as a weaponry defence. Just as the energies of young courtiers needed to be diverted to various courtly sports, so the youth of London had to be diverted from playing and betting at bowls and attending taverns, as John Stow the London historian tells us in his *Survey of London*. Stow also points out that the Bowyers and Fletchers companies would fall into decay unless archery was still practised by the citizens at large. These two companies repeatedly petitioned the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen about their crafts.

Some positive measures were taken in support of archery in February 1607, when James I issued a patent to the Artillery Company for the Maintenance of Archery and Artillery, with particular provision for preserving the marks in the common fields for target practice. These marks covered an area of some 11 acres north of Chiswell Street to Islington and east to the present Shoreditch Park, this limit being marked by the present day Rosemary Branch pub. A few intending archers are depicted on the Copper Plate Map (Museum of London) heading there north across Moorfields (Holmes 1963, 28). A series of small books survive from the 1590s called 'Aime for Finsbury Archers' which give distances in score yards between the marks. These marks, originally of wood with an emblem on the top, were replaced by stone ones in the 17th century. Groups of archers worked their way over the area shooting from mark to mark, the archer coming closest being allowed to choose the next mark. The last surviving survey by the Honourable Artillery Company was recorded in 1737 and one mark called Scarlet is in their collections at Armoury House. Names of other marks included Thief in the Hedge, Nelson, Cato, Pinder, Baines Noodle and Brands Boy.

Busino, a visitor to London in 1617, had commented that 'well nigh through the year they have archery meetings in the fields near London'. The Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen added incentives in 1627 by introducing prizes of 20s, 15s, 10s and 6s 8d for shooting there, the money being awarded from the City Chamber (*Remembrancia*, 1878, 8). A group called the Finsbury Archers was set up in 1652. Archery was also promoted in schools; for example, at Harrow in 1684 Sir Gilbert Talbert presented a silver arrow worth £3 as a shooting prize, a few of which survive in the school collections. Women were admitted as members of archery clubs by the 19th century. With development of the fields, archery ranges were reduced in size.

Sport and health

It was during Henry VIII's reign that certain sports began to be appreciated for their own sake and the skill of the game and the agility with which it was played, rather than as a means to an end for survival on the battlefield. Real (or royal) tennis to which Henry now turned his attention had long been popular at the Burgundian court, and his father Henry VII had built tennis courts at Richmond, Windsor and other palaces. Until about 1500, tennis was played with the hand using a special glove. The early balls were of leather and stuffed with hair; one of dog leather was found in the roof of Westminster Hall during repairs there in the 1920s and is now in the Museum of London collections. By the 1580s the balls had changed to ones with a core of tightly wound cloth held in place by tapes and with cloth covers replacing leather ones (Inglis 2005, 18). These tougher balls were needed as playing with rackets rather than the hand was usual by this date, indeed the Inventory taken on the death of Henry VIII included several rackets in 1547, although no actual examples of this date are known to survive. Henry VIII built 'recreation complexes' at Greenwich and Whitehall Palace which included two open and two close (closed or covered) tennis courts, some features of which survive (Thurley 1998, 71). Walls over 18 feet high and ceilings are necessary for bouncing the ball in royal tennis. The only court to survive with similar features is at Hampton Court although with 17th-century alterations.

Tennis requires considerable skill (and energy) the demonstration of which by a prince was applauded by the Italian writer, Castiglione, in his *Book of the Courtier* in 1527, which stressed the importance of these graces in sport for their own sake. The benefits of exercise for health were promoted by the English writer, Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Book Named the Governour* of 1531, and further endorsed by Andrew Boorde about 1542, who recommends that in the morning, before mass, a man should exercise by 'playing at tennis or casting a bowl or peising [swinging] weights or plummets of lead in your hands' (cited by Thurley in Starkey 1991, 163). Charles II regarded a morning game of tennis as his 'usual physic', and was also noted as being a keen walker (Constitution Hill). Documentary evidence shows that tennis was being played in the City of London by the 15th century. In 1481 it was recorded, for example, that a tailor, John Yong, owned the Tennys Pley in the parish of All Hallows Staining (Fitch in Schofield 1987, 78). John Stow describes how Londoners had already adapted the game for playing outside a court (Pearl 1987, 84): 'the ball is used by noblemen and gentlemen in tennis courts and by the people of meaner sort in the open fields and streets'. The plan of a tennis court belonging to the Clothworkers' Company is included in their Plan Book of 1612 by the surveyor Ralph Treswell. It abuts the Ironmongers' Hall then in Fenchurch Street (Schofield 1987, fig 21).

Elizabeth I also understood the relationship of vigorous exercise and health in her appreciation of bell ringing which Londoners enjoyed, 'considering it as a sign of the health of the people' (cited in Porter 2009, 247). This necessarily was a specialised and restricted activity. Tennis, however, ticked all the right boxes: it was adaptable to urban spaces and the cost of the equipment could be adjusted to modest budgets. Tennis was here to stay.

Traditional sports and new 17th-century introductions

By the early 17th century, attitudes and conventions to sports and pastimes were becoming stricter, especially with regard to their enjoyment on Sundays and other holy days. The secular authorities approved archery as an orderly exercise and in 1618, James I issued his National Book (Declaration) of Sports to support its appropriate usage on Sundays after church time; gymnastic exercises and athletics were also seen as harmless activities, thus countering Puritan demand to ban all sports to keep the day as the Hebrew Sabbath, that is only for religious purposes.

With these tensions the success of one 'Captain' Robert Dover, a lawyer and member of Gray's Inn, is seen as particularly important, in his organisation of competitive sporting events in 1612 at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, near where he had recently moved. These events called

the Cotswold Games were a mixture of rural and gentry sports and included throwing the hammer, javelin and cudgel, single stick bouts, hare coursing, horse racing, fox hunting, dancing, athletics, gym, and the local sport of shin-kicking (with stockings stuffed full of hay padding). Dover presided on horseback, apparently wearing an old suit of James I, perhaps to reinforce the idea of the King's approval. Dover had support from Endymion Porter, a courtier living nearby, and Chipping Campden was itself the seat of former London Lord Mayor, mercer, Sir Baptist Hicks, who founded almshouses there that year (1612). These successful games — considered to be the forerunners of the modern Olympics — have continued to the present day and are held on the Friday of Whit Week in May on Dovers Hill. They are depicted in a woodcut in the tract 'Annalia Dubrensia' (1636) (Goldman 1983, 20).

By 1625 a statute forbade attendance at assemblies for sports and pastimes outside one's own parish (1, Car.I, c.1). Surprisingly it was at this rather restrictive time for sport that a new one was introduced from Italy — this was pall-mall (from Italian *palla*-ball *maglio*-mallet) played at St James's — and horseracing became popular at the Surrey racecourse of Banstead Downs (Epsom).

Depictions of the Frost Fairs from 1608 on the frozen Thames show a number of traditional sports being enjoyed casually by Londoners, such as skating, football, fishing, sledging and hunting. Pepys refers also to archery, footraces in Hyde Park between servants, trapball (hitting a ball released from a trap), and shuttlecock amongst others.

London still retained some of the best hunting in the country at its Royal Parks, especially at Richmond and Greenwich. Pepys refers to the prowess of Charles II hunting deer in St James's Park. Hunting was still (1663) enjoyed by Londoners of various social classes in Moorfields during Bartholomew Fair on 24 August at three-day events which included hunting, wrestling and shooting. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen continued to benefit from ancient royal privileges granted them 'to hunt in all the parks, chases, and forests of Middlesex' with warrants for taking a number of bucks there for venison (*Remembrancia*, 1878, 539).

Horses played a part in everyday life, and organised horseracing and breeding were popular with the monarchy, especially Charles II who improved the royal stock with imported animals. Pepys refers to several racecourses, including the popular Banstead Downs (Epsom), Putney and Newmarket. Charles II hunted at Newmarket, then started to attend race meetings there regularly from 1666, and was the first monarch to run horses in his own name, even racing himself and winning, on occasion!

Country sports, such as hunting, hawking, fishing, were seen as an essential aspect of British life and gave rise to a series of etchings by Francis Barlow (1626–1704) showing the upper classes enjoying themselves at these activities; they in turn provided a ready market for the prints subsequently produced (Goldman 1983). Lower class sports such a football were less likely to be depicted. Football was described by the social commentator Phillip Stubbes in 1583 in the following terms, 'it may rather be called a friendly kind of fight than a play or recreation — a bloody and murdering practice than a fellowly sport or past time'. Football did not fall into the 'orderly' sport category!

Pepys, ever the royal commentator, enjoyed watching Charles II play tennis at his new court in Whitehall Palace and the Duke of York and others play the newly introduced game pall mall at St James's, where it later gave its name to the street, Pall Mall. He observes interesting details about the problems of maintaining the alley for playing with its bed of crushed cockle shell and earth and its tendency to go to dust when dry which 'deads the ball'. Pall mall was played by hitting the wooden ball through a ring and hoops and survived for over a hundred years by which time it seemed to have become more widely popular. A surviving set of mallets and ball is in the British Museum collections. Pall mall is regarded as a forerunner of croquet — popular once middle-class lawns could easily be trimmed with the newly invented lawnmower (Inglis 2005, 34). Pepys does not mention golf introduced by James I from the Netherlands via Scotland to a course at Blackheath in 1608. Like pall mall, it remained an upper class sport until golf balls, originally stuffed with chicken feathers and laboriously and expensively produced, became cheaper mass-produced from *gutta*

percha (Malaysian gum) and later a composite with vulcanised rubber, known as 'gutty' (Inglis 2005, 48).

Conclusion

Politics, religion, adaptability to urban spaces, expense, all influenced the development of sports in 16th- and 17th-century London. Whilst traditional country sports such as hunting were seen as an essential aspect of British life, recently introduced sports such as tennis and later golf crossed social barriers and became popular with a wider public, both needing less expensive equipment and being adaptable to urban spaces. Archery was tamed and enjoyed a new lease of life as a sport. Even middle class individuals like Robert Dover could become patrons — resulting in a big step forward in the development of organised sports.

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LORD'S: A BRIEF HISTORY

Stephen Green

Cricket has been played in north-west London for at least a quarter of a millennium. In around the year 1748 Francis Hayman RA painted his famous picture, 'Cricket in the Marylebone Fields' (the future Regent's Park). In addition, the *Daily Advertiser* for 31 August 1752 announced that there would be a match between Marylebone and 'All of London'.

During the last third of the 18th century, however, the centre of the cricketing world shifted to the Hampshire village of Hambledon. In the 1780s the White Conduit Club at Islington dominated the cricketing scene in London. The president of this club in 1787 was George, Earl of Winchilsea. He was a Marylebone man and he wanted the main London cricket arena to be transferred from the White Conduit Fields, to his home patch. To this end he recruited a young Yorkshireman named Thomas Lord and encouraged him to purchase Dorset Fields (now Dorset Square), indemnifying him against any possible financial loss.

Thus it was that on 31 May 1787 the infant Marylebone Cricket Club played its first match on the new Lord's ground at Dorset Fields. This was equidistant from the future Baker Street and Marylebone stations. An illustration of this ground appears in the *Sporting Magazine* for 1 July 1793. Lord's was also used for military parades during this time of international tension. Illustrations of these occasions can be seen in the Bank of England Museum and the India Office section of the British Library. In addition the North Yorkshire Record Office has preserved Thomas Lord's receipt for Lord Mulgrave's subscription to the MCC in 1792.

In 1805 there took place the first Eton *v* Harrow match. One of the Harrovian players was the poet, Lord Byron. Eton College has preserved the score book for this match, whilst Harrow School has in its archives a letter from Lord Byron describing the game. In 1811 Thomas Lord grew tired of paying escalating rent for the ground. He transferred his turf a few hundred yards to the Eyre Estate. Unfortunately the Regent's Canal was shortly afterwards cut through this ground. In 1814 Lord's nomadic existence thankfully came to an end when MCC was able to establish itself on another part of the Eyre Estate, a little to the north of the second ground.

The third Lord's opened not with a whimper but with a bang. There was a large explosion due to the landlady at the adjacent public house having for some reason

considerable quantities of gunpowder in her possession. In 1822 Benjamin Aislabie became honorary secretary of the MCC, but three years later Lord caused consternation when he tried to sell large portions of the outfield to building developers. Fortunately a well-known cricketer, William Ward MP, bought the ground for £5000. Ward, a director of the Bank of England, had almost literally a baptism of fire. In the early hours of 29 July 1825 the pavilion burned to the ground. The show had to go on, however, and in 1827 the first Oxford *v* Cambridge match took place due to the initiative of Charles and Christopher Wordsworth, the nephews of the famous poet.

In 1835 J H Dark took over the ground and he remained at the helm at Lord's for nearly 30 years. Two years later MCC celebrated its jubilee (Fig 2) in a slightly subdued mood just two days after the funeral of King William IV. In 1836 Dark opened a real tennis court. The 1840s witnessed a variety of events, of which the most unusual was the encampment of native Americans on the ground in 1844. In 1848 the first printing tent appeared.

The 1850s were not among Lord's finest hours. A committee man, Edward Rutter, wrote: 'the matches … in the fifties and sixties were mostly of no interest except to the players themselves'. In 1860 the freehold was sold but MCC did not even bother to put in a bid. In 1863, however, change came with the appointment of an energetic Irishman, R A FitzGerald, as secretary. He was not the sort to let the grass grow under his feet either literally or metaphorically. In 1864 FitzGerald appointed the first groundsman and the following year a young lad named W G Grace made his debut at Lord's. In 1866 MCC was at last to buy its freehold of the ground thanks to the help of William Nicholson MP who was liberal in all but his politics, having deserted that party for the Conservatives.

1868 saw the first overseas tourists to visit Lord's in the appearance of an Australian aboriginal team. A party had left England nine years previously to tour the United States and Canada, whilst the first English team to visit Australia went out in 1861–2. In 1872 FitzGerald annoyed HM Government by taking an amateur side to North America at a time of international tension over the 'Alabama incident'.

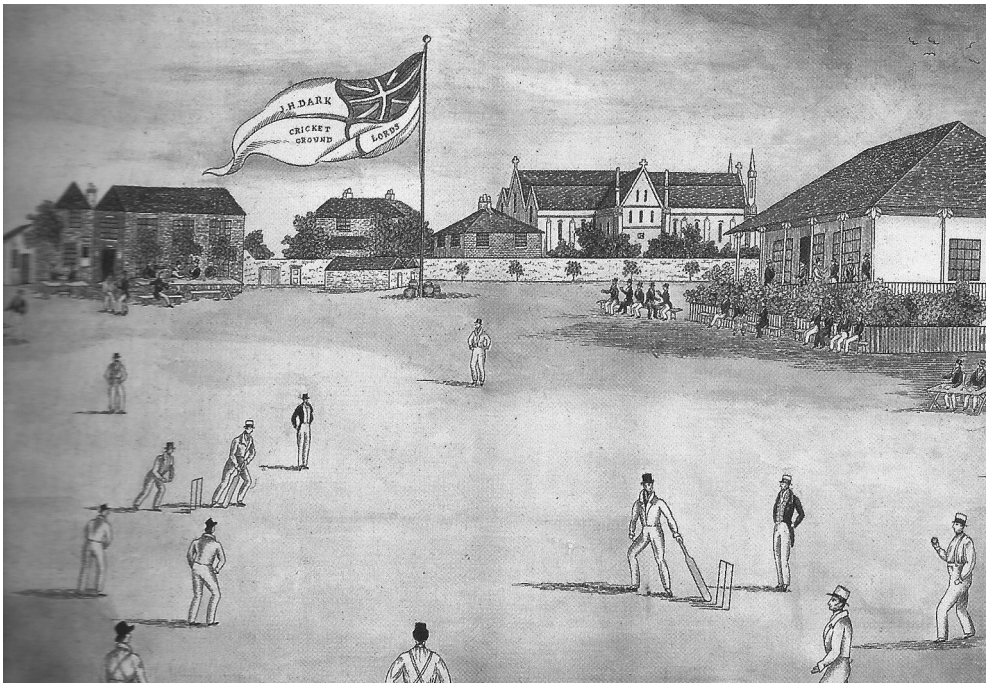

Fig 2. Lord's Cricket Ground: 1837 jubilee match

In the 1870s MCC helped to formulate the first rules for the new game of lawn tennis but soon a croquet club in Wimbledon became ever more prominent in this sphere. In 1877 Middlesex County Cricket Club pitched its tent, or rather its wickets, at Lord's and gave the ground its staple diet of County Championship matches. The following year the first expatriate Australian side to visit Lord's caused a sensation when it defeated a very strong MCC XI in just over four and a half hours.

In 1877 the first Test took place at Melbourne, whilst the Oval witnessed the earliest international on English soil in 1880, and also the famous Ashes match of 1882. Lord's did not stage a Test match until 1884. In Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee year of 1887 MCC celebrated its centenary. Henderson's Nursery (a celebrated market garden) was acquired and gave its name to that evocative expression 'the Nursery End'.

In the off-season of 1889–90 the present pavilion was built to the designs of Thomas Verity. Mr Nicholson again came to the financial rescue — because of the source of his family wealth the new building was jocularly called the Gin Palace. The 1890s were marked by an extensive dispute between MCC and the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway Company which wanted to extend operations up to the present Marylebone station. The Nursery End was literally in the way! Voluminous papers about this issue are kept in the National Archives. Eventually the railway company was forced to tunnel under the ground.

In 1898 one of the greatest secretaries of MCC, Francis Lacey, took office. When he retired 28 years later he became the first person to be knighted for his services to the game. In 1903 P F Warner took the first official MCC touring team to Australia. In 1906 a new press box was built; in 1909 the Imperial Cricket Conference first met, whilst three years later a Triangular Tournament took place between England, South Africa and Australia.

1914 proved to be an unfortunate date in which to celebrate the centenary of the present ground. The same Sir Edward Grey who had won the MCC Gold Tennis Prize was to make that year, as Foreign Secretary, the famous remark that the lamps were going out all over Europe. The ground was used during the First World War by units of the Territorial Army, the Army Service Corps (Transport), and the RAMC. W G Grace had died in 1915. Gates were erected in his honour in 1923. During Lacey's last year in office a new grandstand was built to the designs of Sir Herbert Baker. It was surmounted by the Father Time weather vane, but otherwise it was not well designed. In Warner's words, 'Never in the history of cricket has so large a stand housed so few people'.

The greatest inter-war controversy occurred in the 1932–3 tour of Australia. Bodyline tactics of the English bowlers caused great resentment down under and the future of cricket's greatest contest was put in jeopardy. The RAF took over the ground in the Second World War but a lot of cricket was played. This involved the famous match that took place on 29 July 1944 when a flying bomb exploded near the ground.

In 1953 the club's museum was opened by the Duke of Edinburgh. MCC's historic collection was started in the 1860s and may be the oldest collection of sporting memorabilia in the world. The Warner Stand was opened in 1958 and proved to be a fitting commemoration of one of Lord's great figures. The end of the following decade and the early 1970s were dominated by a great controversy over the desirability of retaining cricketing links with South Africa. One-day knockout competitions came in with the Gillette Cup in 1965 and proved increasingly popular.

1980 witnessed the centenary of Test cricket in England; a new MCC library was opened in 1985, whilst two years later MCC celebrated its bi-centenary. A new Mound Stand was built to the designs of Sir Michael Hopkins. It is illustrated in the relevant volume of Pevsner. The recent buildings at Lord's are very striking. *The Independent* went so far as to say that Lord's was the centre for the most distinguished ensemble of modern architecture in the entire country. A new Grand Stand was built in 1998, whilst the next year saw the construction of a Media Centre. It was designed by naval architects and was made of aluminium. In 2002 another major project was undertaken — the Lord's turf was removed in a complicated operation in order to improve the drainage. Fortunately the weather was kind.

Lord's cricket ground has been part of the London scene for longer than Trafalgar Square, whilst MCC is the fifth oldest London club of any description, but new events are still happening. In the summer of 2012 the ground will play host to an Olympic event for the first time when the archery contest comes to cricket's headquarters.

LONDON'S OLYMPIC YESTERDAYS

Murray Hedgcock

We Londoners all know our London will be taken over by the Olympic movement next year, when the capital makes sporting history as the first city to stage three Summer Olympic Games. No-one can forecast just what will happen from 27 July to 12 August, or in the Paralympics immediately afterwards, but we do know what happened in the London Games of 1908 and 1948. Each helped advance the Olympic movement on the way to the vast athletic, social and business spectacle that it is today. Those first London Games of 1908 had their problems but they established the Summer Olympics as the world's premier sporting event.

Governments in those days did not rush to fund sporting bodies, and it was understood that private enterprise had to pay for the 1908 Games. Despite the comparative failure of the Paris Games of 1900 which had been run in tandem with the World Fair, it was agreed the London Olympics could benefit from co-operation with a Franco-British Exhibition. The Prince of Wales had attended the Paris exhibition, and on succeeding to the throne in 1901 as Edward VII, he suggested that an exhibition staged jointly with France would help promote an *entente cordiale* between the two countries.

The entrepreneur charged with organising the project was a Hungarian-born onetime circus performer, Imre Kiralfy. He was director of the Earls Court Exhibition, and when the Franco-British Exhibition was proposed, he jumped at the chance. He found wealthy backers, and the exhibition went ahead.

A site was found at Shepherds Bush, a mix of farmland and industrial scrubland, leased from the Church Commissioners, and work began in early 1907. Twenty huge 'palaces', plus another 120 buildings, were erected by 4,000 men working during the day and 2,000 at night. The buildings were all whitewashed — sparking the name, 'White City'. The exhibition covered 148 acres — eight times the area of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park. Manufactured goods, inventions, buildings, food and wine were all on display as the French and British sought to show the world what they could achieve. The Exhibition, with an entrance in Uxbridge Road (boarded up, it was still visible until a few years back, when work began on the giant Westfields shopping complex) was open from 11 am to 11 pm, Monday to Saturday, from 14 May until 31 October. Visitors paid one shilling — and there were more than 8.2 million of them.

The exhibition organisers also agreed to build the Olympic Stadium, at an estimated cost of £40,000 — which in the end grew to something between £70,000 and £200,000. The stadium foundation stone was laid on 2 August 1907. This was a massive arena, the biggest in the world, with a capacity of 150,000. It included a cinder running track, bordered by a banked concrete cycle track. Alongside the stadium was a swimming tank 100m long, and up to 14 feet deep. Fourteen dressing rooms under the terracing could house 3,000 athletes, with facilities for police and ambulances. No alcohol was available, but there were five 'temperance restaurants'.

The Games were organised in four phases, spread over no fewer than six months. The Summer Games began in April with golf, tennis and polo, followed by stadium events. These were held on weekday mornings and afternoons and featured track and field, swimming, diving, cycling, gymnastics, wrestling, archery, fencing, tug-of-war and water polo. Racquets and real tennis were played at Queen's Club; polo at Hurlingham; lawn tennis at Wimbledon; and shooting at Bisley. The next two months saw yachting off Glasgow and the Isle of Wight, rowing at Henley, and motor boating on Southampton Water. Then the 'Winter Games' took over, embracing football, rugby, hockey, lacrosse, boxing, and figure-skating.

The IOC had decided that to be included, sports must be played by several nations, so British proposals to stage cricket, baseball and pelota — a puzzling nomination —

were rejected. And plans for aeroplane and automobile racing, plus a golf tournament, were abandoned.

Two weeks before the Games opening, the organisation was short of £10,000. Lord Desborough appealed to the leading newspaper magnate, Lord Northcliffe, who owned the *Daily Mail*. (In that Olympic year he also bought *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*.) Northcliffe agreed that the *Daily Mail* should launch an Olympic appeal. Within a week, £12,000 had been subscribed. The body-builder Eugen Sandow contributed £1,500, and a very different body was on view when the exotic dancer Maud Allen danced her 'Vision of Salome' to boost Olympic funds.

This was the first Olympics to combine national entries; previously competitors had been only individuals or independent teams. The French, German and Canadian governments all funded their teams, but a thousand of the original three thousand individual entries failed to turn up, possibly because of the cost of foreign travel. There were 23 competing teams, with 1,979 male competitors and 44 women, 39 of whom were from Britain, plus three from Sweden and two from Germany. Teams ranged from single competitors, from the Argentine, Iceland and Switzerland, to 208 from France and 736 from the host nation. Great Britain won 143 medals, of which 56 were gold; the US took 46, with 22 gold; and Sweden recorded 25 medals, 8 gold. Olympic gold did not always demand a gruelling succession of preliminary knock-out or round-robin contests. Australasia took the rugby union gold medal by winning the only game played, against Great Britain: 32-3. The team was actually the national side — the Wallabies, touring Britain, and adding the Olympics as an extra.

The United States was determined to show the Old World what the New could do, sending a big squad of 122. Team captain Martin Sheridan announced; 'We will knock spots off the British'. Sheridan was a fierce competitor. He went on to win two discus gold medals, freestyle and Greek-style, and bronze in the standing long jump. Sheridan's belligerent pronouncement was a pointer to noisy nationalism that became more apparent as the competition proceeded. American competitors were noisily exuberant in urging on their team mates, to the annoyance of the British crowds, which became increasingly one-sided in their turn. The feeling was stirred as ever by the more raucous newspapers; even the *New York Times*, known these days for its high-principled *gravitas*, published a startling cartoon on the eve of the Games. This shows a powerful President Teddy Roosevelt, shouldering a pair of 1,000 pound weights, and facing a dandified and feeble Briton.

The official opening ceremony of the Exhibition and then the new Stadium was performed on 14 May by the Prince of Wales, later George V. In best British tradition, it poured with rain. The Games launch on Monday, 13 July drew a crowd of no more than 40,000. Only some teams wore uniform, and the Australian swimmers were not well received for parading in swimming costumes, with bare feet. The Americans failed to dip the Stars and Stripes as they passed the Royal Box, annoying the locals, but establishing a precedent. Their flag has never been dipped in similar circumstances since then.

Many things British upset the Americans, not least their London hotel; they transferred to Brighton. In the first four days of competition, they lodged four official complaints. With only the winners of track heats to advance, the US team was suspicious when their two best men were drawn against each other in the 800 and 1,500 metres. And there was an early row in an event highly popular in those days — tug-of-war. There were three British teams, plus one each from America and Canada, which were scratch entries made up of athletes from other events. The first round saw the US team, in ordinary shoes, promptly pulled over the slippery grass line by a British line-up of burly Liverpool policemen, wearing heavy boots, with metal rims. The crowd roared with laughter, and the indignant Americans protested, to be told the boots were standard police wear. The final saw London police beat Liverpool, then challenge the furious Americans to a pull in stockinged feet. They did not accept.

Gates in the first week were poor, partly because of the weather — wet and windy. There were other problems; there had been inadequate publicity and the entrance charges were set too high. At a time when an industrial worker might earn two pounds a week, the best seats cost one guinea for the afternoon

programme, when most major events were staged, and ten shillings and sixpence in the morning. The cheapest afternoon seats were half a crown, and standing room a shilling. The New York Socialist daily paper, *The Evening Call*, termed this a deliberate policy to keep out the workers. On some days the 150,000-capacity stadium had no more than 10,000 spectators. Lord Desborough took immediate action. Admission charges were halved, publicity was stepped up, and gates improved so that nearly 90,000 watched as the marathon completed the track and field programme. In the end, the British Olympic Council made a profit of £6,000.

The few women who did compete were naturally an object of interest, although the costumes worn by the women archers were hardly on a par with those for today's beach volleyball. Much more to the crowd's taste were the Danish women gymnasts who had no competitions to enter, but gave well-attended demonstrations.

If few of us know much about the 1908 Olympics, then just about everyone must know of the bizarre finish to the marathon on 24 July. A vast crowd at Windsor Castle saw the Prince of Wales fire the starting gun for 55 competitors from 16 countries. Refreshments offered on the way present a sharp contrast to the careful diet of today's distance runners. The Oxo company, which was chief caterer for the event, supplied hot and cold Oxo, rice pudding, raisins, bananas, soda and milk. And if that did not satisfy, beer, champagne and spirits were handed out by spectators. With two miles to go, Dorando Pietri of Italy led, but was tiring rapidly, and he collapsed two hundred yards short of the stadium. Helped to his feet, the dazed Italian ran on to the stadium track, and turned the wrong way. He was redirected, ran a few yards and collapsed, in a bedlam of crowd noise. As the official Games report was to explain, 'It was impossible to leave him there, for it looked as if he might die in the very presence of the Queen'. America's Johnny Hayes entered the stadium, set to pass the staggering figure ahead. The clerk of the course, J M Andrews, and medical attendant, Dr M J Bulger, took matters into their own hands, grabbing Pietri and hustling him across the line (Fig 3).

Astonishingly, he was named the winner. Two hours later, after an American protest, Hayes was rightly awarded gold. Pietri protested in his turn, but this was rejected. At the closing ceremony, the American team was further annoyed when Queen Alexandra presented Pietri with a gold cup, a replica of the winner's, with a card: 'For P. Dorando. In remembrance of the Marathon race from Windsor to the stadium, from Queen Alexandra'. Overnight Pietri was the first

Fig 3. Pietri being helped across the finish line in the 1908 Marathon

international sporting super-star; and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, attending the Games as a correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, as well as being the marathon chief medical officer, persuaded the *Mail* to set up a public subscription to buy Pietri a bakery in his home town.

The stadium was virtually abandoned once the 1908 Olympics closed, although smaller exhibitions were held at White City most years until 1914. In 1927 the stadium was acquired by the Greyhound Racing Association, which staged races there until 1984. The refurbished arena became the headquarters of British athletics from 1932, and the 1934 Empire Games were held there. Today the BBC has offices and studios on the old exhibition site and the gigantic Westfields looms where the Olympic Stadium once stood. Only a simple plaque shows where the Olympics first came to London, a century ago.

In 1948, the Berlin Games of 1936 were still remembered for the manner in which the German authorities had sought to use the event as publicity for the Nazi regime. It was seen therefore as vital that these first post-War Games should stress the ideals of the Olympic movement, with competing, rather than winning, the prime concern. The Games could have gone to a city that had been protected by national neutrality — perhaps Stockholm or Lausanne. Half a dozen American cities were interested, but the cost of sending teams from war-ravaged Europe across the Atlantic ruled them out.

The IOC had voted unanimously to resume the Games in London in 1948, despite a divide of opinion within Britain. Some people argued that a tired nation should concentrate on post-War rebuilding, especially when many European countries were in ruins. Others saw the Olympics as both a challenge, and a celebration of the human spirit. It was inevitable, in the age of 'austerity', that the tag, the 'Austerity Olympics', should be applied to the 1948 Games. Minimal building was planned, with existing facilities updated. White City was invited to apply to be the main stadium. It did so, but the more modern Wembley was preferred. The Attlee Labour administration, struggling to get Britain back on its feet, made it clear there would be no government money for the 1948 Games. A total of 2¼ million tickets was printed, and the almost complete take-up meant the Games were financed largely by ticket sales. The event was to cost £750,000, the equivalent of about £77 million today. Remarkably, it showed a profit of £30,000 — the Inland Revenue promptly taking £9,000 in tax.

The Games organisation was very much in the hands of the Establishment of the day. The London Olympic Organising Committee consisted of a dozen upper-crust men, all possessed of a title or high military rank — nothing so feeble as ordinary civilians, let alone women. Viscount Portal, who had been Minister of Works in the wartime Coalition Government, was president of the Games Organising Committee, and Lord Burghley, formerly a Tory MP and Governor-General of Bermuda, was chairman. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, Burghley, then David Cecil, had won the 400 metres hurdles at the 1928 Olympics, but he was much more than a titled athlete. 'Handsome and articulate, calm and genial', he was a persuasive organiser.

Male athletes were put up in military barracks, schools and colleges, while the women lived in nursing homes and colleges. All male athletes from the United States and Commonwealth, with teams from the Nordic and Latin countries, were based in old army barracks in Richmond Park. Conditions were spartan, and some teams moved out to more comfortable accommodation. My Australian countrymen suffered when a dock strike meant some of their luggage was left on the Tilbury docks, and all the team's tracksuits were pilfered, to be replaced by a hurried air consignment. However in the best Aussie tradition of roughing it, they enjoyed life in the Park and showed their appreciation by 'souveniring' the official Olympic flag, when they and the Kiwis were transferred just before competition began to Willesden Technical College.

A total of 4,099 athletes (3,714 male and 385 female) from 59 nations took part in 136 events. There was a distinct pre-War/post-War mix, 20 of the 313 Britons having competed in Berlin in 1936. The women's foils title was to go to Hungary's Ilona Elek, at 41, who had won in 1936 and Jan Brzak-Felix of Czechoslovakia repeated his success in the 1,000 metres Canadian pairs. The legacy of World War II meant that German

and Japanese athletes were banned, but other Axis powers, Austria, Hungary and Italy, all attended. Communist countries entered for the first time, but sports authorities in the USSR said they were not yet ready for international competition. Israel was not accepted as it had no official Olympic Committee. A total of 59 nations sent athletes, newcomers including Burma, Ceylon, Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Panama, Puerto Rico, Syria and Venezuela.

There was continuing interest as to how the athletes — plus officials and visitors — would be fed at a time of strict food rationing. Britons were entitled each week to one ounce of bacon, eight ounces of sugar, two of tea, two of cheese, 13 ounces of meat, seven of butter, 2½ pints of milk, four ounces of preserves, four of sweets, 63 ounces of bread, and one egg. Competitors were allowed *Category A* rations, as issued to heavy workers such as coal miners and dockers. An extra pint of milk — liquid, not powdered — was issued daily, plus half a pound of chocolates and sweets each week.

Games authorities asked for help from abroad. One hundred tons of fresh fruit and vegetables came from Holland; 160,000 eggs from Denmark; and, a rather puzzling offering, 20,000 bottles of mineral water from Czechoslovakia. Bradman's Australians brought 200 cases of tinned meat. Individual food parcels from America and the Commonwealth eked out the supply. The more far-sighted teams brought extra supplies of their own. Holland came with fruit and vegetables; Argentina with 100 tons of meat; Iceland with frozen mutton; and the US with 42 tons of meat, 36 tons of cheese, enriched white flour, and 25,000 chocolate bars. The French, of course, brought their own wine. Surplus food was donated to British hospitals.

The 1948 Games made history as the first to be shown on television to just 88,000 sets across the country.

On the opening day, a packed Wembley gave a special cheer for the royal glamour girl of the age, Princess Margaret, a month short of her 18th birthday, as she took her seat in the Royal Box. And the host nation was greeted with deafening applause. King George VI declared the Games open, to much relief managing the required 16 words without any trace of the stammer that he was still battling. The Olympic Flag and Flame arrived and the Sacred Olympic Fire was lit; the oath was taken by Wing Commander Donald Findlay, who had won hurdling medals in 1932 and 1936. He was to compete again, 24 hours later, in his 40th year. The National Anthem was played, the teams marched out, and the 1948 London Games were under way.

The first full day of track and field, Friday 30 July, got off truly on the wrong foot, when it was discovered the hurdles had been set wrongly for the opening event, the 400 metres hurdles, and it took 35 minutes to put it right. The crowd was annoyed, and a slow hand-clap echoed around Wembley. But the sun shone, and when events at last got under way, the quality of competition cheered spectators and reassured officials and the media. Those were the days of tiers of officials checking results, although there was a photo-finish camera borrowed from horseracing.

When the final medals were tallied, nations whose sport was least affected by the War came out on top. The United States was first, with 38 golds and 84 medals overall, then Sweden with 16 golds in 44 medals. France finished third with 10 golds and 29 medals overall — a pointer to the fact that sport had continued there with little change during the German occupation.

Gold medallists ranged in age from a 56-year-old yachtsman, Paul Mart of the US, to a 17-year-old swimmer, Thelma Kalama, also of the US. Another 17-year-old, America's Bob Matthias, won gold in the decathlon, an event he had taken up only four months earlier. He remains the youngest winner of a men's athletic event. Sadly for the Wembley crowd, desperate for British track success, no gold medals came their way. Britain's three golds were won on the distant water — in the men's double sculls and coxless pairs, and the men's Swallow class sailing.

The undoubted star of the Games was the 30-year-old Dutchwoman Fanny Blankers-Koen, the Flying Housewife, or the Flying Dutchwoman. She won four gold medals in the 100 metres, 200 metres, and 80 metres hurdles and one as part of the 4x100 metres relay team. She was deprived of more titles by a rule limiting women to three individual

events. At this time she was also the world record holder in both the high and long jump, but was not allowed to enter either. Blankers-Koen had competed in Berlin as an 18-year-old, and always cites as her proudest memory getting the autograph of the great American sprinter and jumper, Jesse Owens.

Shooting produced the extraordinary story of Karoly Takacs, a Hungarian Army sergeant who had won the World Championship with his country's pistol team in 1938. His shooting hand was shattered by a grenade blast, so he taught himself to shoot left-handed, and took gold at Bisley in the rapid-fire pistol event. Another well-remembered name is that of the Czech runner Emil Zatopek who took the 10,000 metres by almost a lap, and galvanised the crowd watching the 5,000 metres by making up a deficit of almost 50 metres on the last lap, to be beaten by a stride for gold.

Many British athletes from 1948 retain today happy memories of wearing the national vest. One of the best remembered is Dorothy Tyler, 'the Mitcham housewife' as she was known — Britain's answer to Fanny Blankers-Koen. Dorothy Odam was 11 when a teacher at her Mitcham school asked her to jump a skipping rope stretched between two posts. She flew over it, and a great high-jumping career was under way. She was only 16 and still at school when she won silver at the Berlin Olympics; if today's countback rules had applied, she would have taken gold. The same rules robbed her of gold again in 1948, when as a housewife with two children, she took silver. Today she looks forward to 2012, being promised free family tickets for the women's high jump.