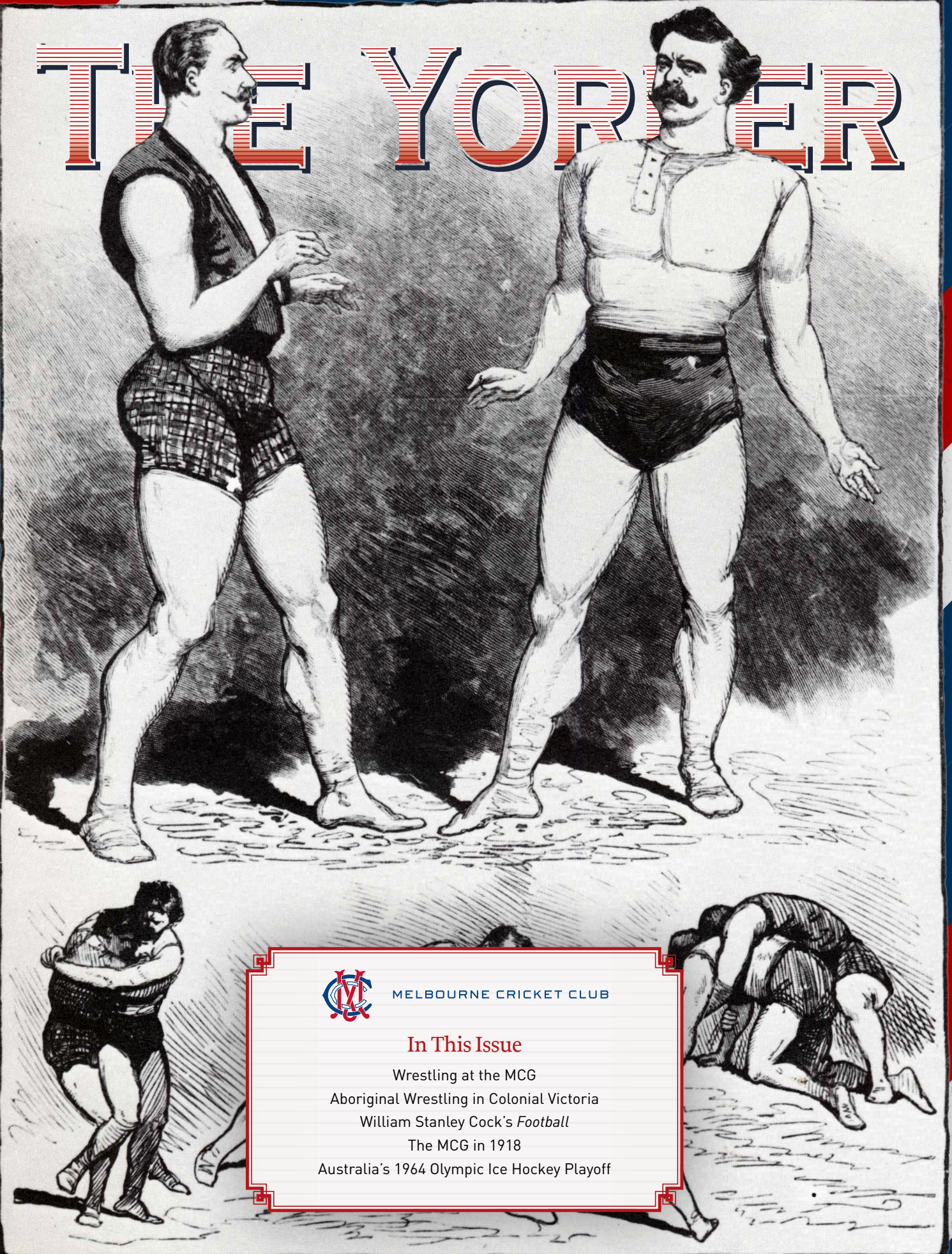


# THE YORKER



MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB

## In This Issue

- Wrestling at the MCG
- Aboriginal Wrestling in Colonial Victoria
- William Stanley Cock's *Football*
- The MCG in 1918
- Australia's 1964 Olympic Ice Hockey Playoff

# OUR CITY OUR TURF



**Official bank of the MCG.**



**Bank of  
Melbourne**





MELBOURNE  
CRICKET CLUB

Level 3, Members Pavilion  
Melbourne Cricket Ground  
Yarra Park, Jolimont  
Telephone +61 3 9657 8876  
Facsimile +61 3 9654 6067  
Email [library@mcc.org.au](mailto:library@mcc.org.au)  
Mail PO Box 175 East Melbourne 8002

## THE YORKER

ISSN 1839-3608

**PUBLISHED BY THE  
MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB  
© THE AUTHORS AND THE MCC**

*The Yorker* is edited by Trevor Ruddell with the assistance of David Studham.

Graphic design and publication by  
**George Petrou Design.**

Thanks to Jacob Afif, James Brear, Lynda Carroll, Edward Cohen, Harry Coles, Gaye Fitzpatrick, Ayako Hatta, James Howard, Quentin Miller, Regan Mills, Marie Pernet, George Petrou, Trevor Ruddell, Ann Rusden, Lesley Smith, David Studham, Lesley Turner, Jessica Ware and our advertisers.

The views expressed are those of the editors and authors, and are not those of the Melbourne Cricket Club. All reasonable attempts have been made to clear copyright before publication. The publication of an advertisement does not imply the approval of the publishers or the MCC for goods and services offered.

Published three times a year, the Summer issue traditionally has a cricket feature, the Autumn issue has a leading article on football, while the Spring issue is multi-sport focused. We accept supporting articles on other sports or general sport related topics. Contact the library to discuss your contributions.

*The Yorker* uses the Style Guide for MCC Library Publications. A copy of this can be viewed and downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/mccyorker>. We always welcome submissions of articles and reviews for *The Yorker*, but please adhere to the new style.

Submissions can be made to The Editor,  
*The Yorker*, MCC Library PO Box 175  
East Melbourne 8002 or via email to  
[library@mcc.org.au](mailto:library@mcc.org.au)

#### Front Cover Imagery:

Champion wrestlers Donald Dinnie (left) and William "Bill" Miller as portrayed by the *Australian Sketcher*, May 5, 1884, p.76.

#### Back Cover Imagery:

**Main image:** *Sportsman*, June 22, 1897, p4.  
**Left:** William Miller, carte-de-visite photograph, Mora studio, New York City.  
**Inset:** Detail from the *Australian Sketcher*, May 5, 1884, p.76.

## Contents

MCG Ringside: Wrestling at the MCG	4
Aboriginal Wrestling in Colonial Victoria	9
William Stanley Cock's <i>Football</i>	15
Vale Peter Thomson	16
The MCG in 1918	18
Australia's 1964 Olympic Ice Hockey Playoff	22
Book Reviews	27

## In This Issue

Inspired by the advent of the World Wrestling Entertainment's Super Showdown at the MCG this October, this spring issue of the *Yorker* features the MCG's little explored wrestling past. James Brear and Lesley Smith look at wrestling events and demonstrations from over 100 years ago, while Trevor Ruddell examines traditional Aboriginal wrestling in Victoria.

This edition also recognises the recent death of a MCC member Peter Thomson, with a display of items related to him held in the MCC Library collection. With the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armistice in November, Lynda Carroll, looks at the MCG's final year during World War I. Marie Pernet, tells the little known story of the Australian ice hockey team's endeavours to qualify for the 1964 Winter Olympic Games.

## THE YORKER

## Read all about it!

This issue of *The Yorker* is digital. However, if you prefer to read a hard copy, or do not have online access, you can still order print copies. Subscriptions are the perfect way of ensuring you do not miss out on an issue of *The Yorker*. You can even have it home delivered! Published each December, April and September, there are different subscription categories and rates for MCC Members, the waiting list and the general public.

Print edition subscription forms are available at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/mccyorker>



The MCC Library catalogue is available online at [tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue](http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue) and through the MCC Library webpage at [tinyurl.com/melbcc](http://tinyurl.com/melbcc)

You can follow us via Twitter and Instagram  
Follow [@MelbCCLibrary](https://twitter.com/MelbCCLibrary) and for your posts include [#MelbCCLibrary](https://twitter.com/MelbCCLibrary) and [#MCG1853](https://twitter.com/MelbCCLibrary)

# MCG Ringside:

## Wrestling at the MCG

by James Brear and Lesley Smith

The WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) extravaganza on October 6 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground is the second time the wrestling behemoth has come to Melbourne. In 2002 in excess of 56,000 enjoyed the show at Etihad Stadium. That event featured the "Triple Threat" match between The Rock, Triple H, and Brock Lesnar for the WWE Undisputed Championship. The Rock (Dwayne Johnson) has gone on to movie stardom in *The Fast and Furious*, *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, *Rampage* and, believe it or not, *The Tooth Fairy*. Triple H, in a return performance, headlines the MCG bill with The Undertaker, WWE Men's Champion A.J. Styles and Women's Champion, Carmella. Ronda Rousey, who was defeated by Holly Holm for the UFC Women's Bantamweight Championship at Etihad Stadium in 2015, joined WWE in early 2018 and will also compete in "Super Showdown". The press has talked up the crowd as being in excess of 100,000. With almost a quarter

of the stadium blocked off, the reality is, even with seating on the ground, more likely to be a crowd of approximately 75,000, as was seen at last year's Guns 'N' Roses concert. Logistically, the situation is also similar with 500 crew taking four days to set up 50 semi-trailer loads of infrastructure<sup>1</sup>.

Wrestling is not new to the MCG. The gold rush of the 1850s brought miners from the north and south of England to Victoria and with them came one of their favourite pastimes – wrestling. Today the style of wrestling is "entertainment" but in the 1850s it was the "Cornwall and Devonshire" or "Cumberland and Westmoreland" style, depending upon the origin of the participants involved. In Cornish wrestling a jacket is worn, and "holds" can only be made by grabbing the opponent's jacket. The goal is to throw your opponent flat on his back. Cumberland and Westmoreland wrestling,



**Above:** Wrestling events were staged at the December 1861 Caledonian Games held at the MCG. Nicholas Chevalier's illustration of the sports showed a wrestling match left of the Highland dancers. *Illustrated Australian News*, January 18, 1862, p.44.

by contrast, starts with the competitors holding each other around the waist, face to face. In this form, the object is to cause any part of the opponent's body to touch the ground, apart from his feet. Due to the popularity of the sport, the Australian Wrestling Society was formed in 1854.<sup>2</sup> Most of the early matches took place in hotels; the Myall Hotel in Prahran, the Leinster Hotel in North Melbourne and the Cumberland and Westmoreland Hotel in Melbourne, among others.

The Caledonian Games included wrestling as part of its program, a popular event to increase the numbers in attendance. By 1861, the Caledonian Games had outgrown the Friendly Society Gardens and moved to the MCG. On the third day, December 28, "The two great features in Saturday's events

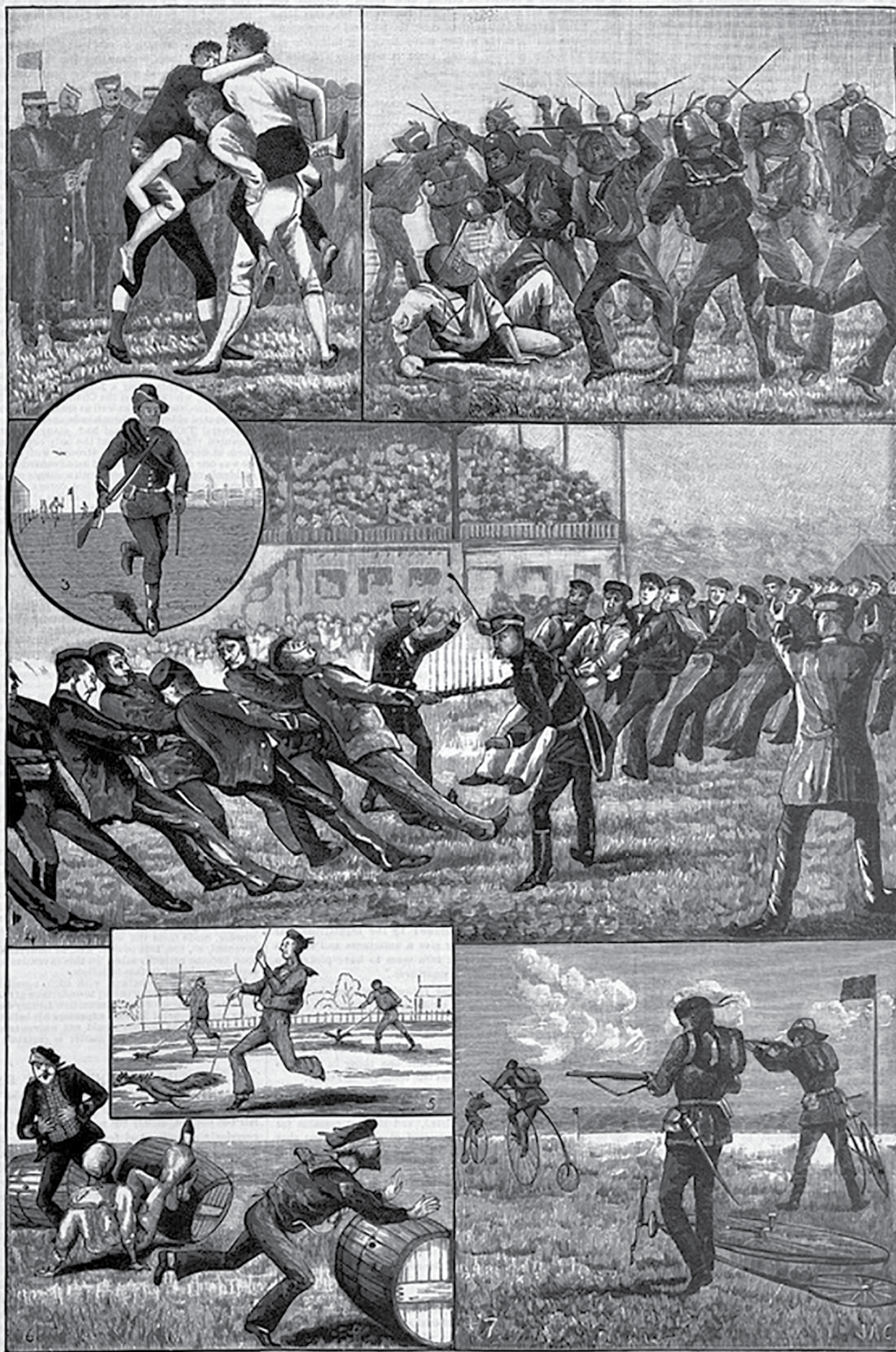
were the wrestling – after the Cumberland and Westmoreland fashion – and the cavalry exercises."<sup>3</sup> The Argus considered the Cumberland and Westmoreland style "the most graceful and attractive of all, and as well adapted as any to prove the strength and skill of the competitors."<sup>4</sup> Twenty combatants competed in a knockout event over five rounds, concluding with a best of three falls final. The eventual winner was William Robley who defeated Matthew Potts two falls to one. Robley was a native of Egremont, Cumberland, and had been a miner at Jamieson.<sup>5</sup> Total prizemoney for the event was 20 pounds, 10 of which was awarded to the winner. Although not an official part of the Caledonian Games, a highlight on the Saturday was the appearance of Charles Horatio Underwood, "of snake antidote notoriety."

Underwood allowed half a dozen poisonous snakes to crawl all over him. "The strangest part of this reprehensible show was, that the police looked on at the man as if he was engaged in a perfectly harmless exhibition."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately for Underwood, later that evening he was bitten by one of his snakes and died, "the antidote, in which he appears to have placed implicit faith, was this time powerless to save him."<sup>7</sup>

Possibly the next wrestling tournament on the MCG was during the Caledonian Games held in January, 1889. Forty-five pounds was offered as prize money to be divided between the three styles of wrestling on the program, Cornish, Cumberland, and Collar and Elbow.<sup>8</sup> The latter originated in Ireland and, like the Cornish style, also involved wearing a jacket. The start involves grabbing the opponent by the collar with one hand and the elbow with the other, the aim being to throw your opponent off balance. Later in the year, the Naval and Military Games held a "Pick a back" event. More closely akin to today's wrestling than the more serious "Cumberland and Westmoreland" format, the teams consisted of two men, one "piggy-backing" the other.<sup>9</sup> Sergeant Mackenzie and Gunner Bayliss, from the Harbour Trust battery were the victors, defeating 14 other teams in the process.



**Left:** "The Comedy of a Wrestling Match" in the *Australian Sketcher* featured scenes from the March 24, 1888, bout between John Connor and Tom Cannon at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, for the "Græco-Roman Championship of the World" and a stake of £300. Connor won the match. *Australian Sketcher*, April 19, 1888, p.56.



1.—PICK-A-BACK WRESTLING. 2.—THE MELEE. 3.—WINNING THE ONE-MILE GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE. 4.—THE TUG-OF-WAR—SAILORS V. ARTILLERY. 5.—THE MENAGERIE RACE. 6.—THE BARREL RACE. 7.—THE MILITARY BICYCLE RACE—STOPPING TO FIRE.

AT THE NAVAL AND MILITARY SPORTS.

## Conway, The Wrestler

From *The Sportsman*, January 29, 1890, p.1.

The subject of our illustration this week, Thomas Conway, by last Saturday's victory in the heavy-weight wrestling at the Caledonian Society's sports has proved himself a first-class wrestler. He shows great skill, is quick, and possesses the strength of a Hercules. He is a young man, and turned 26 years old on 21st of September last. He was born at Myer's Flat – a bush place a short distance from Eaglehawk – which may be termed a stronghold of wrestling in Victoria, seeing the number of capable men who have graduated for the game there. He displayed a liking for athletics early in life, and at 15 years of age began to race at small meetings. He improved rapidly and developed into an all-round ped – going at go-as-you-please and sprinting. Six years ago, at Eaglehawk, he did a big thing by winning four races – including £25 Sheffield Handicap and a half-mile race in one day. Running occupied his attention for a very long time, and he performed creditably in Sydney. But he became too heavily handicapped by adipose tissue and relinquished pedestrianism, though now and again he troubled other members of the Eaglehawk Athletic Club in members' races. Well, about three years ago, Jack Thomas, the well-known wrestler, saw in young Conway a promising man and took him in hand. The rough material – speaking from a wrestler's point of view – was soon toned down, and on 22nd October, 1888, Jack sent his pupil into the arena at Sandhurst against all-comers in Cumberland, Cornish, and Collar and Elbow styles. He won, and of course was stimulated to big things. He won similarly at Eaglehawk in February of last year, and at the celebration of last St. Patrick's Day in Sandhurst and Melbourne covered himself with glory. At the Easter Fair sports last year he again won. At the late Boxing Day sports in Eaglehawk he won again. His latest big performance was witnessed on Saturday last, on the Melbourne Cricket Ground, when he won the heavy-weight wrestling. He says that he was rather disappointed at not having to meet Dinnie and Ross. By his victory he lays claim to the Championship of the colony, and is prepared to meet – anyone disputing it with him. Conway's dimensions are: – Weight, 14st; chest measurement, 41in; biceps, 15in; calf, 17in; thigh, 25in; height, 5ft 9in.



In 1890 the Caledonian Games were again held at the MCG, with wrestling one of the primary contests. Pre-game advertising trumpeted the contests between Duncan Ross, "America's unparalleled athlete" and Donald Dinnie, "for thirty years chief in Scottish games", in both athletics and wrestling.<sup>10</sup> Scotch, Cumberland, and Collar and Elbow styles were included in two categories, an under 11 stone class, and the feature "at catch weights" open class. The former style commenced with the wrestlers gripping each other around the waist at the back, with the right hand under the opponent's left arm and the chin resting on the opponent's right shoulder, as though they were to commence dancing. Although the wrestling was well accepted, "it was a subject of comment and disappointment among the spectators when it became known that Ross and Dinnie were not going to wrestle."<sup>11</sup> To be fair, they had both competed in earlier events, throwing the heavy hammer, throwing the light hammer, throwing the 56 pound weight, and tossing the caber. Ross had also competed in the contest of the day, a sword fight on horseback against Captain

**Facing:** Naval and Military Sports at the MCG – including "pick a back wrestling" (top left) – as portrayed in the *Australian Sketcher*, November 28, 1889, p.181.

Jennings. The wrestling open class was won by Thomas Conway, who hailed from Eaglehawk, then a stronghold of wrestling in the colony. "By his victory he lays claim to the Championship of the colony, and is prepared to meet anyone disputing it with him."<sup>12</sup> This was not an idle boast. Conway, by now the (unofficial) Australian champion, won the heavyweight division again in the 1891 Caledonian Games.

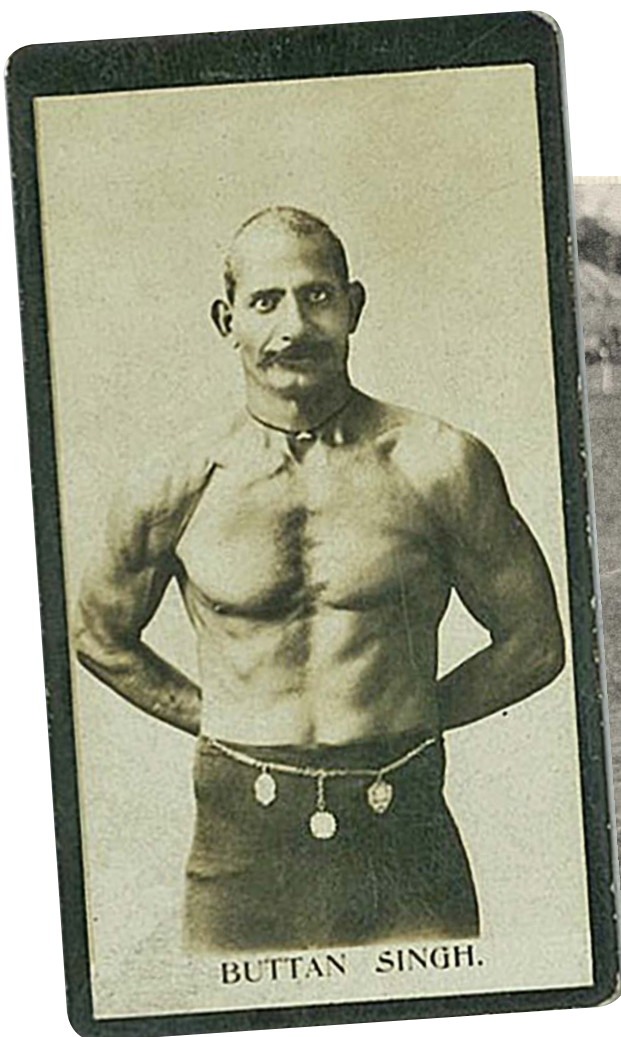
An exhibition wrestling match between Buttan Singh and Jack Graham was part of the Liquor Trades Charities Carnival in 1905 at the MCG.<sup>13</sup> In 1903 Singh had won the Championship of Australia by defeating the titleholder Gunga Brahm. Brahm had won their first contest on April 30, at Wirth's circus, but Singh, very unhappy with the result, insisted on a re-match and claimed the title on June 1 at Queen's Hall.<sup>14</sup> Singh had a very lengthy wrestling career. In 1917, being over 50 years of age, he was still the holder of the middleweight Championships of Australia and America, and looking for further opponents.<sup>15</sup>

At the same carnival, one of the most unusual sports ever to be played on the MCG took place. This was pushball.

"Numerous figures in weird costumes indulged in a pushball match with a huge ball, the result of which neither the players nor anyone else could ascertain."<sup>16</sup>

Wrestling continued on the MCG in 1917 at the Police Charity Carnival. The Australian Imperial Boy Scouts, led by Chief Commissioner Captain Le Grew, demonstrated various sports, including wrestling.<sup>17</sup> A further demonstration, and possibly the last wrestling event on the MCG, save for footballers tangling with each other, was the exhibition of various holds given by Billy Edwards and a training partner in 1927. This occurred during the half-time interval of a Hospitals' Charity football match between the Flemington and Caulfield jockeys.<sup>18</sup> Organised by former St. Kilda star, Dave McNamara, the Flemington jockeys won by 14 points.

While the WWE spectacular may not follow the Cumberland and Westmoreland, Cornish or other traditional wrestling styles, it will attract the largest attendance yet to a wrestling event at the MCG.



**Top:** Pushball at the MCG – 1905

**Left:** Buttan Singh cigarette card. Taddy & Co., London, "Wrestlers" series, 1910.

**Above:** The Liquor Trades Carnival at the MCG in 1905. Costume pushball match (top). Buttan Singh has a hold of Jack Graham in the wrestling event (below). *Australasian* July 15, 1905, p.34.

#### Endnotes

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1. <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , June 24, 2018. | 4. <i>Ibid</i>                            | 9. <i>Sportsman</i> , January 8, 1890, p.4   | 14. <i>Sunday Times</i> , May 6, 1917, p.13  |
| 1. <i>Argus</i> , December 14, 1854, p.6         | 5. <i>Star</i> , January 1, 1862, p.1     | 10. <i>Sportsman</i> , January 29, 1890, p.4 | 15. <i>Leader</i> , July 22, 1905, p.33      |
| 2. <i>Argus</i> , December 30, 1861, p.5         | 6. <i>Ibid</i>                            | 11. <i>Sportsman</i> , January 29, 1890, p.1 | 16. <i>Herald</i> , October 27, 1917, p.1    |
| 3. <i>Ibid</i>                                   | 7. <i>The Age</i> , January 28, 1889, p.6 | 12. <i>Leader</i> , July 22, 1905, p.33      | 17. <i>The Age</i> , September 15, 1927, p.5 |
|  | 8. <i>Argus</i> , October 28, 1889, p.11  | 13. <i>The Age</i> , June 2, 1903, p.8       |  |





# Hands Full of Ashes: Traditional Aboriginal Wrestling in Colonial Victoria

by Trevor Ruddell

Well before the British settlement at Port Phillip in 1835, the local Kulin clans would converge near Melbourne each summer when food was plentiful, for ceremony, corroboree, and business. Ian D. Clark wrote, "On these occasions it was not uncommon for there to be dancing and wrestling. Some of these ceremonies were grand affairs that the townsfolk attended." In the early colonial era it seems such gatherings near Melbourne became more common, and regularly attracted 500 or so participants. Clark wrote, "The fact that in settlements Aboriginal people could obtain food from Europeans meant that traditional means of production were not primarily adhered to; indeed there was no need to relocate as the food source in this instance could be obtained with little physical exertion."<sup>1</sup> In 1906 William Kyle recalled that in 1841, "The Yarra Yarra tribe [Wurundjeri willam] camped on the site now occupied by the Melbourne and Richmond cricket clubs [Yarra Park]. On this ground they held numerous corroborees, to which the white people were sure to be invited."<sup>2</sup> The

*"Wrestling is a favourite game, but is never practised in anger."*

– William Dawson

younger members would also occupy the day with sports and projectile games – such as spear, waddy and boomerang throwing, ballgames and wrestling. The ethnographer R. Brough Smyth described this indigenous grappling sport in his 1878 two volume set, *The Aborigines of Victoria and other parts of Australia and Tasmania*.

*"Tur-dur-er-rin, War-rok-min-der-neit, or Work-ern-der-eit, is the name of an athletic game in which the most skilful, or perhaps the strongest, proves the victor. When this pastime is indulged in – and it is only in fine weather that it is thought of – the old men and old women, with the children seat themselves around some smooth expanse of grass. The young men – the competitors – break into groups, and place themselves opposite to each other. By this action they express their readiness to take part in the encounters that are to follow. After the competitors have been seated for a little time, one of*



**Right:** The scarred tree, a river red gum, on Marathon Way in Yarra Park. A reminder of the Wurundjeri willam's camp at this site.



the strongest amongst them rises, grasps a handful of dust or ashes, and throws it towards one opposite with whom he thinks he may measure his strength. He then sits down. This is a challenge: and usually the native towards whom the dust is thrown rises and accepts the challenge, and throws the dust towards the challenger. Then all the men of the two groups rise and throw dust, or the ashes of the dead fires, around them. There is a pause, and during the time of the pause the two men who are to engage in conflict rub their hands with ashes, and each with hands full of ashes or dust rushes violently forward, and the wrestling commences. The men place their hands on each other's shoulders; they are naked; their bodies have been well rubbed with the ashes of the dead fires, and, holding fast, moving hither and thither, thrusting and pulling, they struggle for mastery. It is often long before one falls to the ground; but when he has fallen, the successful wrestler returns rapidly to his place, often so much exhausted by his efforts that he is unable to speak. This continues until all the wrestlers are tired. There is fair-play in all these encounters, and any departure from the recognised mode of procedure would be severely condemned by all.

The old men and others not engaged in the sport sit by, paying marked attention to all the

movements of the wrestlers, and as one after the other is victorious, they raise shouts in his praise.

The young amongst the males are taught all the arts of this kind of wrestling at an early age, and they take much pleasure in the exercise. It is necessary to the safety of the Aboriginal, who has often to trust his strength and skill in single-handed encounters with members of strange tribes, to be able to act well in such exercises. What he learnt in peaceful wrestlings by the camp-fire is not seldom required for the preservation of his life in war, or in his various secret expeditions.<sup>3</sup>

There were regional wrestling variants and protocols throughout Victoria. On June 1, 1841, George Augustus Robinson, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Port Phillip, wrote of wrestling at "Camp Grange near Tully's" (around Hamilton) in Victoria's Western District. The wrestling, or in the local dialect "pur.ti.bun.note", here was, "in all respects the same as the natives to their eastward, excepting they have a waddy which is stuck in the ground and when the object of the opposing wrestler is to get possession of it and bring it away and stick it in the ground on his side he then, as the others did, stands in front to guard it and when the native comes to take it he is met and they wrestle, if [he] can get hold of the waddy the contest ends."<sup>4</sup>

Facing: Map of the Police Paddock (Yarra Park) in 1855.

# The Indigenous MCG

Prior to the establishment of a settlement at Melbourne, Yarra Park (including the land upon which the current MCG was constructed) was a small part of the estate of the Wurundjeri willam clan, who are known to have camped in this area.<sup>5</sup> Yarra Park was a floodplain, the grass covering the vast area was knee deep and it also had a number of huge eucalyptus trees. One scarred tree, a red river gum, is a physical reminder of the Wurundjeri willam's pre-colonial presence in Yarra Park.<sup>6</sup> The plaque for the scarred tree reads, in part: "The scar on this tree was created when Aboriginal people removed bark to make canoes, shields, food and water containers, string, baby carriers and other items".

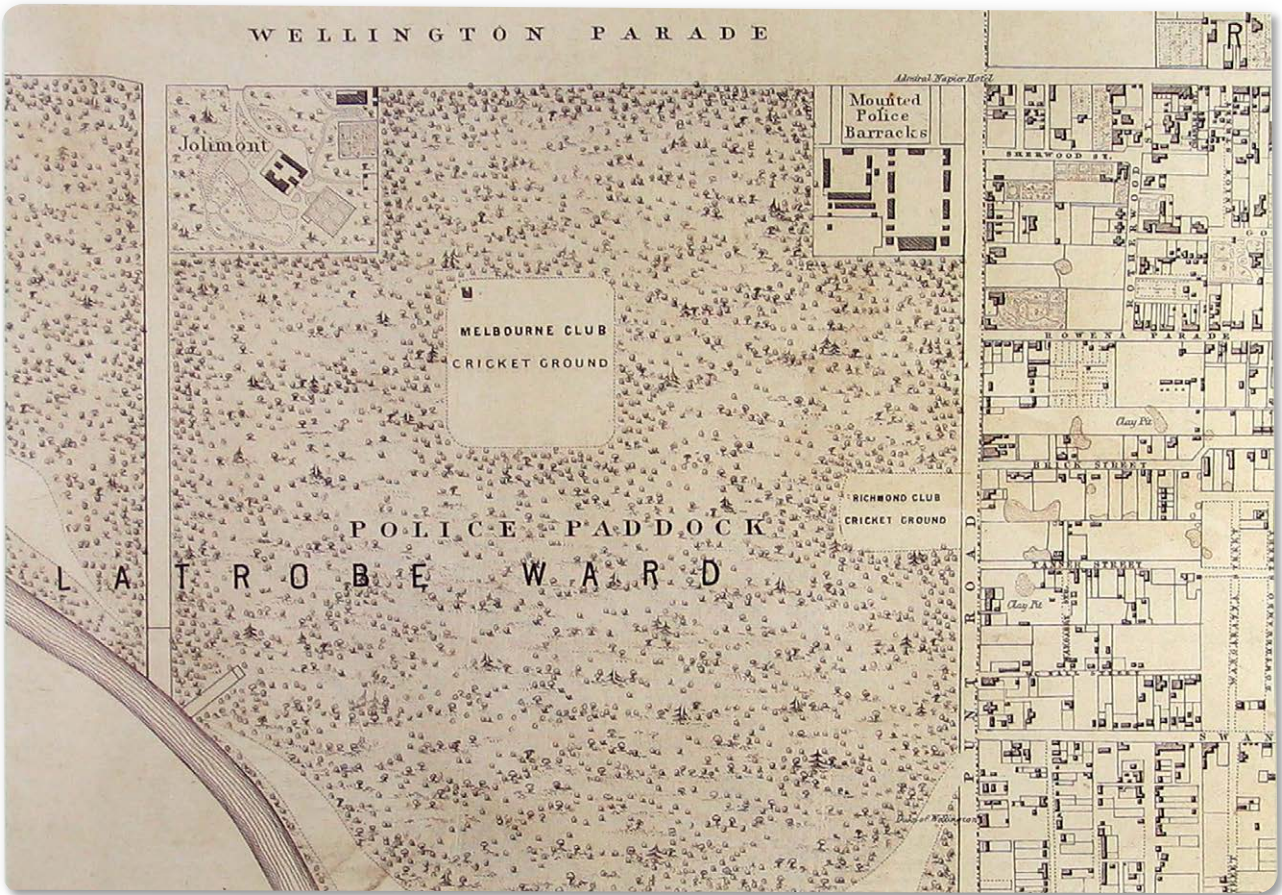
The Wurundjeri willam were custodians of an area along the Yarra and Plenty rivers and spoke a Kulin dialect called

**Top:** Aboriginal Language Areas in Victoria. Yellow shading indicates lands held by the five Kulin peoples prior to British colonisation (based on Ian Clark's 1996 reconstruction of language areas).

**Facing:** William Strutt's sketch of Aboriginal Police Troopers in the Police Paddock (Yarra Park), Melbourne, 1850.



Woi wurrung. *Kulin (gulin)* is the word for man in the Eastern Kulin language. Eastern Kulin comprised the Woi wurrung (Yarra Valley), Boon wurrung (Morrington Peninsula and Western Port), and Daung wurrung (Goulburn Valley) dialects, who along with Watha wurrung (Corio Bay and inland beyond Ballarat) and Djadja wurrung speakers (Loddon Valley) comprise a cultural group referred to as the Kulin nation.



Kulin society was divided into two exogamous moieties, Bunjil (eaglehawk) and Waa (crow). In Kulin lore Bunjil and Waa were ancestors who created the world and its laws. The Wurundjeri willam clan's moiety was Waa. The name Wurundjeri willam literally means "white gum tree dwellers".

Yarra Park was a location where Kulin people would assemble periodically for ceremony, sport and business – such as arranging marriages and settling disputes. At their great meetings they entertained themselves through corroborees, a celebration of dancing skill but also as a means for the participants to convey lore.

Yarra Park was part of the extensive Police Paddock, also known as Richmond Paddock and the Government Paddock. A separately fenced section housed the Mounted Police barracks and stables. The Native Police Corps (1842-53) was largely recruited from Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people and headquartered at Narre Warren and Dandenong, but are known to have used the Police Paddock's barracks when in Melbourne.

Mrs Charles Perry, wife of the first Bishop of Melbourne was living in the 1840s in one of La Trobe's cottages at Jolimont. She wrote that she, "often saw a dozen or so native police drilling on horseback in the paddock at Richmond."



On September 23, 1853, the government granted the Melbourne Cricket Club a new site for a cricket ground in the Government Paddock/Yarra Park, the current site of the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Work soon commenced on clearing the site and erecting a pavilion.



Of this Western District form James Dawson noted that, "Women and children are not allowed to be present". Dawson was an advocate for Aborigines, who sought to document their culture in a manner that was sympathetic. His description of the wrestling was not otherwise unlike Smyth's, albeit Dawson wrote that it was contested as a best of three falls,

The game is commenced by a man who considers himself to be a good wrestler challenging any one of his own or another tribe. His challenge being accepted, the wrestlers rub their hands, chests, and backs with wood ashes, to prevent their hold from slipping; they then clasp each other and struggle, but do not trip with their feet, as that is not considered a fair test of strength. After one of them has been thrown three times, he retires. Other two men then engage, and so on. When all competitors have had a trial, the conquerors are matched; and the last couple decide the championship. The event is followed by a promiscuous wrestling, and the game terminates with shouting, just as among white people.<sup>8</sup>

John Bulmer, a missionary stationed at Yelta on the Murray River from 1855-61, wrote, "The blacks had various ways of amusing themselves, the Murray people had wrestling contests. They would form a ring when one who had not been beaten would stand in the centre, he would throw dust at the person he wishes to challenge. The men would then engage, and wrestle for some time until one is thrown, the vanquished would retire and thus it would be repeated until they all had their fight. The last man in the ring was the victor."<sup>9</sup>

Of the Murray version, the German ethnographer William Blandowski noted in 1859, "The men grease their bodies and meet in the shade of a tree. They use handfuls of dirt from the ground to make their opponent easier to grip. Only the viewing of a fight itself can give a good picture of the fighters and the suppleness of their muscles; a description through picture and words is not enough."<sup>10</sup>

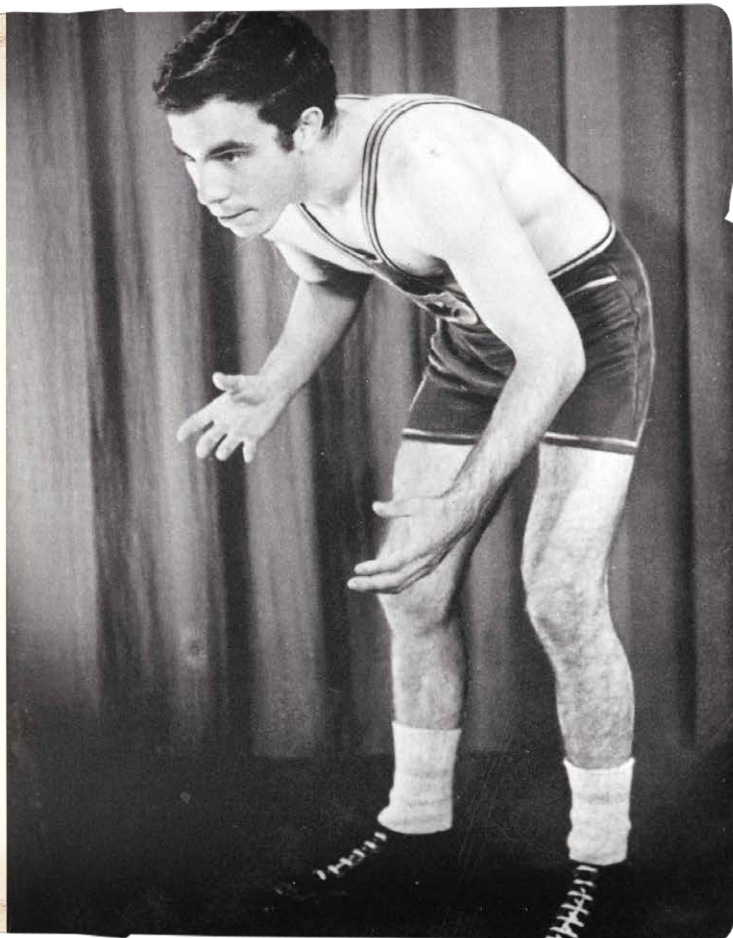
Peter Beveridge, who with his family lived near Swan Hill from 1839 to 1870, wrote of a typical match, in which the opponents, once determined, "sway from side to side, glaring at each other" and then "without signal, they make a simultaneous



## John Francis Kinsela OAM Olympic Wrestler

John Kinsela was born in Surry Hills, New South Wales, in 1949. His father was Wiradjuri from Condobolin, New South Wales. While his mother was Jawoyn from the Northern Territory, she grew up in Adelaide, being a member of the stolen generation. Kinsela was introduced to wrestling at the Police Boys Club in Leichardt, Sydney. He was ostensibly there to learn boxing, and did so for a couple of weeks. However, as he told Maryanne Touk of the *Blacktown Advocate*. "I fell into it, in a way. My boxing trainer didn't show up and a wrestling trainer did, so I joined them."<sup>11</sup>

Kinsela won the Australian flyweight title in 1968, 1972 and 1975. He first represented Australia at the Olympics at Mexico City in 1968. Following these Games he was conscripted by the Australian Army and saw service in Vietnam. Despite two years without wrestling he would again qualify for the Olympic Games at Munich in 1972, and also for the World Championships at Istanbul in 1974. After he retired from the sport he coached wrestling and strives to be a role model for Aboriginal youth. Kinsela received the Medal of the Order of Australia, "For service to wrestling, and to youth", in the 2017 Queen's Birthday honours.



spring at each other, coiling their sinewy arms and legs round each other as opportunity offers, endeavouring by every ruse to gain the advantage in the first of the struggle. When closed in the struggle, they twist and screw their oily bodies into all kinds of contortions, raising each other from the ground as opportunity offers by sheer force of muscle; the raised one, however, generally managing to get his legs firmly twisted round the body of his friendly competitor, and when in that position, no powers of muscle, however exerted, will put him to the ground... The struggle continues with equal success for a considerable time, neither gaining any perceptible advantage... [until] the wind of one begins to fail more rapidly than that of the other; the end soon becomes apparent; the short-winded one is raised from the ground for the last time... so with a huge and final effort, he is flung into the air, and comes down with a thud of sufficient force to shake the ground."<sup>12</sup>

Robinson alluded to Greek myth to describe a contest between members of two Western District clans near Hamilton in 1841, being "2 of a side 2 Yarrer conedeets and 2 Nillan conedeets".<sup>13</sup> He wrote they were, "fine young men. They at times represent Hercules and Anteans [Antaeus], the former lifting the other from the ground by sheer power of muscle and throwing him on his back on the ground, this muscular strength and action illustrated by slight the natives are easily thrown but not by strength."

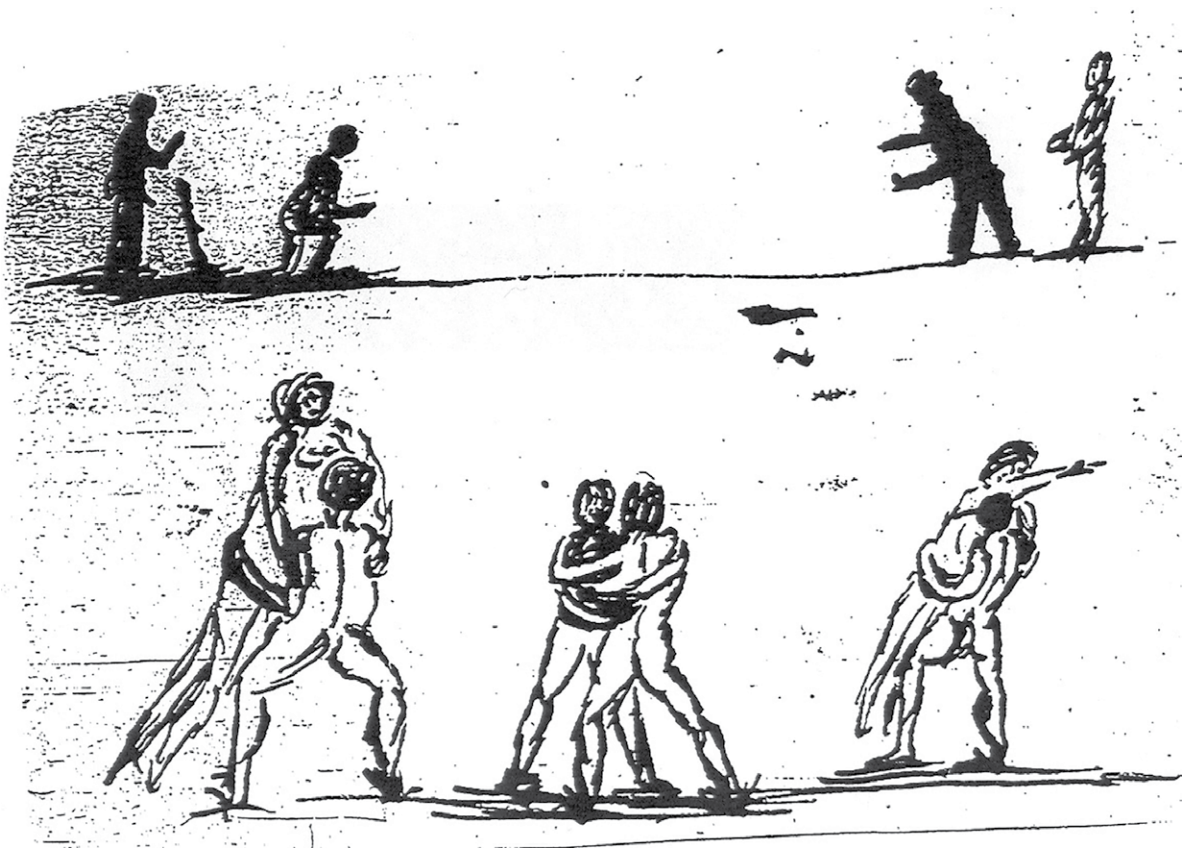
**Facing:** Gustav Mützel's 1861 drawing of traditional Aboriginal wrestling in the Murray River region for William Blandowski's *Australien in 142 photographischen Abbildungen nach zehnjährigen Erfahrungen (Australia in 142 photographic illustrations from 10 years' experience)*. The work was likely based on Blandowski's sketches and/or firsthand account from when he was based at Mondellimin camp, now Merbein, Victoria, in 1857.

However, the Aboriginal population of Victoria declined rapidly in the nineteenth century, and the remnant communities were isolated on mission stations during the 1860s. There, many traditional sports, including wrestling, waned in favour of sports and activities introduced by Europeans such as cricket, football and athletics. Yet, early in the twentieth century many Koorie men were attracted to boxing. While gloves may have replaced "hands full of ashes", and the prize was "a quick quid" rather than a waddy, the sport was still between two men, alone and without weapons, in a contest to physically dominate their opponent.

Jimmy Sharman was a travelling showman, who from the 1910s recruited a troupe of boxers and wrestlers that toured agricultural shows in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Throughout the twentieth century other tent boxing organisations toured regional areas too, and many of their fighters were Koorie. Eric Clarke Snr, an Aboriginal tent boxer from Framlingham, an aboriginal station north of Warrnambool, recalled, "[Jimmy] Sharman always said of the Aboriginal men 'It's in their blood to fight.'" During this era, in which Aboriginal Australians were denied citizenship and whose rights and movements were curtailed, the fight game provided young indigenous men with work during the depressed 1930s, and as Eric Clarke noted, "a means of connection among and between otherwise isolated Aboriginal Missions."<sup>14</sup> The boxing tent also offered oppressed men some pride and dignity in a racist society. Framlingham tent boxer Henry Collins stated, "I felt good when I knocked white blokes out. I felt good. I knew I was boss in the ring. I showed my superiority... they showed it outside."<sup>15</sup>

Boxing was a combat sport in which Aboriginal athletes could and did achieve. Of Australia's seven indigenous Olympians prior to 1984, five were boxers, the other two being the basketballer Michael Ah Mat at Tokyo in 1964, and the wrestler John Kinsela at Mexico City in 1968 and Munich in 1972. But it was on the professional boxing circuit that Aboriginal Australians truly excelled. Since the Queenslander Jerry Jerome won the Australian middleweight title in 1912, many

other national titles have been won by Aborigines. Lionel Rose, from Jackson's Track, north of Drouin, Victoria, became the first Aboriginal world title winner when he claimed the WBC bantamweight belt on February 27, 1968. Lionel's father Roy was a Gunditjmara (Western District) tent boxer, who toured country centres to help support his family. However, if one considers traditional wrestling, the Rose family's fight game tradition was likely much older, and very ancient indeed.



**Right:** George Augustus Robinson's sketches of Aborigines wrestling near Hamilton, Victoria, on June 1, 1841. The challenge was issued by kneeling before a waddy stuck perpendicular in the earth. The illustration shows one contestant, "lifting the other from the ground by sheer power of muscle and throwing him on his back on the ground."

## Endnotes

- Ian D. Clark and Laura M. Kostanski, *An Indigenous History of Stonnington: A Report to the City of Stonnington*, School of Business, University of Ballarat, June 30, 2006, pp.67-68.
- William Kyle, *Geelong Naturalist*, vol. 2, no. 3, March 1906, p.159.
- R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria and other parts of Australia and Tasmania*. Melbourne, 1878, p.177.
- Ian D. Clark (ed.), *The Papers of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate*. Volume Two: *Aboriginal Vocabularies: South East Australia, 1839-1852*, Heritage Matters, Clarendon, 2000, p.113.
- This article relates only to the traditional owners of the land of Yarra Park (encompassing the MCG). Other Melbourne Cricket Club properties – such as the Albert Ground and other locations in Melbourne south of the Yarra – will likely have different traditional owners.
- Another tree (a southern mahogany) in Yarra Park was also identified as a scarred tree but this was refuted in the *Yarra Park Tree Strategy* report by Tree Logic Pty. Ltd. for the Melbourne Cricket Club, January 2013.
- Winston Burchett, *East Melbourne 1837-1977, People Places, Problems*, Craftsmen Press, Melbourne, 1978.
- James Dawson, *Australian Aborigines: The Language and Customs of Several Tribes of Aborigines in the Western District of Victoria, Australia*. George Robertson, Melbourne, 1881. Facsimile ed. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1981, p.85.
- Alastair Campbell and Ron Vanderwal (eds), *John Bulmer's Recollections of Victorian Aboriginal Life, 1855-1908: Occasional Papers, Anthropology and History No. 3*, Museum Victoria, Melbourne, [1999], p.55. The chapter 'Camp activities' was based on Alistair Campbell's 'transliteration' of 'Bulmer, J. 1888. Some account of the Aborigines of the Lower Murray, Wimmera, Gippsland', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australia* (Victorian Branch) 5:15-43 [Vol. 5, 1888, pp. 15-43]. (Held in Museum Victoria Archives)
- William Blandowski (Harry Allen ed.), *Australia: William Blandowski's Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Life*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2010, p.118.
- Maryanne Taouk, *Blacktown Advocate*, June 12, 2017.
- Peter Beveridge, *The Aborigines of Victoria and Riverina*. Melbourne, M.L. Hutchison, 1889. Republished as *The Aborigines of Victoria and Riverina as seen by Peter Beveridge*. Lowden Publishing, Donvale (Vic), 2008, pp.44-45.
- Yarrer gundidj and Nillan gundidj are Western District clans. The Yarrer gundidj was between the Merri River and Allandale stations and the Nillan gundidj was southwest of Mount Napier. "Conedeet" is a term associated with clans that indicates "belonging", therefore "Yarrer conedeet" may be translated as belonging to the Yarrer gundidj.
- Eric Clarke, *The Blood and Sweat Drenched Canvas: A Social History of the Survival of Aboriginal Tent Fighters during the Depression and Post War Years*. School of Education RMIT University, April 2010.
- Colin Tatz and Paul Tatz, *Black Gold: Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2000, p.148.



# A Treasure of the MCC Library Collection: William Stanley Cock's *Football* (1885)

By Trevor Ruddell

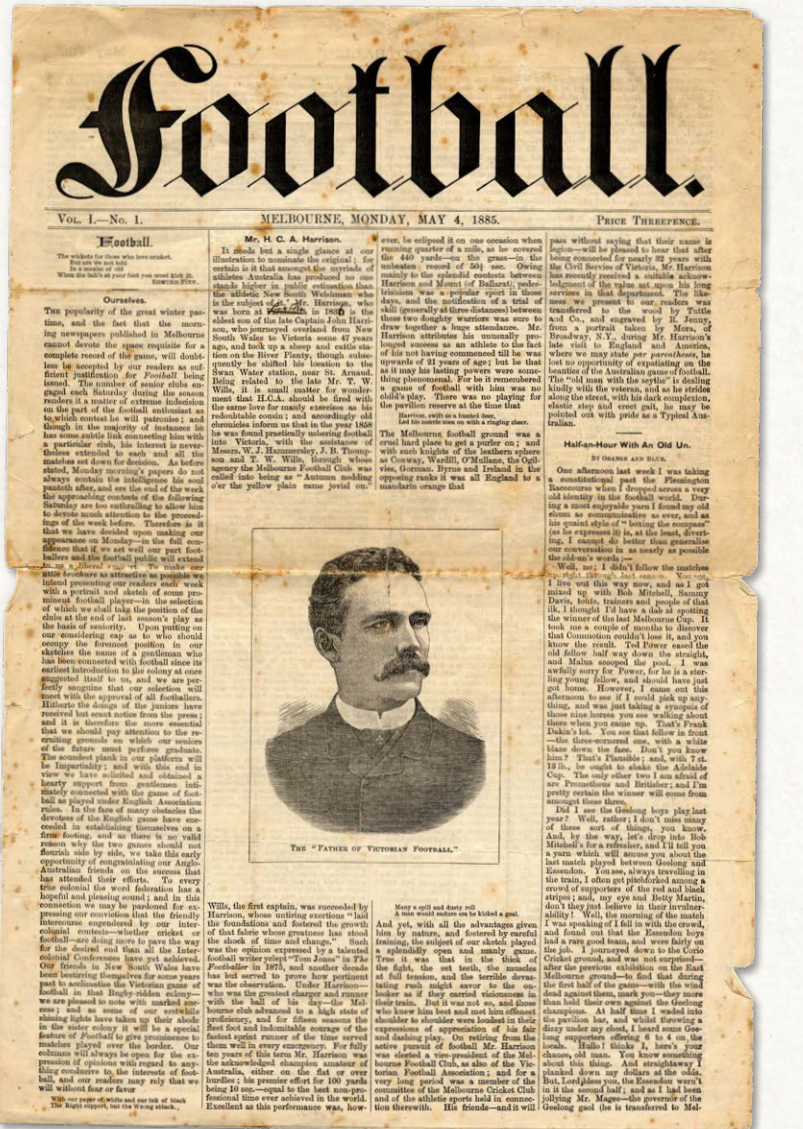
*Football* was the earliest known attempt to publish a dedicated football weekly in Melbourne. It was released on Monday May 4, 1885, by Kemp & Boyce, Collins Street, Melbourne, for the proprietor William Stanley Cock. The magazine was not the first football serial published in Melbourne. Thomas Power's *The Footballer*, an annual published from 1875 to 1881, reviewed the previous season while providing the player and club statistics to inform the upcoming year. Therefore, its content was not unlike a combination of the *AFL Record Season Guide* and John Harms' *The Footy Almanac*.

*Football* was more akin to the old *Inside Football* that ceased publication earlier this year. The magazine intended to provide a weekly review of recent games, commentaries on the game's health and administration, and historical features. In the words of the opening editorial, it sought to provide football enthusiasts with, "the intelligence his soul panteth over." This singular copy is also a boon for football's historians. The issue was published two days after the Richmond Football Club's first ever senior game, and therefore, it covers this seminal match – a one goal to nil loss to Williamstown. The match report contains the only surviving record of Richmond's inaugural starting twenty.

To date the MCC Library knows of no other copy of this publication in existence. In fact, this sole four page copy of *Football*, volume 1 number 1, may well have been the only edition published – there is as yet no knowledge of a number 2 being printed. However, the publisher's enthusiasm was not without good reason, as the game was expanding in the 1880s at senior and junior levels, and the supporters of the "Anglo-Australian" game (soccer) had also founded an association in this city. The latter game was also being covered in *Football's* pages as "British Association Football".

The issue was donated to our library by Lawton Wills Cooke in April 2006. Lawton is a descendant of Horace Wills, who like his brothers, played football for Geelong and Melbourne in the 1860s and 1870s. Horace's eldest brother, Tom Wills, was a leading footballer and cricketer of the era, and a co-author of the 1859 *Rules of the Melbourne Football Club* (held by the Melbourne Cricket Club Archives) – the rules from which the sport of Australian football would evolve.

The magazine's illustrated feature is a profile of H.C.A. Harrison, a cousin of the Wills brothers, which may explain the survival of this copy as a Wills/Harrison family relic. Harrison's picture is captioned "Father of Victorian Football". Similar phraseology regarding Harrison was first used in the 1876 *Footballer*, but it was rarely used in the 1880s. However, by the turn of the century and well into the 1980s epithets such as "Father of the Australian Game of Football" were widely applied to him – whether or



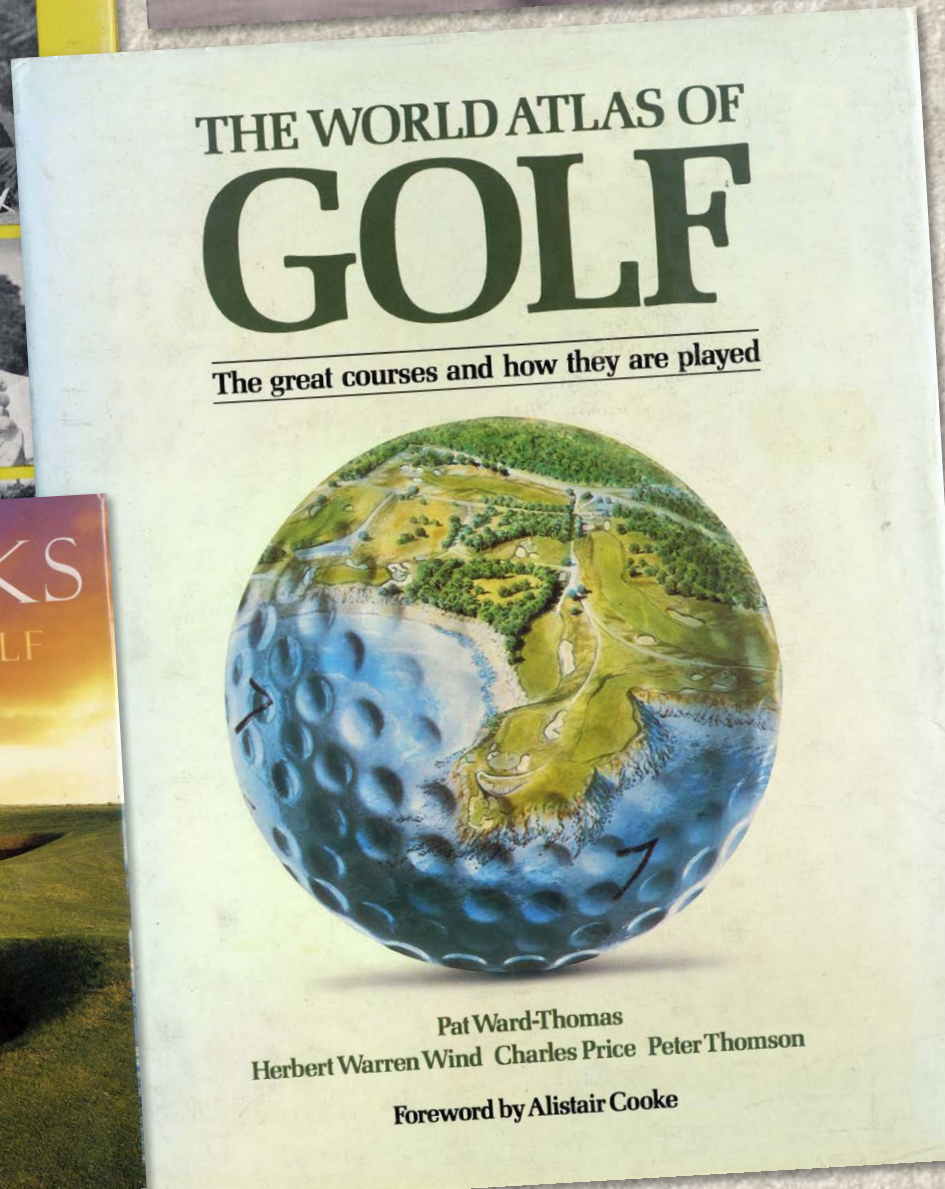
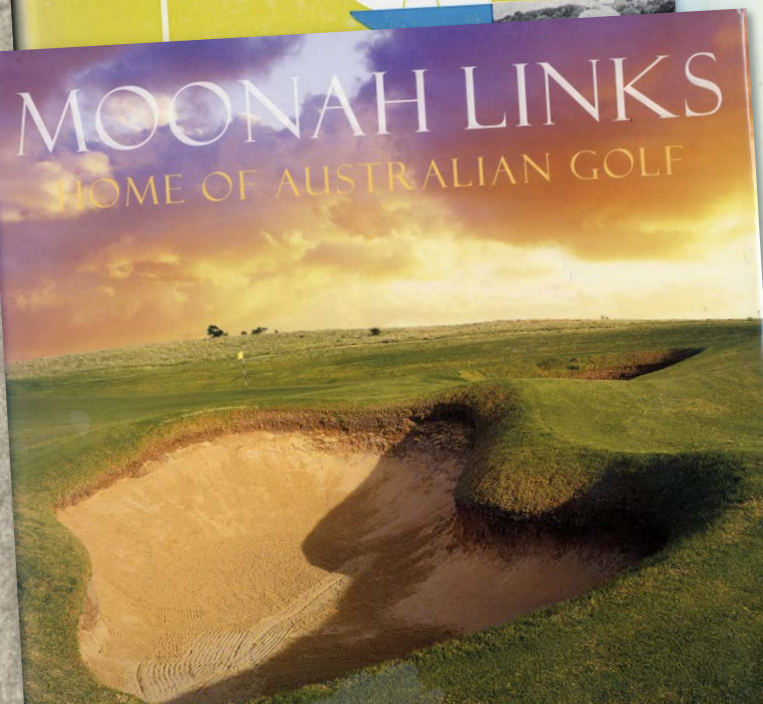
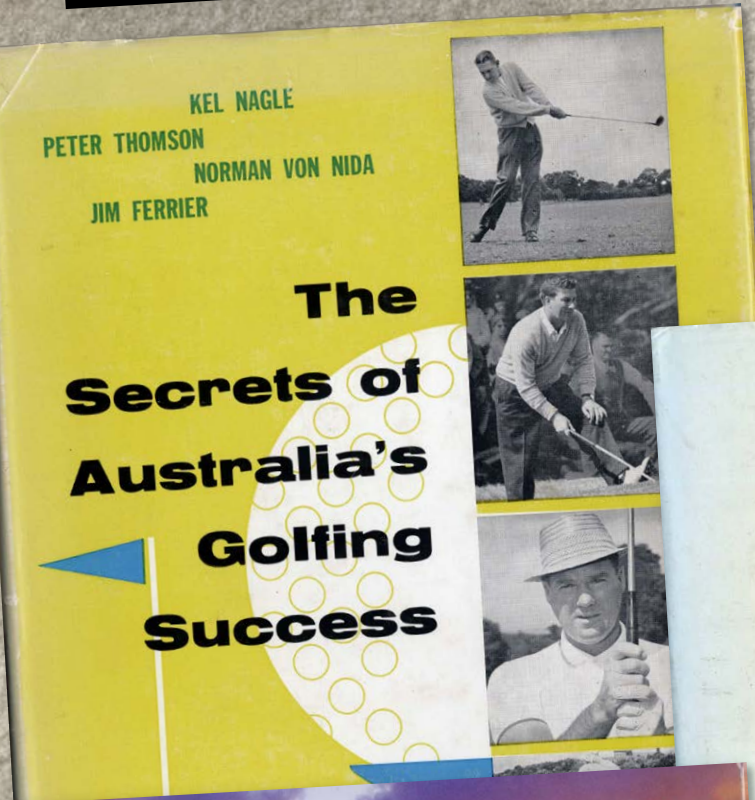
not they were truly deserved. The image was used in the 1987 biography of Harrison, *Running with the Ball* by Gillian Hibbins and Anne Mancini, a descendant of Harrison's brother Ernest. It was in this publication that Gillian Hibbins, a longtime friend of our library, critically demythologised the Harrison myth, along with many others regarding the early years of the Australian game.

It was not just the rarity of the item that makes *Football* a treasure, but its connection to a prominent colonial sporting figure, its importance to our knowledge of Melbourne football in 1885, and its early announcement of what would soon become a stubborn and abiding football origin myth.

# VALE Peter William Thomson AO, CBE

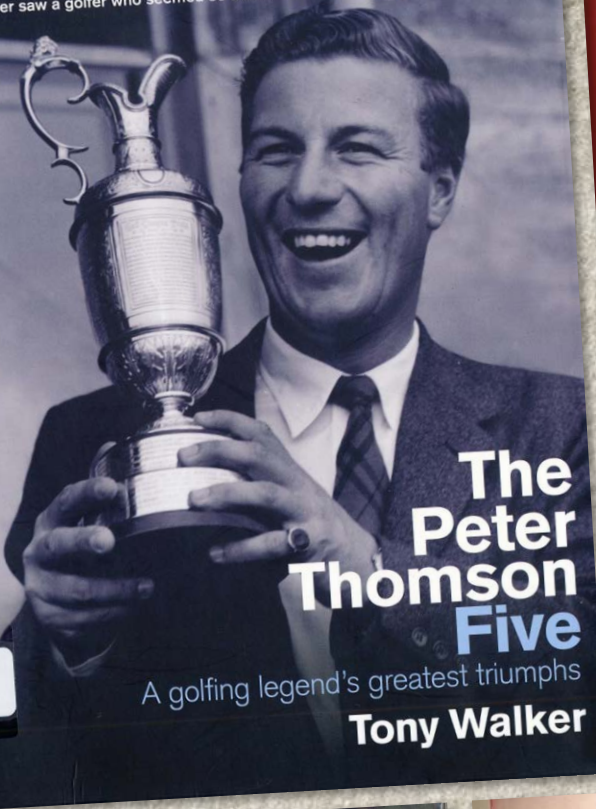
(August 23, 1929 – June 20, 2018)

On June 20 this year Peter Thomson, a World Golf Hall of Fame member and Sport Australia Hall of Fame legend, died aged 88. He was a 40 year member of the Melbourne Cricket Club, who found international renown as a five-time British Open Champion, winning in 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958 and 1965. Described as the thinking man's golfer, he wrote, "The most important facets of golf are careful planning, calm and clear thinking and the ordinary logic of common sense." He was a prolific golf writer, who contributed columns to newspapers from the 1950s, as well as authoring and being the subject of many books. To recognise Peter Thomson's passing the *Yorker* pays tribute to him with a selection of Peter Thomson related items from the MCC Library collection.





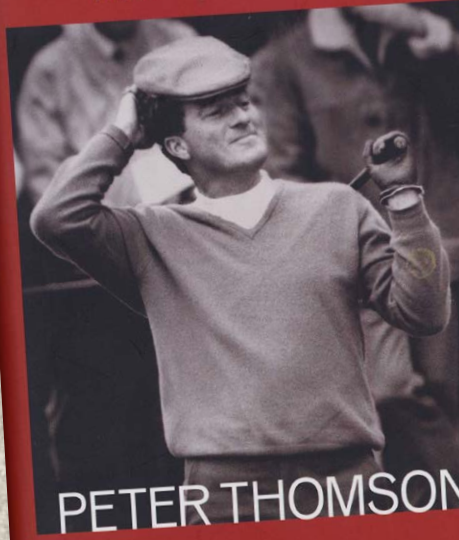
er saw a golfer who seemed so assured of his destiny.' Pat Ward-Thomas



# The Peter Thomson Five

A golfing legend's greatest triumphs  
**Tony Walker**

LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED



# PETER THOMSON

Inspirations & Insights from  
AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST GOLFER

with STEVE PERKIN

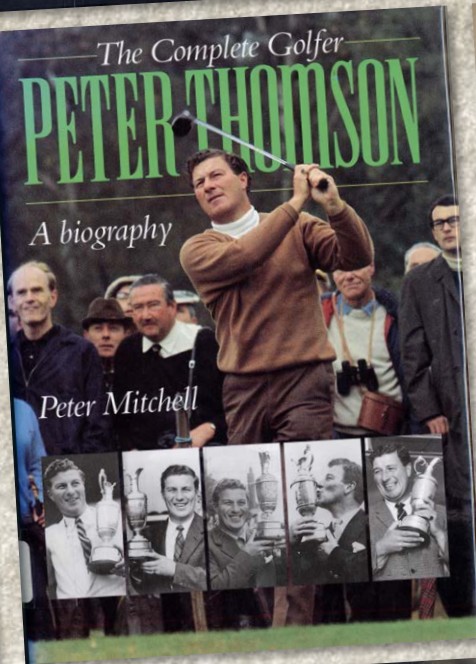
Inspirations & Insights From Australia's Greatest Golfer

# A LIFE IN GOLF



Foreword by Geoff Ogilvy

**PETER THOMSON**  
with STEVE PERKIN



# Victorian GOLF

Registered at the G.P.O., Melbourne, for Transmission by Post as a Periodical

Price: Ten Cents

The Official Organ of the Victorian Golf Association

Vol. 9, No. 3 - November, 1967



# Peter Thomson WON

**BOTH THE 1967 'AUSTRALIAN OPEN' AND AUSTRALIAN P.G.A. TITLES**

**USING EXCLUSIVELY**

# Dunlop

# 65

GOLF BALLS & DUNLOP GOLF CLUBS

# This Wonderful World of Golf

Peter Thomson and Desmond Zwar





# The MCG in 1918

*By Lynda Carroll*

By the time 1918 clicked over, the world was weary; war weary. It was a different type of weariness to the familiar challenges of a new year and summer weather that had already featured substantial rains. As Alf Batchelder has stated in *Playing the Greater Game*, a quarter of all Australian casualties of World War I were suffered in 1918.<sup>1</sup> Far from winding down, the war was still having a substantial impact in its last year.

Just to the east of the city centre, the Melbourne Cricket Ground brooded silently, an important platform, and so often a refuge from the pressures of the outside world. But the war had had an impact here, too, often in directly contrasting ways. A reflective memorial service recognising the fallen from East Melbourne and Melbourne was held at the ground in December 1917,<sup>2</sup> followed a day later by a rally. The latter event featured the Prime Minister, Billy Hughes – himself an MCC member – and a range of other dignitaries, and was promoting the “Yes” campaign as the country headed to its second referendum regarding conscription.<sup>3</sup> This MCG

gathering, with officials clear and present in the middle of the ground, was loud and uneasy, with a crowd including returned soldiers who acted to restore peace among the chaos. They faced pressure against an organised group, protestors against



**Top:** The MCG during the Associated Public Schools’ sports on the MCG on October 25, 1918. *Australasian*, November 2, 1918.

**Bottom:** An April 1918 recruiting drive, headed by the Returned Soldiers’ Band, march through the streets of Melbourne. *Australasian*, April 20, 1918.



conscripting deploying "eggs, glass bottles, road metal and loud-sounding fireworks",<sup>4</sup> causing much consternation and a range of injuries to others in attendance.

Such uneasiness and discontent placed 1918 as a challenge, due to both the war and wider community tensions. Meanwhile, the cricket season trundled along in the background in abridged, local form. Persistent rain and generally inclement conditions throughout the season meant that the turf was substandard, unable to be adequately maintained due to wartime restrictions.<sup>5</sup> There was still no Sheffield Shield fixture;

it was noted that "As in previous years of the war, the V.C.A. decided not to play for a pennant",<sup>6</sup> and at the start of the year it was also pointed out in *The Leader* that:

Heaven knows when the Sheffield Shield games will be resumed, for since the outbreak of the war little cricket of any importance has been played. In Victoria a good deal has been done by cricketers for patriotic purposes, and only just recently the secretary of the Melbourne Cricket Club, Mr Hugh Trumble, handed the State War Council a cheque for £5000 for its fund for sick and wounded soldiers, on account of the proceeds of the patriotic carnival organised by the club a month or so ago.<sup>7</sup>

Both major sports played at the MCG continued to evolve through wartime compromises and challenges. While the VFL had nearly its full complement of teams in action once again in 1918 with Essendon and St Kilda returning to the competition, the Melbourne Football Club was still in recess.



The MCG was bereft of a regular fixture for most of the 1918 season. As Essendon's home ground, the East Melbourne Cricket Ground shouldered most of the work for the precinct, hosting seven games during the regular season.<sup>8</sup>

However, come finals time it was back to the MCG for three big games. First, Collingwood defeated St Kilda, before the weather that had proved unpredictable all year again had an impact. The semi-final between South Melbourne and Carlton had to be delayed for a week.<sup>9</sup> The ground was waterlogged and unsuitable for play, and further, as stated in *The Herald*, "as the profits are to be given to patriotic and charitable objects they are anxious to make the matches as financially successful as possible."<sup>10</sup>

With a win to South in the rescheduled semi-final, the final game of the season was between South Melbourne and Collingwood. Despite leading for the first three quarters, Collingwood was overrun in the last term, with South Melbourne winning the premiership by five points in front of a crowd of 39,262.<sup>11</sup>



Even though it was quieter than usual at the MCG throughout 1918, with attendances at most events – including football matches between Army teams from the Broadmeadows Camp – lower than expected,<sup>12</sup> the ground was a site for many and varied activities, keeping the life of the MCG bubbling along at a low ebb. The greatest novelty was undoubtedly a Grand Parade of Dogs, held in late April 1918. With over 400 entries received, the event – organised by the Victorian Poultry and Kennel Club – was conducted in rings formed in the middle of the arena.<sup>13</sup> As well as attracting the interest of many ladies, it was also noted in *The Age* that "One of the judges was a returned soldier, Sergeant E. J. Coyle, who handled the Bull Dogs and

**Top:** South Melbourne, Victorian Football League premiers, 1918.

**Bottom:** The Victorian Poultry and Kennel Club's Parade of Dogs at the MCG in late April 1918.



Pomeranians in a careful and confident style'.<sup>14</sup>

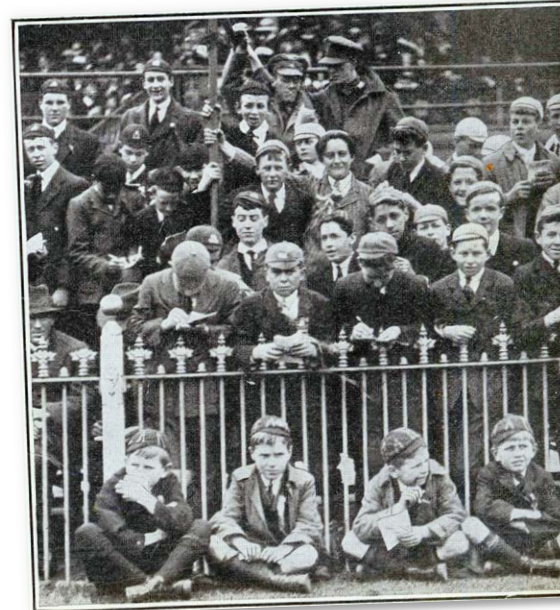
This unusual event for the MCG came in the wake of a state schools display in March, with male students from fifteen state schools taking part. Divided into squads, the activities undertaken included "a march past, marching in fours, physical training and games."<sup>15</sup> The school which went home with the silver and oak shield was Brighton Road State School, St Kilda.<sup>16</sup>

Supporting the war effort – both tangibly and socially – was at the heart of most events held on the MCG, often involving donations to bodies such as the Red Cross and the Comforts Fund. Along with a number of private firms and community groups holding concerts and sporting contests,<sup>17</sup> the Scouts used the ground in September, the event starting with a march from the city to the MCG. There were 39 troops involved, with the Governor General and the State Governor undertaking the inspection.<sup>18</sup>

While VFL football was largely absent from the MCG in 1918, school teams utilised the arena, with Parade Christian Brothers College training there once a week, and a batch of ten Public School games were played on the

ground in July and August 1918 over a series of weeks.<sup>19</sup> Wesley proved supreme among all participating schools, not losing any of their five games, and triumphing over Melbourne Grammar, 14.15 to 5.8.<sup>20</sup> One of those who excelled was Wesley's vice-captain, Percy Tulloh, who was "in brilliant form" in the final.<sup>21</sup> Tulloh went on to play for Melbourne through the 1920s, with one season at St Kilda to complete his VFL career.<sup>22</sup>

Once the football was over, the public schoolboys were



on holiday, but would be returning to the MCG for an athletics carnival on October 25, 1918.<sup>23</sup> The weeks that followed this event were filled with heightened excitement as realisation dawned that the end of the war was finally becoming a reality. On 8 November 1918, premature news of the Armistice gathered force, with early rejoicing throughout the city and suburbs leading to an announcement that, "Arrangements have been made to hold

**This page:** Scenes from the October 25, 1918, Associated Public Schools' sports on the MCG, as photographed by the *Australasian*, November 2, 1918.

**Top:** L-R – The 120 yards hurdle, S.H. Thompson (Scotch College) winner of the Under 16 long jump, and preparing for the flag race.

**Centre:** Supporters from the preparatory schools.

**Bottom:** French General Paul Pau addressing the winning team following the presentation of the Argus and Australasian Cup. Pau fought during the Franco-Prussian War, rising to the rank of general, and in 1914 commanded the Army of Alsace during the Great War.



**Above:** The corner of Collins and Swanston Streets, Melbourne, on Armistice Day 1918. (State Library of Victoria collection)

a celebration at the Town Hall, and a thanksgiving service at St Paul's Cathedral immediately official confirmation of the news regarding the signing of the armistice is received."<sup>24</sup>

It was time to start planning beyond the war. Club president Sir Leo Cussen brought together representatives of all the MCC's sports on November 20, 1918 to discuss future plans.<sup>25</sup> One group eager to return to the fray was the Melbourne Football Club, already recruiting in preparation for 1919, with around 30 new players – a mix of untried recruits and players from other sides - to join the team.<sup>26</sup>

These last weeks of 1918 – undoubtedly a strange mix of celebration and sombre reflection - were important ones for the MCG, and it was with much joy that spectators gathered at the ground on Boxing Day. It was reported that "After a lapse of four years interstate cricket was resumed".<sup>27</sup> Victoria, with

Armstrong as captain, was taking on the Monty Noble-led New South Wales, and would ultimately run out victorious by 216 runs.<sup>28</sup> However, the year was finishing as it started, the game delayed by torrential rain.<sup>29</sup>

The war was over, but it was just the beginning of the new challenge of managing peace. All the challenges of repatriation, commemoration and the emerging influenza pandemic combined in a near impossible combination.<sup>30</sup> Over 13,000 men had sailed for Australia by the end of 1918,<sup>31</sup> joining the "Some 93,000 men [who] had come home while the war was in progress".<sup>32</sup> Leisure and community activity would undoubtedly be important to everyone in this strange new world and the Melbourne Cricket Ground waited, ready for post-war life and activity.

## Endnotes

1. Alf Batchelder, *Playing the Greater Game: The Melbourne Cricket Club and its Ground in World War I*, MP Publications, Brighton (Vic), 1998, p. 439
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 417-418
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 418-424, *passim*.
4. *Argus*, December 11, 1917, p. 6
5. Alf Batchelder, *Playing the Greater Game*, p. 432
6. *MCC Annual Report 1918-19*, p. 6
7. *Leader*, January 5, 1918, p. 21
8. <https://afltables.com/afl/seas/1918.html>, AFL Tables, Season 1918 scores, viewed 12 August 2018
9. *Leader*, August 31, 1918, p. 22
10. *Herald*, August 24, 1918, p. 3
11. <https://afltables.com/afl/stats/games/1918/041619180907.html>, AFL Tables, South Melbourne v Collingwood – Sat, September 7, 1918, viewed August 12, 2018
12. Alf Batchelder, *Playing the Greater Game*, p. 443
13. *The Age*, April 29, 1918, p. 6
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Prahran Telegraph*, March 30, 1918, p. 2
16. *Ibid.*
17. Alf Batchelder, *Playing the Greater Game*, pp. 443-444
18. *Bendigo Advertiser*, September 30, 1918, p. 3
19. Alf Batchelder, *Playing the Greater Game*, p. 444
20. *Herald*, August 29, 1918, p. 2
21. *Ibid.*
22. Russell Holmesby and Jim Main, *The Encyclopedia of AFL Footballers: Every Melbourne AFL Player Ever*, BAS Publishing, Melbourne, 2004, p. 189
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Herald*, November 8, 1918, p. 1
25. Alf Batchelder, *Playing the Greater Game*, p. 471
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Herald*, December 26, 1918, p. 3
28. *Argus*, December 31, 1918, p. 6
29. *Herald*, December 26, 1918, p. 3
30. Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest (NSW), 2013, pp. 523-528, *passim*.
31. Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, p. 522
32. *Ibid.*, p. 524

# The Australian Ice Hockey Team's 1964 Olympics Playoffs Experience

*By Marie Pernat, with the recollections of Harry Coles, Australian team member*

Variations of the game of ice hockey in Australia can be traced back to 1904, originating at the Adelaide Glaciarium. Over the next few years, the sport's rules continued to evolve with games at the newly-opened Melbourne Glaciarium including one against visiting American sailors from the USS Baltimore, and at the Sydney Glaciarium. In 1909, the first interstate series was played between Victoria and New South Wales. The winner's trophy became known as the Goodall Cup, having been donated by John Goodall, a Victorian player.

Following the difficult years of the two World Wars and the Great Depression in the first half of the twentieth century, the standard of the sport improved in the 1950s when immigrants with experience in higher standard ice hockey leagues overseas played in and coached local teams. It was planned to send an Australian ice hockey team to the VII Olympic Winter Games in Cortina D'Ampezzo, Italy, in 1956 but this did not eventuate.<sup>1</sup>

Harry Coles<sup>2</sup> tells of the popularity of local ice hockey matches shown on television after TV had been introduced in



**Top:** Harry Coles in 2018 with his 1963 team passport photograph.

**Above:** Opening ceremony prior to the first playoff in Tokyo on November 23, 1963.

Melbourne at the time of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Local TV cameramen were sent overseas to practise filming ice hockey games so they could learn to film athletes in action at high speed. This preceded extensive television coverage of other fields of sports including Australian football.

In the 1960s, at least for Olympic Winter Games, Australian team members were selected even though they had no chance of medals. There was dissension among Australian Olympic and winter sports administrators on whether athletes should be allowed to compete when they were not of world-class standard.<sup>3</sup> The Olympic spirit at that time was that if the athlete was the nation's best and could fund their trip to the Games and cover associated expenses, they had an opportunity to participate. Olympic athletes had to be amateurs; professional athletes or teams were forbidden to participate. Today's athletes, by comparison, must meet strict qualifying standards and perform at the highest levels in selection trials. They often receive government grants, are commercially sponsored and are paid for performing successfully in their sports at championship events around the world.

An Australian ice hockey team competed in the VIII Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley, California in 1960, the first time an Australian team had participated in the Winter Games. They finished in ninth (last) position, not being up to world class level, but gained valuable international experience by competing against the world's best. This occasion was also the first time an Australian ice hockey team had represented their country internationally.<sup>4</sup>

In 1962, Australia competed for the first time in the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championship, held in Colorado Springs and Denver, United States. They competed against teams who had

played and trained together in preparation for the event, with long-term coaches. In this tournament Australia defeated Denmark 6-2, achieving their first win internationally, were defeated by the Netherlands 6-4, and their other games were closer than in previous international games. This was achieved despite the team arriving only two days before the tournament, having ongoing difficulties acclimatising to the altitude, and many other setbacks.<sup>5</sup> It was hoped that these improved performances were a sign that Australia was becoming more competitive at the highest level.

On October 8, 1963, the Australian Ice Hockey Federation (now Ice Hockey Australia) announced that the International Olympic Committee had given permission for an Australian ice hockey team to participate in the 1964 Winter Olympics and that a team would be sent to participate in two playoff games in Tokyo to be held in November 1963. Playoffs were necessary because more countries had applied for the ice hockey event than could be accommodated in the Olympic Village in Innsbruck, the location for the 1964 Winter Olympics.



**Right:** Poster advertising the two Olympic playoffs between Australia and Japan in Tokyo on November 23 and 25, 1963 plus the exhibition game in Tokyo on November 26.



The team was announced at a function at the Prince of Wales Hotel, St Kilda and a date organised for their first practise together. This left just five weeks for the players to practice as a group and bond as a team before the playoffs.

William (Bud) McEachern was appointed as coach, Russ Carson as team manager and Syd Hudson to the role of assistant manager and trainer. Players in the squad to represent Australia were: Russell Jones (Captain), Phil Hall, Noel Derrick, Harry Coles, Anthony Martyr, John Thomas, John Miller, Edward Mustar, Ken Pawsey, Tim Spencer, John Nicholas, Charles Grandy, Elgin Luke, Ken Wellman, John Purcell, Peter Cavanagh and John Stuart.<sup>6</sup> Jones, Derrick, Thomas, Pawsey, Nicholas and Wellman were members of the 1960 Winter Olympics team.

In the few weeks remaining until the team flew to Japan, training took place in Melbourne at St Moritz Ice Skating Rink at weekends. The players were mostly from Victoria, with some from New South Wales. A unique training program was devised. Due to the limited access to

ice rinks, additional training took place in parks – such as sprints piggybacking another player for 100 yards – Harry well remembers that part of the program. There were no specialised gym facilities or equipment and no individualised training programs. Harry added squash to his own schedule. Dietary advice was non-existent and smoking was not banned.

The players from New South Wales travelled to Melbourne for training at their own expense, remaining in Melbourne for the whole of the last week before leaving for Tokyo. Unfortunately, there was limited practice time in Japan before the playoffs given the high cost of being overseas longer. Thus, there was very little time to adjust to the ice conditions. Just prior to the team leaving, a fundraising event was held at St Moritz. The arena was packed with spectators who came to see an exhibition game between the Olympic squad and a few local players who were organised into two teams called Australia and the Rest of Australia.

The Australian ice hockey players who travelled to Japan in November 1963 were amateurs who had to finance much of their own travel. They had to take leave without pay from their workplaces. Harry had to do that even though he worked for the Australian Government. He recalls that each player was allocated ten books of raffle tickets to assist with payment of airfares. After the Games playoffs, it took him more than a year to pay off the debt he incurred from competing in Japan.

In the team were outstanding sportsmen from a range of sports. Tim Spencer competed in the 1960 Winter Olympics as a figure skater. John Nicholas was a surf ski champion and a sailor. Harry Coles was firstly an ice skater and was dubbed "Sea Biscuit" for his speed across the ice. When he took up ice hockey he had to learn goal shooting and puck handling away from the ice due to the limited availability of ice time at the rinks. The team included three naturalised Australians from Canada – Charles Grandy, Elgin Luke and Phil Hall, all champion junior lacrosse players and with experience in ice hockey overseas.



**Top:** Poster advertising the Australia-All Hokkaido exhibition game on November 27, 1963.

**Right:** Australian players outside the Takanawa Prince Hotel, the team's hotel in Tokyo, before the first playoff, John Thomas, Tony Martyr, Harry Coles and John Miller.





The team flew with Qantas, stopping overnight in Sydney before travelling to Tokyo. A function was held in Sydney at which they were presented with their 1964 Winter Olympics blazers, with the endorsement of the Australian Olympic Committee. Other uniform pieces that were supplied included ties, slacks, jumper and hat. The players were required to bring two of their own ice hockey sticks overseas. They did not wear helmets during their games, apart from the goaltender.

Funding was scarce for Olympic winter sports and the cost of providing training and experience against overseas teams was extremely high. Australia did not compete in the World Ice Hockey Championship in Stockholm in March 1963, and neither did Japan.

The top 12 teams at the end of the 1963 World Championship, plus the Austrian team, were eligible for automatic entry to the IX Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck to be held 29 January to February 9, 1964. A decision was made that only 16 teams in total would be accepted into the Olympic Village in Innsbruck. As 22 countries had applied to compete in the Olympic Games, the International Ice Hockey Association decided that a process of elimination would occur. Countries that wished to compete and were not included in those with automatic entry, would be required to participate in playoff games.<sup>7</sup>

The Games in Innsbruck were organized on a scale suited to its size, which was relatively small. The Innsbruck Organising Committee wanted to stage the Games in a simple manner. There was to be no astronomical construction budget and facilities were to be built to suit future use by local communities.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, at these Games, for the first time in Olympic Winter Games history, a limit was placed on the number of teams eligible to compete in the ice hockey tournament.

Only one team from the Asia-Oceania region would be accepted to compete. As both Japan and Australia were striving to represent this region and neither had played in the World Ice Hockey Championship in 1963, neither team automatically qualified for the Games. They were scheduled to play two playoff games against each other, with the winning team, that is, the team with most goals after the two games, to progress to the Olympic Village in Innsbruck.

The Australian players and officials arrived in Tokyo on November 21, 1963 and were welcomed at the airport by officials of the National Skating Union of Japan.<sup>9</sup>

The first game, which was televised, took place on November 23, at 4.00 pm. Before the game began, the two competing countries, the American referees and spectators observed a minute's silence for the President of the United States, the late John F. Kennedy, who had been assassinated the day before.<sup>10</sup>

The Japanese team were far too strong, overwhelming the Australians 17-1. The Japanese team thereby virtually guaranteed their entry to Innsbruck.<sup>11</sup> Half of the Australian team had never played on a full-size rink, apart from the one practice session the day before.

An article in *Japan Times* on November 24, 1963<sup>12</sup> detailed some of the play, with numerous early shots for goal by the Japanese team well stopped by Peter Cavanagh, the Australian goaltender. The first Japanese score occurred in



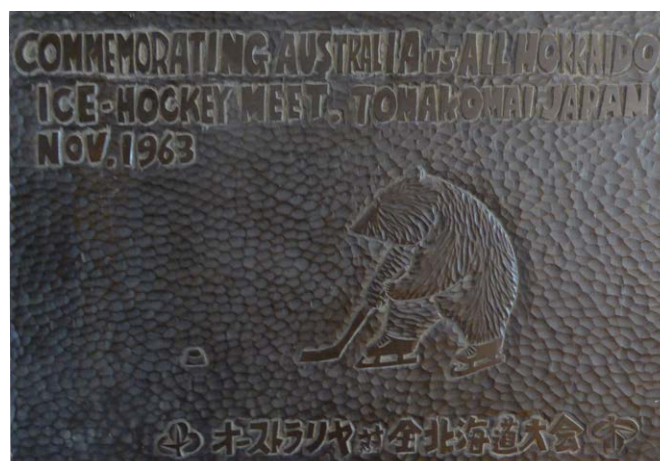
**Top Right:** Harry Coles' 1964 Winter Olympics team blazer.

**Right:** All-Hokkaido team commemorative plaque.

the 14<sup>th</sup> minute. After that, the Japanese forwards continued to score freely with hard, passing shots. The sole Australian score came in the third period when Ken Wellman goaled, assisted by Harry Coles.

The second playoff game took place on November 25 at 7.00 pm.<sup>13</sup> Around 3000 spectators attended each playoff at the Shinagawa Skate Center. Harry explains that the team was again hampered by their lack of experience of playing on a full-size rink but were starting to adjust, losing 17-6, and would have given a better showing with more exposure to the large rink. The Japanese team went on to compete in Innsbruck, finishing in 11<sup>th</sup> place.

The Australians remained in Japan to participate in three goodwill exhibition games against various Japanese teams. On November 26 they played an All-Tokyo team at Shinagawa.





On November 27 they played an All-Hokkaido team in Tomakomai. The temperature was so cold there that, for the aircraft to be able to fly, snow had to be swept from the wings.<sup>14</sup> On November 29, they played a Fukutoku Bank team on the Osaka Skate Rink. Although the Australians were defeated in each game, with the closest contest being on the smaller rink in Osaka, they were acclaimed for their tenacity and sportsmanship. At the end of the Osaka game, the Australians lined up and threw their hockey sticks to the spectators to thunderous applause.<sup>15</sup>

The Australian team had a very full schedule in Japan, with one practice session and five games in eight days. Long distances were covered by bullet

train or plane for the exhibition games. The Japanese even hosted a visit to the Canon factory. The team departed Tokyo for Australia on November 30, 1963.

Harry Coles remembers well that representatives of the National Skating Union of Japan and the Japanese team and officials provided the highest level of hospitality to the

**Top:** Commemorative pennant presented by the National Skating Union of Japan to each Australian player.

*The author wishes to thank the following who assisted with this article: Harry Coles, Australian team member for the 1964 Olympics Playoffs, for his unique recollections, memorabilia and photographs; Ayako Hatta, Japanese Studies Librarian, Monash University Library – for assistance with Japanese newspapers; and, David Studham, Melbourne Cricket Club Librarian, for advice on MCC Library resources.*

Australians and that as hosts they could not be faulted. The Australian team had tried their utmost and showed true sportsmanship, which was warmly acknowledged by the Japanese players and spectators. Harry's memories are still very vivid after so many years, reflecting the wonderful experience he had as a 21-year-old representing his country. As noted in *The Glass Slipper*<sup>16</sup> "Australia didn't dazzle the world with its performance, only its presence, the magic required just to get there". No Australian team has participated in the Olympic Winter Games since the 1964 Winter Olympics playoffs.

There was no formal reception when the team returned to Australia. At Sydney airport, the local players got off, while Melbourne-based players continued home, returning to work at the earliest opportunity. After the Games, many of the team continued to play and coach and became long-term administrators in ice hockey.

Our top players today, along with imported players from American, Dutch and other leagues, play in the Australian Ice Hockey League, the Australian national ice hockey competition. Eight teams - Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne (2), Newcastle, Perth and Sydney (2) compete for the Goodall Cup, which is awarded annually to the champion team. Players are nowadays considered semi-professional with personalised contracts and sponsorship deals.

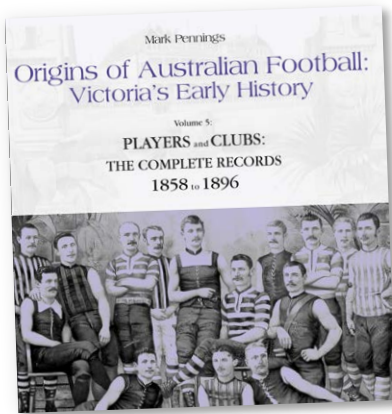
After their World Championship appearance in 1962, the Australian team did not compete again in the Championships until 1974. They have since competed regularly. In April 2018, the team, nicknamed the Mighty Roos, finished in 30<sup>th</sup> place (2<sup>nd</sup> in Division IIA) in the Championship in the Netherlands.<sup>17</sup>

In a breakthrough for the sport, in October 2017, Nathan Walker, who has represented Australia in World Championships, became the first Australian to play in the National Hockey League. On May 8, 2018, playing for the Washington Capitals, he became the first Australian to play in a Stanley Cup Playoff game. Washington Capitals went on to win the Stanley Cup, with Nathan Walker captured proudly hoisting the coveted trophy.<sup>18</sup>

## Endnotes

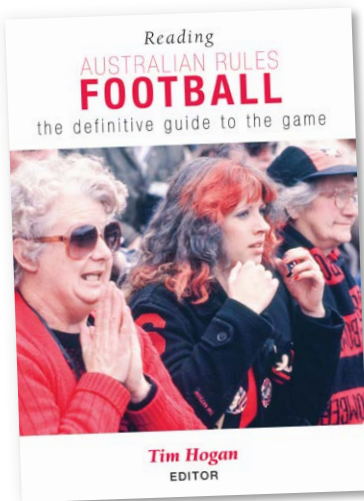
1. Harry Gordon, *Australia and the Olympic Games*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland, 1994, p. 421.
2. Harry Coles, Personal communication with Marie Pernat, 5 April 2018.
3. Harry Gordon, *Australia and the Olympic Games*, pp. 411-413.
4. *Ice Hockey in Australia*, <https://www.nationalteamsoficehockey.com/australia/>, accessed 13 May 2018.
5. *Australia's Red Letter Day*, [http://icelegendsaustralia.com/legends-2/article\\_30.html](http://icelegendsaustralia.com/legends-2/article_30.html), accessed 13 May 2018.
6. *The God's Crossing: Australia's Elimination from the 1964 Games*, [http://icelegendsaustralia.com/article\\_33.html](http://icelegendsaustralia.com/article_33.html), accessed 13 May 2018.
7. Friedl Wolfgang and Bertl Neumann (eds), *Offizieller Bericht der IX. Olympischen Winterspiele in Innsbruck 1964*, Wien, 1967, <http://library.la84.org/6oic/OfficialReports/1964/orw1964.pdf>, pp. 22, 157-158, accessed 13 May 2018.
8. *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*, no. 77, Février 1962 and no. 78, Mai 1962.
9. 'Aussie Hockey Team Arrives', *Japan Times*, 22 November 1963, p. 7, Japan Times Archives, accessed 4 April 2018.
10. Katsundo Mizuno, 'Japan Skaters Beat Aussies 17-1', *Japan Times*, 24 November 1963, p.5; Harry Coles, Personal communication.
11. *Japan Times*, 24 November 1963, p. 5.
12. *Japan Times*, 24 November 1963, p. 5.
13. 'Japan Routs Australia Again for Olympic Ice Hockey Berth', *Japan Times*, 26 November 1963, p. 6.
14. Harry Coles, Personal communication.
15. *The God's Crossing: Australia's Elimination from the 1964 Games*, [http://icelegendsaustralia.com/article\\_33.html](http://icelegendsaustralia.com/article_33.html), accessed 13 May 2018.
16. *The Glass Slipper: Australian Ice Hockey at the Olympics*, [http://icelegendsaustralia.com/article\\_35.html](http://icelegendsaustralia.com/article_35.html), accessed 13 May 2018.
17. International Ice Hockey Federation, *Statistics 2018 Ice Hockey World Championship*, <http://www.iihf.com/competition/640/>, accessed 13 May 2018.
18. [www.zimbio.com/photos/Nathan+Walker/2018+NHL+Stanley+Cup+Final+Game+Five/Gtvgkm5hHpz](http://www.zimbio.com/photos/Nathan+Walker/2018+NHL+Stanley+Cup+Final+Game+Five/Gtvgkm5hHpz), accessed 16 June 2018.

## Book Reviews



Mark Pennings  
**Origins of Australian football: Victoria's early history. Volume 5: players and clubs : the complete records, 1858 to 1896**  
 Grumpy Monks Publishing, 2017  
 ISBN: 9780646955971

Tim Hogan  
**Reading Australian Rules Football: the definitive guide to the game**  
 Walla Walla Press, Petersham (NSW), 2017  
 ISBN: 9781876718251



Lists and guides... at first glance, such volumes can appear testing at best. But it's the second check that counts. Two 2017 additions to the collection are sound evidence of the value of guiding the way, providing signpost information, and sending the researcher off, well equipped and ready to face the fray.

The first volume under consideration is *Reading Australian Rules Football: the definitive guide to the game*.

Edited by Tim Hogan, and with contributions from across the football history spectrum, it delves into a wide range of topics and gives a helping hand with reviews of the literature contained therein. The chapters include "Business and Management of Football", "Football Art and Images", "Playing, Training, Coaching", "Scholarly Theses and Dissertations", and much more besides.

An introduction to each segment is provided, which includes an explanation of how publications are categorised – handy for those inevitable cases of overlap. Along with basic publishing details for each publication, a brief overview and – sometimes – an opinion is offered.

Overall, *Reading Australian Rules Football* offers a valuable insight into the myriad insights surrounding our game, from articles to books to plays and academic works. It is useful in the "I didn't know that was out there, need to track it down" vein, and while some reviews are briefer than the titles of the publication being canvassed – for example, *A Day at the*

*Camp: 150 Years with the Castlemaine Football and Netball Club* receives "Castlemaine is in central Victoria" – this is a volume and concept that will hopefully be expanded upon in the future, assisting researchers of all levels as the plethora of material surrounding the Australian game continues to grow.

One publication that definitely needs to be earmarked as a major contribution to knowledge is Mark Pennings' latest offering. Volume Five of *Origins of Australian Football: Victoria's Early History* deals with players and clubs between 1858 and 1896. In some cases, this publication fills in gaps and updates material from the first four volumes. It also serves to show that lists can provide the gateway to a fuller story.

By detailing that East Melbourne had three incarnations before disbanding, that Geelong players wore blue hats in 1859 before moving to scarlet caps and shirts with white trousers in 1859, and that Williamstown's nicknames were "The Townites" and "The Villagers", Pennings provides a platform and the intricate details needed to dive into the rabbit hole of nineteenth century Australian football. Given that this is a place where most of us would love to venture, the generous extras of the publication are even more delightful, filled with contemporary illustrations and documents, as well as enabling us to link names to many moustachioed faces. The timeline of team existence is a useful walk along the story of our game, while the team of the nineteenth century delivers profiles and potential debates – delightful to think that discussion of 21<sup>st</sup> century "teams of" could possibly run parallel to such an exercise involving their colonial brothers.

If, of course, you like to dip and learn, Pennings provides a handy opportunity for this as a round out to the volume, with General Records and Anecdotes starring at the back of the book. These are sparks to the curiosity, with – for example – the following July 1877 anecdote from *The Argus* about the Melbourne ground (just outside the main MCG) giving a fascinating insight:

*...about 1,000 spectators [went] to the Melbourne ground. This was the first time that use was made of the temporary fence. Though there were only hurdles enough to shut the public out from the ends of the field, the players found them of great service.*

Both Hogan and Pennings offer works that are "of great service", and well beyond the initial idea of lists and guides. While Hogan and his cohorts take reader-researchers on a helpful tour through the mass of material relating to the game, Pennings offers a comfortable seat and a fascinating time travel opportunity back to its origins, the details and the personalities who continue to make it memorable to this day. Both publications are worthy without being stodgy, and interesting without resorting to frivolity.

Lynda Carroll

# ROGER PAGE

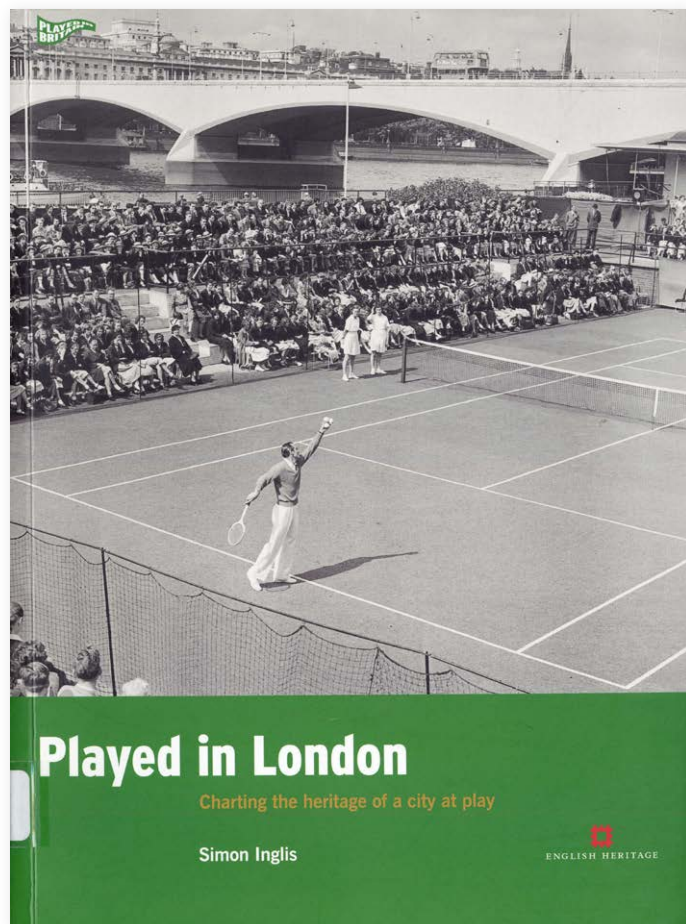
AUSTRALIA'S SPECIALIST DEALER  
IN NEW AND SECOND HAND  
CRICKET BOOKS



- Back issues of Wisden a speciality.
- Wide range of second-hand tour books, autobiographies, biographies and works on cricket history and statistics.
- All new titles held in stock including overseas cricket annuals.
- Australian agent for Association of Cricket Statisticians, Cricket Memorabilia Society, The Cricketer Magazine & All Out Cricket.
- Cricket books and collections bought.

10 EKARI COURT  
YALLAMBIE, VICTORIA, 3085

TELEPHONE: (03) 9435 6332  
EMAIL: [rpcricketbooks@unite.com.au](mailto:rpcricketbooks@unite.com.au)  
WEBSITE: [www.rpcricketbooks.com](http://www.rpcricketbooks.com)



Simon Inglis

***Played in London*** : *charting the heritage of a city at play*  
English Heritage, Swindon (UK), 2014  
ISBN: 199132791

The liveliness and sheer enthusiasm that emerges from Simon Inglis' work is one of the main reasons that *Played in London* has made it to my Christmas wish list. An architectural historian, journalist and advocate of the sporting landscape through time, Inglis was a founding member of the Played In Britain group in 2004, and has been ushering wonderful stories into being ever since.

While Inglis – complemented by his contributor wife, Jackie Spreckley – undergoes some early turmoil regarding the difference between “history” and “heritage”, the battle is quite unnecessary. History may be more formal and bound about with convention and footnotes than the material Inglis gives us, but what he is offering here is invaluable and in-depth. With engaging detail and obvious empathy, he guides us through the bustling London landscape, giving sports of all kinds a platform for their evolution to the current day.

In addition to the sports themselves, the arteries of London are exposed to the reader's fascination, with examples abounding to lead the eager traveller astray. An example dealing with Wembley Park gives ready indication:

*As shown on this 1896 map, two years after the park and its station opened, the tower occupied the southern corner of the site.*

*To the north was a cricket ground, on which the Australians played in June 1896, surrounded by*



Real tennis



► All three of Britain's oldest real tennis courts may be visited by members of the public. And what courts they are! At Falkland Palace in Fife, Scotland, stands the oldest working court in the world, built in 1539 and still without a roof, as were all courts in the early years. At Milton College, Oxford, the court dates from 1738. The third is this, the Royal Tennis Court at Hampton Court Palace.



For visitors to the palace there is a door to the court (seen on the left) entered from the Broadwalk, open from April to October. Members of the resident tennis club, which formed in 1818, enter via **Tennis Court Lane** (above). As may be deduced from its exterior, the building has been added to in several phases. This has given rise to a theory, put forward by David Best on his history of tennis at the palace (see *Links*) that the court may stand on the site of an earlier example – one built by Cardinal Wolsey from 1526-29 – and that a section of the outside, east wall we see here, may be a remnant of that earlier court. What is certain is that there have been three courts at the palace. Cardinal Wolsey's original was an 'Open Play' (or unroofed court), whose exact location was never recorded on any documents. A second, covered tennis court was built on another part of the site (next to the Chapel) by Henry VIII, after he took over Hampton Court from Wolsey in 1529. This was virtually identical to 'Great Close Tennis Play' he built at the same time at another

of Wolsey's seized properties, Whitehall Palace, but with only one corner turret (rather than four). Henry's court remained in use until c.1661, after which the space was converted into lodgings. Its side walls and turret survive however, clearly visible from the palace gardens (page 25). Meanwhile in 1625 the newly crowned Charles I started to build the third court – possibly on the site of Wolsey's original – forming the basis of the structure we see today. In essence, its floor plan and west wall survive from 1625. Both ends walls, and the adjoining Keeper's House (on the right), date from 1636-37, when Charles I also added a roof for the first time. This makes the building the second oldest functioning covered court in the world (the oldest being at Fontainebleau, built in 1501). Charles II implemented further changes in 1660-61, for example remodeling the penthouses and tambour to reflect the growing preference for courts styled as *jeu quarré à dedans* rather than *jeu quarré*. Like most real tennis courts the

Hampton Court building has been used for other purposes periodically. For a decade Sir Christopher Wren turned it into a timber store. For two years George I, no great lover of sport, used it as a drawing room. Since then the only major changes have been the glazing of the upper windows, supposedly to prevent the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) from catching cold, and more recently the addition



Over the years real tennis players have tried alternatives, but it would seem there really is no substitute for a ball made by hand, using methods barely altered in centuries. That is, a cork centre is wound with cloth and, after being hammered into shape, tied with twine to form the core seen on the left. Two strips of bright Miltor cloth are then sewn on for the completed ball. Each one takes 40 minutes to make from scratch or 20 if, as is common, a used core is recycled. For professionals like Nick Wood, at Hampton Court that means finishing off at least ten balls a day in order to keep up with demand. His workshop forms part of the original Keeper's House, which, restored in 1993, also contains living quarters and club facilities for the court's 500 or so members.

In the Hampton Court, as inside any other real tennis court, there is an open-air but visually quite unlike other real tennis courts. The walls, made of old – and often weathered – timber, are the only ones in Britain by way of the Grays of Cambridge family, a distinct being as they are in contact with the ball, even though these walls are now made of other than sheep but (at least) sheep's wool. The walls are made of heavy, solid yet light wood, 750 each in weight, and are almost entirely covered in green paint against the sides of the wooden penthouses at the sides of the court. Every sound seems to resonate. As can be seen, the chaises are identified by a number painted on the side walls. Traditionally the ceiling of Hampton Court, and painted white in 1914. As for the floor, in order to make the playing so that balls would be more visible, before the 1890s it was common for a coating of lampblack and oxblood to be administered. According to the former professional at Hampton Court, this process was made easier by slaughtering the pigs on the floor itself. The current, bloodless coating was applied in 1985. Viewing a real tennis match also has its quirks. This view was taken from one of two end galleries, one on one from the north end, known as the *declans*, where, as we will see on the next page, most spectators gather at ground level, under the *penthouse*. There is a further gallery alongside the court, the left, either side of the net. Traditionally no more than 100-200 spectators can watch a match at any one time. Other features to note include the *tribune*, known as the *tambour*, at the hazard end of the main wall



(far right) and in the *back wall*, a small opening (to the right of the player's shoulders) called the *galle*. Each feature plays a part in the tactics and scoring of the game. For most visiting players the court at Hampton Court seems larger than most. And it is, if only by a matter of inches. During the summer months they must also get used to the presence of visitors wandering in from the Broadwalk

and watching from the side gallery, some no doubt frothing that Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex, a keen player, might be on court. But only rarely do these tourists cause any disturbance, for just like any individual entering a cathedral or great house, they know instantly that there is no ordinary place of sport, but one echoing with history, and steeped, almost literally, in majesty.

276 Played in London

Played in London 277

*a track on which, two weeks later, WJ Sturgess of the Polytechnic Harriers broke the two mile walking record. In later years trotting races and polo also featured.* (p. 71)

This is the beauty of this exploration of London; the setting is given, enabling you to locate yourself in the maze, followed by detail and examples to grant identity and belonging. London, of course, is packed full of personality, and Inglis is delighted to share that with us. At the same time, his acknowledgement of the debate as to whether heritage "constitute [s] an asset or an obstacle to progress" (p. 11) is obviously heartfelt, and sometimes conveys the feeling that he is ensuring that what may eventually disappear at least has a tribute in this publication.

So it was that I learned of the evolution of "my" team – Arsenal – and its shifts across the city, the development of its stadia, and the leaving of Highbury, absorbing the North Bank Stand and Clock End into a residential development. While I may not have had the chance to see that last game at Highbury in May 2007, I have a sound sense of the progress of Arsenal – and other clubs – courtesy of a detailed map and lively, well illustrated discussion of the whys and wherefores of club evolution. There is empathy for all reactions to development and change, and a shared appreciation of the "round eternal" experienced by spectators:

*The Shed at the Bridge, the Shelf at the Lane, The Palace, the Valley, the Cottage and the Den.*  
*The Hammers, the Gunners, the Daggers and the Dons, the Blues, the Spurs, the Lions and Bees...The 'thes' of London football have a poetry and a rhythm all of their own... (p. 230)*

The same pattern is followed for the various segments that make up the London experience, their sections indicated with tabulation. From a general history to "Open Space" (and I would love to visit Finsbury Circus, "an island of green and all that survives of Lower Moorfields" – p. 29), we can travel down the River Thames, head to the Lea Valley, where the 2012 Olympics were centred, inspect a wide range of grandstands, and then become absorbed by pursuits requiring particular facilities: billiard halls, skateparks, outdoor and indoor swimming pools, before moving on to a range of specific sports. As so many sports are or have been played in London, not all are canvassed, with criteria as to longevity and facilities imposed. Perhaps the remaining sports provide fodder for future research and writing. I hope this is the case. The references provided for the subjects covered in this publication certainly display the comprehensive and interesting nature of the research undertaken, which provides another attractive detour for the absorbed reader.

I have but one real criticism of *Played In London*, and it is unavoidable due to the dense and detailed content. At 360 pages, this is one chunky volume, almost hitting the "tome" category. It could perhaps have been split into two parts, one concentrating on specific sports, the other on facilities and a general history. But, aside from its back breaking potential, this may have diluted some of the charm of the whole. However, if you want to use *Played In London* as a guide book, my advice is to deploy a separate trolley and/or willing assistant in order to tote it about as a reference. However you may transport it, also make sure to enjoy and learn from it, with the opportunity for both offered readily within its packed pages.

Lynda Carroll



Ashley Browne & Dashiell Lawrence  
***People of the Boot: The Triumphs & Tragedy of Australian Jews in Sport***  
 Hybrid Publications,  
 Melbourne, 2018  
 ISBN: 9781925736083

*People of the Boot* is an edited collection of stories about Jews involved in a wide variety of sporting achievements.

Significant contributions have been made both on-field and off-field. The book comprises 26 stand alone chapters told eloquently by

journalists, writers and broadcasters.

Jews have traditionally been prominent in such endeavours as medicine, law and commerce. The motivation of the editors was to demonstrate that this talent extended in many significant ways in the sporting sphere.

Prominent businessmen such as David Smorgon (Western Bulldogs) and Richard Pratt (Carlton) were presidents of AFL clubs. They were preceded by others beginning in the 1930s, who sought to use their commercial skills for their club's benefit. Perhaps the most controversial were Geoffrey Edelsten with his ill-fated purchase of the Sydney Swans, and Joseph Gutnick who felt many at Melbourne were keen for his monetary support, but didn't respect his somewhat assertive input.

St.Kilda – along with Carlton in having the largest Jewish support- celebrated their sole premiership in 1966 .The Grand Final coincided with Yom Kippur -Judaism's holiest day. Ian Synman has no regrets with his decision to play in the Saints sole flag winning team. Another Saint, Mordy Bromberg, recounted his brief career as the only Israeli born league footballer. Now a Federal Court Judge, he eventually walked away from the game to concentrate on his legal career.

Frank Lowy became involved in soccer as a newly arrived migrant in the 1950s. Aside from his renowned business acumen, he was instrumental in the establishment of the National Soccer League. After time out of the game, disillusioned by the incessant internal politics, he returned to lead the establishment of the A League – which finally eliminated ethnic identities, whilst broadening the game's appeal. Lowy was instrumental in moving Australia into the Asian competition –"arguably the most important development in the history of the game in Australia".

The monumental failure of Australia's 2022 World Cup bid, which involved substantial government funding , and subsequently revealed widespread FIFA corruption, was the biggest setback of Lowy's tenure, and is described as 'one of the most significant unfulfilled deals of his working life'.

Harvey Silver, as the first executive producer of "The Footy Show", provided an insightful and amusing account of the program's early days, and his role in bringing about the juggernaut it became. It was a show that was about football, but also entertainment. He returned in 2017 with the daunting challenge to return the show to its former popularity.

The reader of *People of the Boot* can readily select those sections that catch their interest. The contents page clearly outlines the fields of endeavour covered, whilst a closing glossary is helpful with acronyms, and definitions of Jewish terminology.

I found the book an entertaining read. Many a diverse character had their achievements told. The one strand in common was their faith – albeit observed in quite contrasting manner and degree.

**Edward Cohen**

## MCC Library's Match Day Fact Sheet

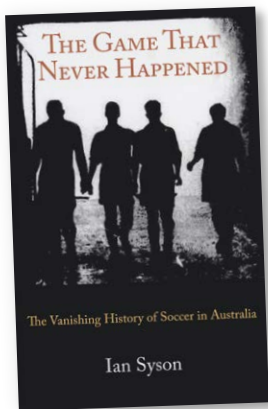


If you are a new reader of ***The Yorker***, you may not know of the MCC Library's ***Match Day Fact Sheet***.

***Fact Sheets*** give a mix of historic, quirky, or biographic material on the front, as well as a historical statistical analysis on the back. All sporting events played at all levels on the MCG are covered by these ***Match Day Fact Sheets***.

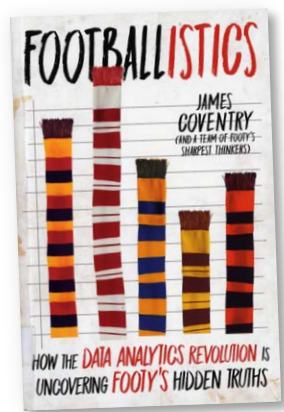
When you are next in the Members' Reserve please visit the MCC Library to collect a ***Fact Sheet***, or look for the MCC Library's Fact Sheets online each match day.

For those that cannot attend events here at the MCG, each ***Fact Sheet*** is available online in PDF format at both the MCC Library Catalogue [tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue](http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue) or the individual event pages of the MCC website at [www.mcc.org.au/whats-on/calendar-of-events](http://www.mcc.org.au/whats-on/calendar-of-events)



Ian Syson  
***The Game That Never Happened : The Vanishing History of Soccer in Australia***  
 Sports and Editorial Services  
 Australia, Bannockburn (Vic), 2018  
 ISBN: 9780994601933

James Coventry  
***Footballistics : How the Data Analytics Revolution is Uncovering Footy's Hidden Truths***  
 ABC books, Sydney, 2018  
 ISBN: 9780733338441



Two books released this year and launched at the MCC Library, Ian Syson's *The Game That Never Happened* and James Coventry's *Footballistics*, offer new insights into football and its development. Both, through a thorough examination of facts, excise assumptions that have often gone unquestioned.

Syson's *The Game That Never Happened* is an examination of soccer in Australia, from the first proposals that the London based Football Association's rules should be introduced during the

late 1860s, to the eve of World War II (prior to the post-war European immigration boom). When the adherents of soccer first formed clubs in mainland capitals, often as an alternative to a predominant code, their game was soon marginalised. Syson writes soccer's, "legitimacy has been questioned from the outside ever since it was first advocated."

Although there was no apparent enmity towards soccer early on, Syson charts how the sport was defamed as foreign and effeminate by supporters of other codes. He does this through series case studies from football cultures as diverse as, for example, Hobart in the 1870s, federation and Edwardian era Perth, and Warwick in rural Queensland from the 1910s to the 1930s. The struggle of soccer in Melbourne over this journey is a constant throughout the book.

Syson does not place all responsibility for the negative stereotyping of Australian soccer on supporters of other codes. He notes that although soccer is a minority code in most Australian cities, it has had large and passionate supporter bases throughout the continent. He concludes that "soccer has not made a good fist of becoming a narrative point in Australian history."

Syson emphasises stories, largely ignored, that place soccer at key moments in the development of the nation. That soccer's story fits nicely within popular Australian tropes such as "the bush" – as at Warwick where soccer was particularly healthy in the 1910s and 1920s – or "the Anzac legend" – where soccer was played by Australian troops at home and at the front in World War I. Soccer has always been a part of Australia's leisure time, it was just never widely recognised – as if it never happened.

Just as Syson used historical facts to question popular and even cherished assumptions among soccer's detractors, "particularly from middle aged men with positions of some

cultural influence", Coventry shows how match data, when professionally analysed can overturn a supporter's crude perceptions.

Coventry is a widely respected Adelaide-based ABC sports commentator who was assisted by some of Australian football's "sharpest thinkers". The flaky, visionary, Kevin Sheedy type "thinkers" are absent in *Footballistics*. Instead, the book is co-authored by a myriad of academics and economists who think numerically and statistically, and love the game dearly.

The tome is very heavy, but it is divided into readable self-contained chapters, supported by graphs, that interrogate footy's conventions subject by subject. Some chapter headings, such as "Goal Kicking", will likely draw the fan more than others, like "Win Probabilities". However, this latter chapter is possibly the most illuminating, as it examines the game analyst's role in the coaches' box through Melbourne's Craig Jennings.

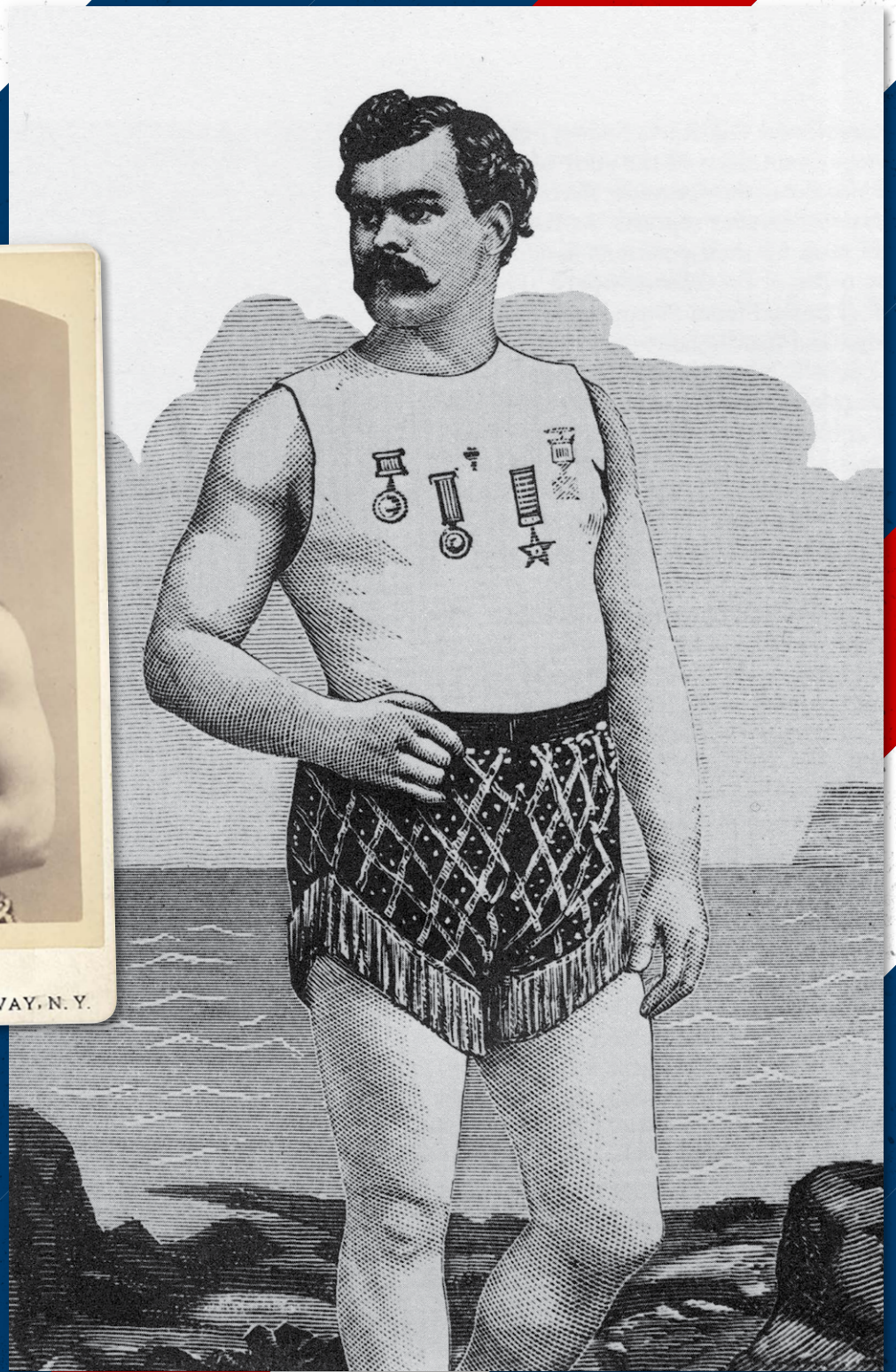
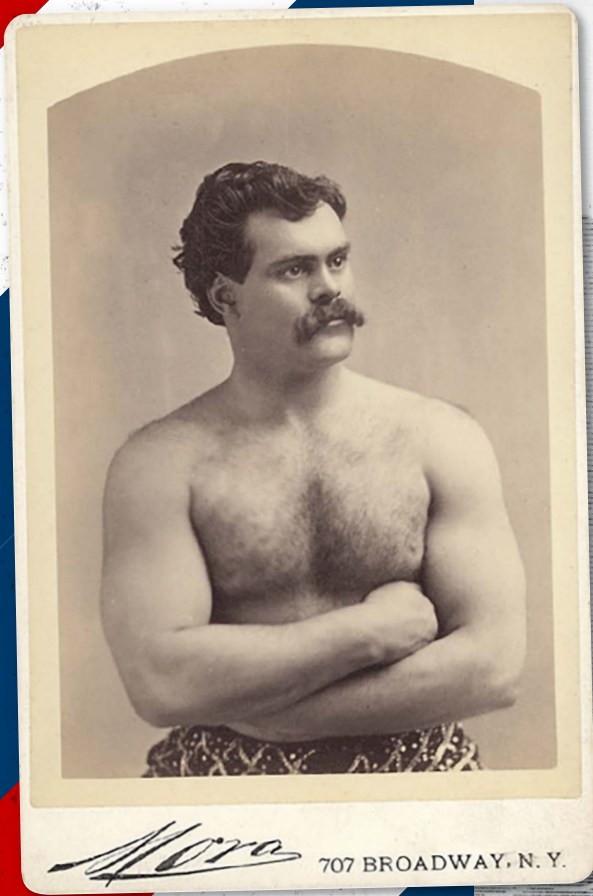
While some myths are exposed, other assumptions are statistically reinforced. "The Brownlow Medal" chapter shows that while umpires do favour blonds in the voting, they draw statistically less votes than baldies. The book is not just about dry statistics, but also covers the history of how footy's folklores evolved – and includes odd but related facts, such as when players started to apply peroxide to draw votes (it was Melbourne's Peter "Crackers" Keenan in 1972 – however, he got just two votes that year).

A few chapters will confirm the obvious or self verifying, for example the book argues that the clubs that draft the best players tend to win premierships. However, the metrics of ranking draft choices and the performance of each club are interesting. *Footballistics* also compares clubs statistically on such matters as goal kicking, and thereby the book gives a club data analyst's insight into game styles, and how they may be exploited by opponents.

But it is not solely about on-field trends and differences. The book concludes with two chapters that relate to Australian football's off-field health, "Fandom" and "Finances". These two chapters on football cultures and economies, draws me back to Syson, particularly Sean Lawson and Coventry's discussion of Ian Turner's Barassi Line – a conceptual border dividing Australia into Australian rules and rugby league dominant cultures. Coventry and Lawson noted that the "imaginary line between the native game and the rugby codes had always felt perfectly natural to Australians, but still had the capacity to surprise foreigners."

However, there is an anomaly. Nationally, Australian football is far more popular, better attended and wealthier than rugby league, but the assigned rugby league region contains about one million more people. Four versions of the Barassi Line are mapped and soccer, as well as the support for other minority codes in particular regions, are absent in all of them. Australia is thereby portrayed as a binary football landscape. Yet, with the exception of the Barassi Line's borderlands, where Australian football and rugby league are played with similar enthusiasm, soccer is in most regions the second most popular code. Therefore, the simplistic Barassi Line concept graphically wipes soccer from many Australians' perception of Australia's football divisions. Insufficient data can hide facts just as detailed data may illuminate them.

**Trevor Ruddell**



## Professor William Miller Australia's All-round Champion Athlete

*Sportsman*, June 22, 1897, p.4.

Though born in Liscard, Cheshire, in 1847, Prof. Miller may well claim to be an Australian, as he arrived here when only four years old. He is the only man who has ever held the separate championship of boxing, wrestling [Graeco-Roman], fencing, and heavy dumbbell lifting. He has for years had a standing challenge of £300 to meet any man in the combined Olympian games. The "Professor" is now, and has been for years, an acknowledged champion exponent of all-round athletics.

