

**First Issue**  
**ROBERT DOVER, Dr WILLIAM BROOKES**  
**AND ALL THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Sport contains common elements of what has become ritualised behaviour which recently have been best explained in terms of the hunter-gatherer cultures existing up to 10,000 years ago. In this respect all sport can claim pagan roots, but it has really been a continual process of adapting old actions to new situations, and it is dangerous to imply any continuity in the supposed underlying ideas. Despite the modern developments, "sport" is not necessarily competitive. The older meaning included fun, entertainment and games, and embraced the Morris when it appeared. Lewis Carroll's "*Dodo's Caucus Race*", in which everybody won and all had prizes, was intended to remind Victorians of this wider meaning.

The Olympic ideal of the classical era had brought the local Greek cultures together, as expressed in a number of annual festivals, and they had grown to encompass many athletic, equestrian and artistic events. The rediscovery of the classical world from the late Renaissance onwards led to a recurring interest in the Games in modern times. The references in the victory hymns of Pindar (518-438 BC) and other Greek poets were noted. There have always been games, sports and other physical leisure activities. All modern sports trace some sort of origin back to the 17th/18th century, but they flowered in the 19th. Behind them all were some who were moved by the Olympic spirit. There have been three great contributors to the modern movement, Robert Dover in the Cotswolds, Dr. William Brookes at Much Wenlock and Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the recognised inspiration of the Modern Olympiads, whose achievements over a three hundred year span are linked, but their connections are in danger of being forgotten.

Everyone writes from a particular point of view - this, perhaps unusually, is that of a folk dancer. Much has been published on the Modern Olympics, so the paper concentrates on the items that tend to be skipped over. It is dependent on secondary sources, all listed in a bibliography, but it is the linkages which are seldom appreciated which are important. The information has been gathering for many years, and each new Olympiad induces a new crop of books with more insights and information. However a substantial effort could still greatly increase the data base.

## **2 DOVER'S LIFE**

Robert Dover was born in 1582, seventeen years after Shakespeare, the son of John Dover of Great Ellingham, in a family of Norfolk minor gentry, a number of whom moved to the area between Chipping Campden and Evesham. He studied at London's Gray's Inn during 1604-5. In Elizabethan times the Inns of Court had emerged as combined finishing schools and law academies for the sons of gentry and wealthy yeomen. By 1610 he had become the second husband of Sibella Sanford of Stow-on-the-Wold, the daughter of the Rev. William Cole (d.1600) a Dean of Lincoln, and the widow of a Bristol merchant. At first they lived at Saintsbury, over the Cotswold edge from Chipping Campden, where Dover, a barrister, practiced as an attorney. It was reputed that Saintsbury then had a cherry fair, and also that the local plums were made into a

drink called "*Plum Jerkin*", still remembered. In 1613 they were in Chipping Campden, and then at Childwickham, just west of Saintsbury, where, amongst other things, from 1623 he was Steward of the Manor of Wickhamford, a little to the north near Evesham. They had two daughters and two sons, one of whom died after only four months. He was probably created a Royalist Army Captain during the **Civil War**, despite his age. Robert was buried on 24th July 1652 at Barton-on-the-Heath, just east of Moreton-in-the-Marsh, where his son John lived and his wife were also buried in June 1653.

A grandson, Dr. Thomas Dover (1660-1742) was born in Warwickshire, who invented "*Dover's Powders*", a mixture of opium, ipecacuanha and sulphate of potash, a sedative still in use in the nineteenth century. However his published works contained little else of value. He had an exaggerated estimation of the value of mercury as a remedy, and became widely known as "*Quicksilver*". Unexpectedly, he went as second in command on a privateering voyage around the world, starting in August 1708, which rescued shipwrecked Alexander Selkirk from Juan Fernandez island on 2nd February 1709, where he had been for four years and four months, and who then lived on in England for another thirteen years, becoming the model for "*Robinson Crusoe*". Daniel Defoe met him at the home of the daughter of Nathaniel Wade, who had gained a pardon after being an officer in the Monmouth Rebellion by writing for James II the narrative of that event from the inside.

### 3 THE BEGINNING OF THE COTSWOLD GAMES

Dover and his friends of the Inns of Court and of the stage in Jacobean London, in so far as they had any aim beyond that of just enjoying themselves, sought to keep the imagined lingering spirit of rural medieval England alive by both reviving and modernising its country sports and pastimes. They were intended to be an opportunity for ordinary rural people to indulge in "honest and harme-lesse sports". This meant for Dover at that period relating these activities to classical mythology and the Renaissance culture, whilst also linking them with the English throne and the King's Protestant Church. Dover's interpretation of the "*Olympick Games*" probably opened about 1612. The games were in effect, if not in intent, a counter against the growing influence of Puritanism. The conflict between the *festive* and *concerned* cultures was one of several factors that helped to divide the peoples during the Civil War. It is thought that Dover probably took over games which had been celebrated for some years as a joint Whitsun Ale and community jollification for the parishes of Weston-sub-Edge and Chipping Campden. Their boundaries met along the ancient path, now called the Cotswold Way, passing near the Kiftsgate stone. This was once the meeting point for the neighbourhood's Saxon Hundred Moot and at which the Kings of England up to William IV were proclaimed locally. By attempting to combine the then ideas of the Olympic events of ancient Greece with the activities of the Cotswold Whitsun Ales and by enlarging and organising the games, Dover created a unique festival which made Chipping Campden famous throughout the Shires and even came to be known at Court.

The general policy of King James I was confirmed in his *Book of Sports* of 1618 and reaffirmed in 1633 by Charles I,

And as for our good people's recreation; our pleasure likewise is that after the end

of Divine Service, Our Good People be not disturbed or letted or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as Dancing, Archery, Leaping, Vaulting, or any other harmless recreations; nor from having May games, Whitsun Ales, and Morris dances; and the setting up of Maypoles and other sports therewith used, so as the same shall be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service.

Dover's friends included Ben Johnson and his sometimes employer Endymion Porter, born at Mickleton in 1587. After living in Spain between 1606 and 1612 Porter was able to purchase the old family estate at Aston-sub-Edge, but he seldom stayed there. Porter was a poet and a groom of the bed-chamber to the future king, and as a great patron of the Arts played an important part later in forming Charles I's great collection of pictures. Through his position at Court in the service of the half brother of George Villiers, the King's favourite, later created Duke of Buckingham, Porter was able to obtain not only James' leave for the Games with the help of Sir Baptist Hicks, but was given a hat and feather and ruff and other clothes cast off by the King, and in these Dover used to dress when he rode on the hill officiating at the games.

They were supposedly visited by the nobility and gentry from as far away as sixty miles. It is believed that Prince Rupert of the Rhine, Charles I's to be famous nephew, went to the Cotswold Games in 1636, when aged eighteen, attended by Endymion Porter. Rupert was in England from February 1636 to June 1637 and was struck by the beauty, peace and prosperity of his mother's native land. His love of hunting and paintings, shared with his uncle Charles I, brought him into contact with Porter. Sir Baptist Hicks was a financier to whom James I and his court were nearly all deeply in debt. His mother is said to have invested in Drake's Round-the-World voyage. Hicks came to Campden in 1610 soon after it had received its new royal charter, buying the manor, and as owner of Weston Park on the edge above Saintsbury he provided Campden with major new buildings, such as the manor house, the market hall and the almshouses. Finally he was created Viscount Campden of Campden and Baron Hicks of Ilmington in 1628, the year before he died aged 78 at the Old Jewry in London, which is by the Guildhall, and, surprisingly, not at his London home of Campden House in Kensington. This was period of fierce competition between Royalist Virginia and the North Cotswolds over the growing of tobacco. So much was sacrificed to establish the colonies!

#### 4 THE "ANNALIA"

There was a steady literary interest in the Cotswold Games, partly because of the possible connection with Shakespeare, but also because of the book *Annalia Dubrensia*, or "Dover's Annals", containing thirty three poems which was written over a number of years, with contributions from poets, friends, relatives and admirers of Dover, of which the first edition was published in 1636. It was reprinted by his grandson Dr. Thomas Dover in 1736, but then not again until 1877 by Dr. A B Grosart and then in 1878 by E R Vyvyan. There have been several reprints since 1970. However except for the following there is very little mention of dance or of any form of the English Morris.

William Durham (1611-1684), third son of John Durham of Willersey, two miles from Dover's Hill, and who married the daughter of the Royalist vicar of Campden in 1633.

"In honour of the place they leape on high,  
and friske and dance for joy they are so nigh!"

"And maydens measured galliards on the greene"

"Which from the woods did walke into the plaine,  
There dance a jig, and so return againe."

Thomas Randolph (1605-1635), poet and playwright.

"From this same beech to yonder mulberry,  
A second leapt, his supple nerves to try,  
A third was practising his melody,  
This a new jig was footing."

"These teach that dancing is a Jezebel  
and Barley Brake the ready way to hell,  
The Morrice, idols; Whitsun-ales can be  
but profane relics of a Jubilee!"

"The country lass, although her dance be good,  
Stirs not another's galliard in the blood."

## 5 THE COTSWOLD GAMES UNDER DOVER

The Games were began on the Thursday of Whit week and lasted two days. Dover usually opened them by riding up on his white horse to a portable pivoted castle built of boards that he had had erected on the hill, and then firing off a salvo from the castle's mimic battery of small cannons. Prizes of value were given, such as a silver "salt" for the horseracing in the form of a model of the castle. Yellow silken ribbons known as "*Dover's Favours*" were sold and worn as a compliment. Anthony a Wood in *Athenae Oxonienses* in 1691 said that five hundred of the gentry wore such favours the year after one celebration. "Favours" are flat, as worn today by football and political supporters. "Rosettes" were raised decorations usually seen on horse harnesses. At this time the whole of the top of Dover's Hill, 750 ft above sea level, known as Kingcombe Plain until the nineteenth century, was unenclosed land, a great flat open plateau of five hundred acres within the parish of Weston-sub-Edge, but extending south towards Broadway. It was ideal for the steeple chasing that was becoming fashionable and which throughout the Games' history must have remained the major attraction, although little mentioned. Shakespeare's much quoted words from the *Merry Wives of Windsor*,

... How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on Cotsall ...

might well refer to Dover's Games as they appeared in the first folio edition of 1623, but had not been in the quarto of 1602. The games could have continued no later than 1643, as they were halted, possibly at the instigation of Campden's puritan minister, William Bartholomew.

The early Civil War **Battle of Edgehill** in October 1642 was less than twenty miles away. The antiquary and diarist Richard Symonds (1617-1692) writing during the King's Army's retreat from Evesham to Oxford on 17th June 1644 said, in an account published by the Campden Society in 1859,

... Over the Cotswold Downes, where Dover's Games were ...

The last open battle of the Civil War was fought up the slopes of Dover's Hill at Saintsbury, on the 21st March 1646, as the start of what became known later as the **Battle of Stow**.

Robert Dover's surviving son John, was born in 1614, married in 1639, moved to Barton-on-the-Heath 1604-1, and died in 1696, having been a captain of horse under Prince Rupert during the civil war and a captain of the local militia for a period after the Restoration.

## 6 THE NEXT REVIVAL OF THE COTSWOLD GAMES

The Rev. William Thomas recorded about 1730 that in Ilmington there was also still kept an annual feast on 21st September, incidentally known as St Matthew's day, set up by the "mobbish" people for wrestling and other masculine exercises from about the year 1650.

The Campden Games were revived again after the Restoration of 29th May 1660, although the actual year is unknown, and they continued with varying degrees of popularity and success for nearly two hundred years until 1852, when, largely through the influence of Rev. G D Bourne the rector of Weston-sub-Edge, they were finally stopped.

In the *Gloucester Journal* of May 1725 there is an advertisement for the Games mentioning wrestling, back-sword, and men and women dancing jigs for prizes of shoes.

In 1736 the parson of Stow-on-the-Wold complained in *A Serious Dissuasive Against Whitsun Ales*,

These sports are attended usually with ridiculous gestures and acts of folly and buffoonery, but children's play, and what therefore grown-up persons should be ashamed of ... What I have now been desiring you to consider as touching the evil and pernicious consequences of Whitsun Ales among us doth also obtain against Dover's Meetings and other noted places of publick resort of this nature in the country.

William Somerville (1675-1742), a highly cultured country gentleman enthusiastic for sport and living in Edstone near Henley-in-Arden, published in 1740 his poem, *Hobbinol, or the Rural Games*, being a mock heroic pastoral, in the form of a rough burlesque in blank verse, and

dedicated to Hogarth. Its main interest is the vivid description it gives of the atmosphere of Dover's Games. [find] It was first circulated as *The Wicket Chair* (1708).

In 1773, the Rev. Richard Graves "the younger" (1715-1804) poet and novelist of Mickleton, aged 57, published *The Spiritual Quixote* (reprinted by OUP in 1967) a satire on the Methodists of his day drafted about 1758. Graves imagines his hero Wildgoose and his rural friend and assistant Tugwell, setting out to convert the world and very early in his mission going to Dover's Games. The account of the scene gives an idea of the taste and flavour of an eighteenth century country gathering, being of course no better or no worse than any other.

They now approached the place of the rendezvous, where the revel was held; which was a large plain on the Cotswold-hills. Their ears were saluted with a confused noise of drums, trumpets, and whistle-pipes; not those martial sounds, however, which are heard in the field of battle; but such as those harmless instruments emit, with which children amuse themselves in a country fair. There was a great number of swains in their holiday-cloaths, with their belts and silk handkerchiefs; and nymphs in straw hats and tawdry ribbands, flaunting, ogling, and coquetting (in their rustic way) with as much alacrity, as any of the gay flutterers in the Mall.

A ring was formed about the wrestlers and cudgel-players, by the substantial farmers on their long-tailed steeds, and two or three forlorn coaches [were] sauntering about with their vapourish possessors: who crept out from their neighbouring seats - to contemplate the humours of these awkward rustics, and waste an hour of their tedious month in the *country*; where (as a great modern observes) *small matters serve for amusement*.

... they were refreshing themselves ... when the company began to divide; and proclamation was made, that a holland shift, which was adorned with ribbands, and displayed on a pole, was going to be run for; and six young women began to exhibit themselves before the whole assembly, in a dress hardly reconcilable to the rules of decency.

... a shrewd young carter (with a silk handkerchief about his neck) ... thinking that this harangue would spoil the diversion, which they were now intent upon, he threw the rind of an orange at the orator's head. Another levelled a piece of horse-dung (with an unlucky dexterity) exactly into Tugwell's mouth ... Their example was followed by a great part of the company; who began to bombard then furiously with clods of dirt and horse-dung ... One of them tilting up the form on which Tugwell was exalted, laid him sprawling in the moisture, occasioned by the staling of horses, or spilling of the liquor; where he lay wallowing for some time, being saluted with several bumps and jostles in contrary directions; which prevented his emerging from the slippery soil.

They met Morris dancers when near Gloucester as they retreated from the games.

Those who are acquainted with this sort of morrice-dance must know that they

are usually attended with one character called the Tom Fool: who like the clown in the pantomime, seems to burlesque upon all the rest. His fool's cap has a fox's tail depending like a ramillie whig; and instead of the small bells which others wear on their legs, he had a great sheep-bell hung to his back-side. Whilst the company therefore were all attentive to the preacher, this buffoon contrived to slip the fool's cap upon Tugwell's head, and to fix the sheep-bell to his rump. Which [he] no sooner perceived, than his choler arose, and spitting in his hands, and clenching his fists, he gave the Tom-fool a swinging blow in the face. The Fool, having more wit than courage, endeavoured to escape amongst the crowd. Tugwell pursued him in great rage, with the sheep-bell at his tail; the ridiculous sound of which, forming a sort of contrast to the wrath in [his] countenance, caused a great deal of loud mirth amongst the company.

## 7 THE SLOW DECLINE OF THE COTSWOLD GAMES

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the games seem to have declined. Samuel Rudder, topographer, (d.1801) in *A New History of Gloucestershire*, of 1779, merely stated,

... there is still a meeting of young people upon Dover's Hill, about a mile from Chipping Campden, every Thursday in Whit week. **[check]**

A similar sentiment was in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1797.

Dover's Games were no doubt still pretty rough and disorderly, but they were part of the eighteenth century way of life, and an important and essential part, as there also were events such as the urban public executions at which large crowds of people of all classes gathered, without the control of constables, and before the police existed. There are riotous events described in the literature. The sports were drawn from, according to later advertisements, in alphabetical order, bull-baiting, card games and chess in the tents, cock-fighting, coursing the hare with greyhounds, basket handled cudgel, back-sword and single-stick bouts, dancing by women, football and handball, handling the pike, hunting the hare with hounds, leapfrog, leaping, music, pitching or throwing the bar or hammer, quintain, quoits, racing on foot and running in sacks, shin kicking, shovel-board, skittles, walking on hands and wrestling.

According to Miss Edith Brill, **[where]** for shin-kicking the two contestants had iron plates on the toes of their boots and, holding each other by the shoulders with outstretched arms, kicked at each other's shins until one was obliged to give in. Contestants hardened their shins with malt vinegar and a blacksmith's hammer. The back-sword fighting was equally brutal, in a celebrated fight between Spyres of Mickleton and Nezy Plested of Campden, one man lost an eye and the other died from his injuries.

Although all this emphasises the sporting aspect, Sir William Denny (d.1676), a contemporary at Gray's Inn, suggested in his *Annalia* contribution that Dover had provided a "Homeric" harpist to give the Games an Olympic character and to attract the gentry.

In Campden the early nineteenth century continued as in the past with the slow revolving year and the annual event of Dover's Games, with its crowds, junketings and confusions. A poster exists from 1806 showing that they were chiefly conducted on the initiative of the Campden Innkeepers, notably William Drury of the Swan Inn, who appeared to be responsible for bookings, entries, stalls etc. There was a 13 guineas prize for teams of eleven backswordsmen to be split 10/3, a gold laced hat for five men wrestling sides, gloves and ribbons to be danced for and a good pair of shoes for jumping in a sack. On the Saturday the wake was to be held in Campden "as was usual".

In 1818 the poster proclaimed,

The high estimation in which this truly laudable Festival is held (being so famed for the celebrated Olympic Games) is fully evinced by its having been the Admiration of every true and undesigning Briton for more than two Centuries, and is now patronised by the Noble Heroes of the present age, and by every well wisher for the prosperity of the British Empire.

That year's event included a back-sword match for twelve guineas, wrestling for a silver cup, a pony race for a handsome prize and horse racing for a sweepstake of five guineas each with thirty pounds added. The new world of piety, self-improvement and progress was yet to come!

The 1819 poster spoke of The Famous Cotswold Sports and Manly Diversions .... there were Handsome Prizes to be Danced for .... Together with a multiplicity of the Noted Olympic Games and National Sports, peculiar to this ancient Festival.... There was a Ball on the Friday Evening and a Wake held in Campden with a variety of amusements, as usual ....

Hunting, coursing and shooting and the annual Dover's Games were the recreation of the gentry and some of the larger farmers, although the district around Chipping Campden seems to have lost the fashionable repute that it had in the eighteenth century for sport and social interactions. Of the meeting held in 1826, *The Mirror* (No.197 of 27th May 1826) referred to the Games and a reply (No.199 of 10th June) wrote that,

... although it is not countenanced by persons of rank and consequence as it was some half century ago. It is still a great holiday for all the lads and lasses within ten to fifteen miles of the place, and is attended by numbers of gentry and people of respectability in the neighbourhood.

The same writer described the Cotswold Morris dancers as,

... spruce lads sprigged up in their Sunday clothes, with ribbons round their hats and arms, and bells on their legs, and they were attended by a jester called Tom Fool, who carried a long stick with a bladder tied to it, with which he buffeted about to make room for the dancers, while one of the best looking of the men was selected to carry a large plum cake, a long sword run through the middle of it, the cake resting on the hilt. On the point of the sword is a large bunch of ribbons with streamers, and a large knife stuck in the cake, and when

the young man sees a favourite lass he gives her a slice.

## 8 THE COMING OF THE RAILWAYS TO THE SOUTH MIDLANDS

The coming of the railways was an event which it was claimed caused much local disturbance. Such intrusion of large numbers of "navigators" brought a fresh element of disorder and lawlessness into the district. Shops, public houses and bookmakers benefited, but Dover's Games supposedly became more and more rowdy as they were attended by larger and larger crowds. A railway station was opened on the Midland Railway's Bristol to Birmingham line at Ashchurch in 1845 only about twelve to thirteen miles away. Presumably this would have been too far for thousands to travel. The *Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway* obtained its Act on 4th August 1845. Although it became part of the West Midland Railway on 1st July 1860 and of the Great Western Railway on 1st August 1863, it remained known locally as the "*Old Worse and Worse*" because of the quality of its service. Dr. A B Grosart in the introduction to his edition of the *Annalia* of 1877 said that during the five years 1846-52 that the Mickleton Tunnel was in progress, a body of navvies converted the gathering into a riotous and dangerous assembly. Such stories are not supported by local police records. In 1851 a dispute between the tunnel contractor Marchant and the line's engineer Brunel led to a "battle" at the tunnel involving a few thousand men, magistrates, several readings of the Riot Act, and finally the intervention of troops from Coventry. With the opening of the railway from Oxford to Wolverhampton and Birmingham on the 4th June 1853, it was claimed that the Games became more the resort of the toughs and undesirables from as far away as the Black Country. Believable, but it is difficult to prove. From the beginning of the railways, excursions were run, even if there was still a long walk by today's standards at the end of it. This aspect is explored in more depth below.

Another relevant line in the area was the *Evesham and Redditch Railway*, whose bill was gained in 1863 and which opened in September 1866, but the later *Evesham, Redditch and Stratford-on-Avon Junction Railway* from Broom Junction and running through Bidford did not open until June 1879, well after the games had stopped.

## 9 EXCURSIONS

The idea of providing outings for a large body of people first began on water, canals and estuaries, so the concept was not new to railways. Strictly, "railway excursions" meant special trains with cheap prices. The early railways offered reduced fares on ordinary scheduled trains as well, but the number of such passengers were never very large. Scores of trains were run on Bank Holidays from the Act of 1871, but these were after Dover's Games had been stopped, and the Games had not been on a Bank Holiday date anyhow.

The first main line, the London to Manchester, opened on 15th September 1830. In general, no separate recording of excursions appeared in the railway returns, so researchers have had to find evidence from less direct and more scattered sources. Thus it has been very difficult to prove that excursions were not run for particular events. The earliest excursions recorded anywhere were in the period 1832 to 1836. As an idea it rapidly caught on all over the country to encourage and

popularise travel by steam, and the numbers moved increased into the thousands. At first they severely stressed the Railways' resources, often reduced to using open wagons for passengers.

Examples of large numbers, taken from Jordan

1831		First Race Course special by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway to Newton-le-Willows
1838	5,000	In several trains from London to Epsom for the Derby
1840	2,400	One train from Nottingham to Leicester with 70 carriages
1841	400	London to Southampton and then a boat trip, by LSWR
1841	570	First outing organised by Thomas Cook
1842	2,500	Several separate outings of about this size
1844	6,600	Single monster train from Leeds to Hull, with 240 carriages
1846	6,000	Two trains Norwich to Great Yarmouth
1846		First works outings recorded with up to a 1,000 travelling
1848	2,000	Train to Fleetwood
1848	8,000	Six trains to the St Leger at Doncaster
1851		Very many trains to the Great Exhibition in London
1857	5,000	London to Culham, GWR trip
1860		36 excursion trains in a day from London to Brighton by LBSCR

From 1842-68 trains were run for prize fights and public executions. A famous case was the SEC Railway who ran for a prize fight at Farnborough, Hampshire. During 1865 the LNWR, LYR and the Midland Railway carried 1,114,000 excursion passengers. Thus there is no doubt that large numbers were moved occasionally, but those hearing the complaints about spectators from the Midlands attending Dover's Games would have only known of the possibility, and would not have experienced it for themselves.

It is hard to believe that a movement by train of the order 10,000 people about 1850 would have gone unnoticed, so it is still worth looking in local records.

## 10 THE NEVER ENDING STORY and THE COTSWOLD MORRIS

E R Vyvyan in his 1878 edition of the *Annalia* said that the Games became the trysting place of all the lowest scum of the population which lived in the districts lying between Birmingham and Oxford. Sometime before 1851, the Rev.G D Bourne, later a Canon, who was a magistrate and the wealthy and powerful Rector of Weston-sub-Edge from 1846 until 1901, claimed to have seen over 30,000 at one of the gatherings and was much concerned at the drunkenness and the general licence that prevailed. There is no evidence for these large numbers, which would have been difficult to feed and accommodate. But only a decade later there were 10,000 claimed attending at Much Wenlock. It was probably a story put about by those who were to benefit financially from an enclosure. In order to stop such claimed behaviour, an enclosure act of Parliament for the Weston-sub-Edge parish was obtained in 1853-4 (15 Victoria) [check], progressed from 1849 with the help of the Earl of Harrowby who owned the common land and open fields. Chipping Campden had already been enclosed in 1799. The hill was divided into

fields and ploughed, leaving no space big enough for the crowds or the steeplechases and athletic events. So the last official meeting was probably in the summer of 1852.

Thos Phillips of Middle Hill in 1855 wrote, Dover's Hill (in Weston Sub-Edge) upon which these games were played, was enclosed in 1853-4, so that an end was put to them forever, but for many years previously they had been sinking in reputation, and nothing but pony races and a few backword players were seen. By then no gentlemen of the neighbourhood attended. So what would have attracted large crowds? The railways had helped convert horse racing from a local to a national sport as the large decline in the number of race courses showed. There had been only 130 courses left by 1874, falling further to just 65 in 1885. The racing side needs much more exploration.

The advertisement for 1852 mentioned dancing for ribbons as previous years, but this is unlikely to have been a Morris competition. However the Cotswold Morris was present in the 1850's. There appeared to have been meetings at Stow-on-the-Wold beforehand for sides to compete for the right to dance on Dover's Hill at which the winning side would be allowed to sell the yellow Dover's favours. At one of the last celebrations the team from Guiting Power competed with four other sides, Sherborne among them, as to who should have the right to stay on the hill for the day and won the contest, so claimed Charles Danley. The MS history of Chipping Campden written by Mr John Horne in 1898, said that the last year the meeting was held the Morris dancers came from Longborough together with one or two old Campden dancers. Competitions at Stow were so popular that they continued for some years after their primary purpose had ceased. They were described apparently by the Young Bledington dancers present at the feast during the Stow-on-the-Wold Ring Meeting in 1938, according to interviews with attendees 25 years later, although surprisingly and uncharacteristically no written record of what was said appears to have survived.

The stopping after 200 years at about the same time of the septennial *Woodstock Ale* in 1851, the Dover's Games in 1852, the *Kirtlington Lamb Ale* in 1860, and the Whit Hunt near Witney following the Wychwood Forest enclosure, removed some of the motivation for the continuing of the Cotswold Morris, which was now going into serious decline. The general public perception of the morris was that it had been disappearing from 1840.

The Games had not only occupied Dover's Hill, in Campden there were cock fights, plays and balls and the final wake on the Saturday with booths, stalls and roundabouts. These continued, and by 1887 this side had expanded to be known as *Scuttlebrook Wake*, after the Cattle or Scuttle Brook which then ran down the middle of Leysbourne into a large pool at the junction of Church St and High St. But the older custom on the hill had died hard, for late in the nineteenth century there were still gatherings of young people for sports and games, either on what there was of open space or on the Mile Drive, which was probably part of the old race course.

## 11 SAVING AND REVIVAL

Dover's Hill was threatened with development as a hotel site in the 1920's and its was saved by the artist Frederick Landseer Griggs RA, who had settled in Campden in 1904 and did much to preserve the local scene. He bid against speculators at the auction and gained it for £4,000. Over

the next two years richer friends, among them the historian Dr.G M Trevelyan, bought it from him and handed it over to the National Trust in 1929. There is now a commemorative plaque to them on the hill. For the *Festival of Britain* in 1951 there was a special celebration on the hill. In 1965 the *Robert Dover Games Society* was formed to ensure the regular appearance of the Friday evening games. After a 112 year gap from 1966 they were regular occasions on the Friday evening before the Wake with races, bands, fireworks, culminating in a torch lit procession to the town led by a "*Robert Dover*" in seventeenth century dress riding a horse, supported by an "*Endymion Porter*" and ending with general dancing in the square. The Scuttlebrook Fair continues today on the Saturday after the Spring Bank Holiday with a carnival procession, a May Queen and the local Morris dancers.

In 1966 the games started at 7.30 pm with spectators brought by a shuttle bus from Campden's square. There were about 2,000 attendees, paying £2 per adult, and the event had a £6,000 budget. For the strong there was throwing the hammer and spinning the bar, and for the agile the standing leap and the sack race, most of the events are as they have always been. In backwording the two fighters have their left hand strapped to their thigh and then set about each other with sticks, the winner being the one who first "brake the head" of the other. As they cannot get people to beat hell out of each other, it has become a "demonstration" sport, with a man from Guildford giving a display. Shin-kicking now stops short of actual bloodshed, being more wrestling than kicking, holding each other's shoulders and trying to kick the other's legs out from under him. Now they wear trainers rather than hob-nailed boots. The Pentathlon includes the standing jump, throwing the hammer, putting the shot, and spurning the bar, rather like tossing a caber. There is also a separate wooden stretcher race. That year Robert Dover was played by Father Tom Brennan, the local Catholic priest, who had previously been Endymion Porter. The Chipping Campden Town Crier made the announcements over the PA. Besides the sports there was a bonfire, a fireworks display, morris dancing, a fun fair and two pipe bands. For £1.80 a torch could be purchased to take part in the final procession back to the town and then there was dancing in the square until midnight. There was the usual half a page about in the next *Evesham Journal*.

The Chipping Campden museum has had to close.

## 12 OVER TO MUCH WENLOCK

The tiny medieval market town of Wenlock, beneath the wooded Wenlock Edge, was the first non-county borough to be granted borough status in 1468, sending members to parliament until 1885. Its prosperity over the centuries depended on various trades from copper and coal, to malting, tanning and clay pipe making, and then to lime and limestone quarrying. There was a time when there were more than thirty inns, public and ale houses for under two thousand people. Dancing had been a popular relaxation, for many hours at a time with considerable gusto according to local newspapers, and there are references to gypsy fiddlers providing lively music.

Dr. William Penny Brookes, a local surgeon and from 1841 a magistrate and commissioner for roads and taxes at Much Wenlock, had considerable impact on Wenlock throughout the last century. Born during 1809 to a local GP, in Wilmore Street, Much Wenlock, where now is

Lloyds Bank, he trained at both Guys and St Thomas's hospitals in London, then in Paris and Padua, and after working in Stourport, joined his father's practice in 1831, eventually taking it over. He could ride up to 70 miles a day seeing patients.

He was involved with the restoration of the Council Chamber in 1849, and the building of the Corn Exchange by public subscription in 1852, as well as in the provision of other amenities, such as the local introduction of town and domestic lighting by the *Wenlock Gas Company* in 1856 being a founding director, the arrival of the railway as the secretary from 1861 of the *Much Wenlock and Severn Junction Railway*, and the installation of public sewerage and water systems.

By the mid nineteenth century it was considered that the amount of drinking and roistering in the town was excessive and projects for the poor were started, including a library and reading room opened in 1841, of which Brookes was the first president, and the encouragement of athletics.

... the inhabitants of this neighbourhood ... will be provided with a good library of well selected useful and improving works, which will furnish abundant rational recreation to the general reader, contain an ample store of scientific information ... and prove of practical value to the Agriculturist, the Mechanic and Artificer ...

Dr. Brookes appears to have been an archetypal country squire, dedicated to suppressing the perceived vice in his neighbourhood by creating a festival to substitute for the older and supposedly less uplifting expressions of village gaiety. He was an admirer of the better aspects of the Cotswold Games concept, which combined classic Greek prowess and the sporting heritage of rural England, and he started a local event on these lines in October 1850. It grew from an Olympic Class as a subsidiary organisation or "class" of the Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society. Only later did it become a separate organisation, the *Wenlock Olympian Society*. In 1850 the committee book expressed its aims as,

... the promotion of the moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Wenlock, and especially the working classes, by the encouragement of outdoor recreation and by the award of prizes annually, at public meetings, for skill in athletic exercises and proficiency in intellectual and industrial attainments.

At the very beginning the sports were strong on the rustic side, including fourteen a side football and cricket, quoits, blindfold wheelbarrow pushing, chasing a pig around the town, a jingling match, a game of prison base, and old women running for a pound of tea. Most of these were dropped by 1860, but the popular tilting on horseback was introduced in 1858. This involved spearing a small ring, suspended from a bar over the course, of only about one and half inches diameter. There were running races even for under sevens.

In the period 1860-1870 the crowds were perhaps up to 10,000 strong. Some events were open to all comers. By 1870 the programme had developed to be more like a modern athletics meeting with recognised track and field events and top flight national athletes were being attracted.

Fairness was often achieved by handicapping. In 1868 the pentathlon was added. Mentioned as pentathlon tasks were the long and high jump, the putting of a 32 lb stone shot with each hand and climbing a seventy foot rope. In 1878 there was a one mile hurdle race. Through the 1870's and 1880's the prestige events were competed for and often won by outsiders, not surprisingly predominately members of the Birmingham Athletic Club.

Naturally dancing did not feature highly in the sports being encouraged, but arrangements were made for it as a relaxation during the Games. In 1876 the admission charge for the dancing area enclosure was 6d. The local Christmas morris, certainly active at the turn of the century, never had any connection with the Games.

### **13 THE DAY AT THE EARLY WENLOCK OLYMPIC GAMES**

The early Games started with a speech by Dr. Brookes and then a procession from the town centre by the Gaskell Arms to the racecourse to the south east, named the Olympian Fields for the day, remembered now only by Racecourse Lane. Streets were decked in greenery and tributes to officers of the Society. Until its centenary in 1950 it was always a one day event. In 1890,

The morning rendezvous was at one of the two inns, the Raven or the Gaskell Arms. There the procession was formed. The herald came first on horseback, wearing a richly embroidered shoulder belt and a red velvet cap with white feathers, and carrying the banner of the association. Behind him were the committee and the officers and the Wenlock band playing a march. Then the school children singing hymns and casting flowers from their baskets and last the yeoman and the tilters riding their horses and bearing on their uniforms the association badge. Through the streets gaily decorated with flags and flower wreaths the procession would make its way toward the "Olympian field" where another kind of ceremony was entered upon.

The playing ground was beautiful for its setting, its grass tracks for foot races and equestrian sports, its cricket and lawn tennis grounds, its large and comfortable stands, its open-air swimming tank and its dancing lawn.

But what makes it charming and unlike any other athletic field is the row of rare and beautiful trees that surrounds it. These have been solemnly dedicated to distinguished guests or to persons of high rank on some noteworthy occasion. The dedication of a tree was the ordinary prologue of the celebration: short speeches were delivered, a hymn was sung, and the champagne was poured on the tree out of a large silver drinking cup that used to go round afterwards from lip to lip of the officers of the day. Then the cortege was resumed and marched toward the grand stand in front of which the sports were to take place.

These were a motley lot, including tilting at the ring, for which all the plucky young farmers of the neighbourhood are always ready to enter their names,

and tent pegging, an exercise popular in India, besides racing, cricket and lawn tennis. Brookes he noted was not without admiration for the Athenians, save for one thing, they lacked *galanterie*, allowing no woman into the stadium. This injury to the beauty and charm of the fair sex the old gentleman resented deeply. Not feeling satisfied with giving the ladies the best seats at the Wenlock festival, he had forced upon his countrymen the queer custom of having the champion tilter crowned with laurels by a lady. After the title of champion for the coming year had been solemnly proclaimed by the herald, the winner was ordered to kneel down before the lady who had accepted the duty of crowning him and to kiss her hand.

The scene was indeed strange because of its derivation from three very different forms of civilisation. The dress and the speeches were modern; the use of laurels and the quotations from Greek authors inscribed on the flags and banderoles were antique; the latter part of the ceremony was a homage paid to medieval ideas and theories.

Victory odes were read and the winners were presented with olive crowns and elaborate medals. After the competitions there was a procession back to the town, again led by a band, followed by a formal dinner. The Herald's costume, supposedly modelled on one of Henry VIII's time, appeared in 1867, obtained from a London theatre, and now the original is on display in the local museum. He rode a white horse. The shops shut for the day and the streets were decorated with flags and greenery.

#### **14 THE OUTSIDE CONTACTS OF BROOKES AND THE SOCIETY**

Brookes tried and failed to export this idea. He wrote to the Mayors of all the boroughs in England in 1860 enclosing a copy of the Wenlock Games programme "with a view of promoting the formation of similar societies throughout the kingdom". Olympian festivals under the same regulations took place in Birmingham, Shrewsbury (1861) and Wellington but no regular movement had started and they did not catch on. However it was brought to the attention of the Greek Government and Royalty through the Greek Charge de Affaires in London, J Gennadius, by 1880.

... as a Greek I can but feel indebted to you that you combine with this idea the project of a revival of the Olympic Games ... I believe that you will find a very sympathetic response in Greece.

The Greek newspaper *Clio* in June 1881 reported,

Dr. Brookes, this enthusiastic Philhellene is endeavouring to organise an International Olympian Festival, to be held in Athens ...

Brookes sent a silver decoration, as awarded to victors at Wenlock, and a silver belt clasp to Queen Amilia, or Amalie on the eve of her husband King Otho's dethronement in 1862 whilst on

holiday. Medals featured the figure of Nike, the goddess of victory. King Otho, an unpopular German prince, was the son of Louis I of Bavaria and was selected in 1832 by an International Congress to rule the Greeks.

Active in athletic and physical education organisations throughout his life, Brookes remained in contact with the Olympic pioneers in Greece and was a leading member of the British National Olympian Association founded in 1865, together with John Hulley of Liverpool and E Ravenstein of the German Gymnastic Society of London. It was intended that it should be "a centre of union for the many gymnastic, athletic, olympian and similar clubs rapidly springing up all over the country". The first meeting was at the Crystal Palace in 1866 and it was a success, attracting 10,000 spectators. In 1877, the successor King of the Hellenes, George I, sent a large silver cup or urn to Brookes as a trophy for the pentathlon at the Shrewsbury meeting of the NOA Games. King George was the son of Christian IX of Denmark, a brother of Queen Alexandra of England, and had married a Russian princess Olga. The British Government in commemoration presented Greece with seven Ionian islands which had been long taken from the Turks.

Five more meetings were held but they faded from the national stage after the last at Hadley in 1883. The Association was obscured by the success of the more influential Amateur Athletics Club, later on 24th April 1880 to become the AAA, the creation of powerful London establishment figures and Oxford and Cambridge athletes, set up in reaction to the NOA and stealing its thunder by organising its own championships ahead of the NOA's, at Lillie Bridge, London on 3rd July 1880.

Dr. Brookes died in 1895 when aged 86. There is a memorial stone high up on the front of the restored Corn Exchange, now the public library. Throughout his life he campaigned for the inclusion of physical education in school curricula and demonstrated its value with the children at the Much Wenlock National School. The Wenlock Olympian Society petitioned Parliament on three occasions, while Brookes wrote to Gladstone and other notables numerous times. Just before his death came the news that the Board of Education was to give grants to incorporate physical exercises, drill and gymnastics into school curricula, something he had advocated for nearly half a century. This step was exploited later by Cecil Sharp to introduce Morris and English "folk" dance into schools just before WW I.

## **15 THE WENLOCK GAMES AND THE REMINDERS TODAY**

Brooke's pioneer agricultural lending library was in the Corn Exchange in the centre of the town where the county library branch is now situated. The local museum, originally the Market Hall and then the War Memorial Hall, and encompassing the Tourist Information Office, has a current exhibition recording some of the early history of the games and showing examples of medals and cups awarded in the past. Dr. Brookes kept documents and made scrapbooks and formed a photographic collection. The current Wenlock Olympic Society now holds very extensive records.

The Much Wenlock Games continued annually until the First World War, the 63rd WOG were on May 13th 1913, and then at intervals until the 1960's, being restarted after WWII in 1950 to celebrate their centenary. Their last revival was in 1977, largely due to the efforts of the current secretary Mr Norman Wood of Homer, born in 1922, assisted more recently by his daughter Jan of The Bakery Shop in the High Street. It has developed to include a carnival procession with floats and a carnival queen. The 1994 event attracted around 2,000 athletes to the William Brookes Secondary School and Sports Hall and the adjacent Linden Playing Fields to the north of the town. Survival of the event depends on volunteers and local business sponsorships and its income is largely from entry fees and the sale of refreshments from the cricket club pavilion. Today everyone is given a commemorative medal for taking part and winners receive a modest voucher which can be exchanged for sports equipment. Races for the disabled have been included since 1981.

The three day event in 1990, the centenary of Coubertin's visit, was filmed by a local man Malcolm Brown. There were again about 2,000 competitors, with races for under nines, minors, under elevens, intermediates and seniors.

The sports are now usually a full weekend in early July. In 1995 they were on the 8/9th, with the cricket match two weeks later. There are associated events, such as a best Dressed Shop Window competition, a Live Arts festival in March and an Annual show of Art, Handicrafts, Produce, Cookery and Photography in the Priory Hall during the Saturday before the Games weekend.

## 16 THE GREEK LINK

Despite the undoubted interest, little was known about the ancient games until the 20th century, many scholars had thought that they were just myths. The surviving evidence is fragmentary and widely scattered. There were a number of legendary origin stories. In the most extreme, Hercules cleared and laid them out to celebrate the cleaning of the cattle stables of King Augeas of Elis by diverting the river. Also there was little understanding of what it must have meant to the Greeks. Few qualities were more prized than *arete*, the perfection of physical performance, and *kalòk'agathia*, the combination of beauty and goodness. The Greeks used athletics to keep their warriors in peak condition. There are no Greek images of obese men. The trainers were called *paidotribai*, they could use whips for encouragement, and often training in the wrestling schools, *palaestra*, and the *gymnasia* was accompanied by the music of flutes and cymbals. Dancing was used to strengthen and tune up the body, to learn control, and to develop grace, suppleness and beauty.

During the Games a period of peace was observed to prevent their disruption. No one was to arm in anger, or initiate a legal dispute, and no death penalties were performed. Fines were levied on peacebreaker states. In 480 BC the 75th Games began as planned, although it was the last day of Sparta trying to repel the Persians at Thermopylae. The first recorded Olympic Game victory was in Mycenaean times in 776 BC and the Games were numbered at four yearly intervals from then, the first accurate date in Greek history. Some games might have been started earlier about 884 BC by King Iphitos of Elis on the advice of the Delphic Oracle. Homer mentioned games about 1370 BC and a hundred years later an athletic festival organised by Achilles, as well as one

by the Phaeacian king when Odysseus was washed up on his shore after the Trojan War. A decline set in under Roman influence, they had conquered Greece in 146 BC. The spread of the Roman Civil Wars to the east after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC led to such devastation and loss of resources that even at the Olympic Games the number of events were reduced because of the financial stringency and shortage of competitors. Herod, king of Judea, a greek culture enthusiast, supplied a large endowment in 12 BC, which restored them, for which he was uniquely appointed President of the Games.

In 67 AD, a drunken Emperor Nero was crowned victor of the chariot race, even though there were no other entrants and he did not finish the course. The last properly recorded Games were in 385 AD, with possibly the final and 293rd Olympiad in 393 AD, stopped by decree of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, the first Christian Emperor of Rome, thinking to crush paganism by abolishing supposed pagan rites. But they might still have continued in some form until just before 426 AD when the Temple of Zeus was burnt down at the edict of Theodosius II. The games had continued without interruption for at least nearly 1200 years.

There had been a widely supported *periodos* or circuit of national Panhellenic Games in or opposite the Peloponnese. The first named winner at Olympia was Coroibos of Elis, a cook. The first king of Elis, where the contestants practiced before the Games, Aethlius, gave us the modern word *athlete*. One of the last known champions was Varazdetes for boxing in 369 AD who became King of Armenia.

<i>Games</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Dedication</i>	<i>Wreath/Garland</i>
Olympic	Olympia	Midsummer	Zeus	Wild Olive
Pythian	Delphi	Midsummer	Apollo	Laurel
Nemean	North-East	Summer	Zeus	Fig-Wort or Wild Celery
Isthmian	Isthmus of Corinth	Spring	Poseidon	Fir or Pine

Besides these, by 500 BC there were about 50 regularly scheduled local games, and after 100 BC more than 300, each under the patronage of a divinity. Olympia remained the climax. Only the lesser games included musical competitions for singing and for playing of the lyre and flute. They only occurred at Olympia under Nero. The equivalent Capitoline Games were established in Rome in 86 AD. Hadrian attempted to start an alternative "New Olympics" in Athens from 131 AD but it was largely ignored.

The prizes were insignificant compared to the fame and glory. Interestingly, winners had wool ribbons tied around their head, arms and legs as a mark of victory, and there was a public banquet. There were no prizes for second or third, only disgrace. The importance of winning led cities eventually to hire professionals and to bribe judges.

Olympia was an already established neutral sacred precinct near the western coast of the Peloponnese, by the Ionian Sea, not anywhere near Mt.Olympus which was far away in Thessaly. It had been set aside in the tenth century BC as a sacred centre for Zeus. It was a lush

green valley with two rivers, but there was no town or village. A model of the site exists in the British Museum. Phidias produced a statue of Zeus in the second half of the fifth century BC, 13 m high, in ivory and covered with gold, for the temple to Zeus, which was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Phidias' workshop was converted into a church about 400 AD. The statue was eventually taken to Byzantium and lost in a fire. The games were held after the grain harvest and olive picking, and were timed so that the central day coincided with the second or third full moon after the summer solstice, either in mid-August or mid-September. This was a slack agricultural time, but also a period of hot weather.

At its fullest development the programme was that each Games would be announced six months in advance along with the sacred truce, *ekecheiria*, by groups of three heralds, *spondophorei*, wearing olive wreaths and carrying staves of office. Possible entrants would have been in training for four months already. Two months before the Games all entrants would go to Elis, 35 miles north of Olympia and train there for thirty days. The Eleans had wrested back control of the Games in 572 BC. The officials at Elis codified the rules and appointed the *hellenodikai* or judges, accepted or rejected contestants and matched them where it was appropriate. Then the remaining contestants and the others would make a procession to Olympia along the Sacred Way, about 58 km, taking two days. Only free born Hellenes, that is Greek citizens from homelands and colonies around the Mediterranean, were allowed to compete, and each had to supply sufficient evidence of parentage and standing. There could have been up to 20,000 spectators, from estimates of the size of the initial stadium, perhaps twice as many later. Even to attend the Games was considered an honour. There was no admission fee, but little food or housing facilities either.

By 632 BC, a typical but not fixed programme had emerged, but a full five day event was not established until 472 BC, thus :

Day 1 : Arrival of contestants preceded by trumpeters, heralds, priests and officials, the swearing in by athletes and judges, who plunged their hands into sacrificial blood, the 12 lap two wheeled chariot race nearly 9 miles long, followed by bareback equestrian events, and this before the invention of stirrups. This was in the rectangular open air *hippodrome*.

Richard Mandell has reported, "*We have eyewitness accounts of spectators abandoning themselves to frenzies of tension and advocacy. They shrieked, wept, embraced one another, insulted athletes in disfavour, and tossed flowers at those they adored.*" What changes?

Day 2 : The *Pentathlon* in the Olympic Stadium.

Day 3 : Religious procession and spectacles, about 100 oxen sacrificed to Zeus, followed by the youth age band (12-17 years) events.

Day 4 : Foot races, wrestling, boxing and the unrestricted *pankration* event, ending with a race in full armour.

Day 5 : Reading of the List of Winners and the Crowning of the Champions with wild olive leaves.

The surviving stadium was built in 330 BC by the orator Luycurgus, a disciple of Plato. It was rebuilt 500 years later by Herodes Atticus. Unfortunately the Romans removed most of the numerous statues to decorate their own homes. The Olympia Stadium was plundered in the fourth century AD and suffered two major earthquakes in the sixth (522 and 551 AD) which toppled temple columns and diverted the river Kladeos to destroy half the *gymnasium*. In the late Middle Ages the river Alpheios washed away all of the *hippodrome* and covering the rest with four meters of silt, so that its exact location became a mystery to all but the local inhabitants. The British amateur scientist Richard Chandler discovered the location in 1766 on an exploratory mission for the Society of Dilettanti. Its "rediscovery" at the start of the nineteenth century could not be exploited because of the general turmoil caused by the Greek **Wars of Independence**. Yet again the site was plundered, as was customary for that time, by the six week French Morea expedition in 1829, the relics now being in the Louvre. In 1870 King George I of Greece arranged for an excavation funded by Kaiser Wilhelm I of Prussia. The Germans under Ernst Curtius, who had been the Kaiser's tutor, began serious archaeology on the site, and publishing on the historic games in the period from 1875 to 1881, and again from 1936, against a promise not to export anything found. By 1889 many of the buildings had been uncovered.

The official events were, in order of introduction, *stade* the short foot-race (776 BC), *diaulos* the double length foot-race (724 BC), *dolichos* of 24 stadia, about 4.5 km, the long distance foot-race (720 BC), *pentathlon* and wrestling (708 BC), boxing (688 BC), four-horse chariot-race (680 BC), *pankration* all-in wrestling, and a horse-race (648 BC), foot-races over half distances and wrestling for boys (632 BC), boxing for boys (616 BC), hoplite race in armour over 2 stades (520 BC), *apene*, mule cart race (500-444 BC), two-horse chariot-race (408 BC), a **competition for the heralds and trumpeters**, so essential for the running of the Games (396 BC), chariot-races for teams of four colts (384 BC), chariot-racing for teams of two colts (268 BC), races for colts (256 BC), all-in wrestling for boys (200 BC). Up to 40 chariots raced at a time. In its final form there were 18 events. From the beginning there may have been additional unofficial competitions besides the one official event.

There were no team events, nor swimming or diving as these were not considered competitive. Relay races with torches over short distances having purely religious significance and ran at night were included in the festivals, but not as part of the Olympic programme. The torch holders ran with them unlit to the sacred altar, lit them, and raced back.

The "*stade*" or sprint over 600 Olympic feet (192.28 m) was the oldest and most prestigious event and the following four years in the Olympic cycle were usually named after the winner. The *stade* was reputedly 600 times the length of the god Hercules foot! At first it was run on a level stretch of ground with a line drawn in the sand to start, giving our term "starting from scratch". Then the stadium was built about 350 BC and a flat marble starting line provided, the *balbides*, which can still be seen. The *pentathlon* events were a broad jump, javelin hurling, running, 4 kg discus, and wrestling, all in one afternoon. It was more of an elimination contest. In the broad jump they had to pass a given distance, then the best four javelin throwers competed in a one stade race, the best three then threw the discus, and if there was still doubt as to the best the final two wrestled for the best of three falls. The discus throwers went for style and grace but without foot travel, only body rotation, the javelin throwers were assisted by a leather thong wound round the middle of the shaft that spun and stabilised it. The long jump was leap made

with the assistance of *halteres* or hand held weights of 4 to 9 lb. At first these were shaped rather like our more recent telephone receivers. The competitors may have been allowed a 5 yard start, but they had to land stationary and be able to stand upright, as falling earned disqualification. It is not clear if it were a single, double or even triple jump. The two surviving estimates of lengths achieved were far in excess of a single leap. In all the events the judges took into account style as well as fastest and furthest.

The role of the *halteres* is often misrepresented in the modern literature. Principally their **acceleration** forward at the moment of the jump increased the pressure of the feet on the ground thus making the jump greater, as with all proper body movements associated with leaps.

Defining the race track in terms of "local feet", produced equivalent lengths for the "stade" from 181.3 to 210 m elsewhere.

Chionis of Sparta won the stade in three games, 664-656 BC. The first known triple champion was Phanas of Pellene in 512 BC. Possibly the most famous champion was Leonidas of Rhodes who won the three flat races on four consecutive occasions from 164 BC to 152 BC.

Unusually, married women and slaves were not allowed to compete or supposedly witness the Olympic Games. Some early references however suggest that married priestesses, virgins and prostitutes were welcomed. To ensure that no woman participated the men competed nude from 720 BC. Women could be champions of equestrian events as the accolade was given to the owners of the horses or chariots not to the riders, for example, to Belistike of Macedonia in 268 BC for her two horse chariot. There were separate women's games at Olympia in honour of Hera, but with only a foot-race, 500 Olympic feet (160.23 m) long, for girls in three separate age bands. But certainly by Christian times there were women's events at the other festivals.

The full Greek games were actually wanton and bloody affairs, particularly in body contact "sports" such as the *pankration*, in which anything was allowed except biting and eye gouging, and in their attitudes to "accidents", but this was conveniently ignored in the nineteenth century arguments for a revival. The ancient Games did not lead to commercialisation, and only gradually became secular. At no time were there amateurs in antiquity. The Games did not lead to national teams, they were wholly of individual enterprise, and no one then thought that the Games led to international amity, if they thought of it at all, it must have been quite the reverse. The modern Olympic "spirit" is a new concept, with its own supporting myths.

The Olympic inspiration became more than just a literary mention in the eighteenth century and several serious suggestions were made for some such modern celebration. One was by Major Evangelos Zappas, a grain dealer who had made his fortune in what is now Romania, who in 1858 offered King Otho of Greece a large endowment for the restoration of the Games. These Zappeion Games, to celebrate Greek Independence from the Turks, were held in Place Louis, a square on Athen's outskirts, one Sunday in November 1859, and included what would now be considered oddities such as wrestling on the ground, discus throw for height, rope climbing, throwing a javelin at a steer's head, and a tug-of-war, as well a standards such as a race over a "stade", one over 3000 m, throwing the discus and hop-step-&-jump. There was little organisation, no system of qualification and spectators were injured during crowd control. He

bequeathed his fortune to give the so called Zappeion to Athens. The Wenlock Society sent £10 prize money for the 1859 games, the winner of which was made an honorary member of the Wenlock Olympian Society. This WENLOCK PRIZE went to the winner of the "Long or Sevenfold Race". There were further such games in 1870, 1875, 1888 and 1889, but at various other sites, and none successes.

Modern athletic events have become tests of the competitors and only secondarily entertainment for spectators. But many 19th century events were not so honed, still with the flavour of fairs, fetes and carnivals allowing for persons of lesser talents. Such are still with us with so called "country" or "medieval" sports, often introduced to attract paying spectators or encourage prize chasing whilst fund raising.

## 17 **BARON de COUBERTIN AND THE MODERN OLYMPIADS**

On September 1st 1870, France was heavily defeated at the battle of Sedan, only eight weeks after Napoleon III had declared war on Prussia, Three days later France was proclaimed a Republic, in another ten days Paris capitulated. Then Alsace and Lorraine were annexed. It brought a lasting gloom to France.

Pierre de Fredi, Baron de Coubertin, was born in Paris at the family hotel on New Year's Day 1863. His grandfather had been made a Baron by the Bourbon Louis XVIII in 1821. His father died in 1908. Pierre was unusually small and took an un-French attitude to games and fitness, even practising boxing. The *lycées* had no playing fields, no games and little physical training. Coubertin first visited England in 1883 to study English Public Schools and their sports, as an admirer of Dr. Arnold, Coubertin had read *Tom Brown's Schooldays* in 1875, and then made a similar but a commissioned official visit to the USA and Canada in 1889. Many sports were standardised only from the 1850's, and purely athletic meetings only started late in the nineteenth century. The Olympic Club of Montreal was founded in 1842. America presented Coubertin with the first evidence of the mass popularity of spectator sports, whilst the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition alerted him to the attraction and symbolic power of international public spectacles. The first truly international exhibition had been at the 1851 London Crystal Palace. Our Prince Albert's role in that was similar to Coubertin's for the later Modern Olympics. Coubertin was 15 years old when the 1878 Paris Universal Exposition opened only a few blocks from his apartment on the rue Oudinot. It included a German pavilion with a diorama of the Olympia archaeological site. The next was that in 1889 for which the Eiffel Tower was built. It had ethnic displays and the first European appearance of Buffalo Bill's "*Wild West Show*".

In 1884 Coubertin enrolled at the Sorbonne, but ignored the lectures on law, and entered in 1885 the Free School for Political Science, a private school for training for government service. He read about theories of education. He participated in a small group called the Society of Social Economy, whose procedures he introduced later when he organised the International Olympic Committee. He visited Rugby school in 1886. 'Alone', he would later write, 'in the great Gothic chapel of Rugby, my eyes fixed on the funeral slab on which without epitaph, the great name of Thomas Arnold was inscribed, I dreamed that I saw before me the cornerstone of the British Empire.' Coubertin was wrong about many things, including Arnold and Rugby school.

Headmaster from 1828-1842 he detested sport. Early sporting activity in Britain was driven by betting and prizes until well into the 19th century, then grew the cult of the amateur, as much to separate the moneyed from the working classes. The many new sports clubs from 1860 were by definition exclusive, not designed to provide sporting amenities to the deprived general public. Coubertin swallowed it all and the idea lasted 90 years.

After the visit to England, in 1887 he approached the French Ministry of Public Instruction with ideas and was given an office, a budget, and a mission to find ways of improving French education. It took him throughout France. At one school he learned a Latin motto, *citius, altius, fortius*. To encourage interest in sports he created the Union of French Athletic Sports Clubs, with a monthly newspaper, *The Athletic Review*. Coubertin realised that the ancient Olympics had much in common with his ideas for athletic internationalism. Both brought athletes together for friendly competition, were designed to glorify individual achievement instead of national identity, and created an island of peace and friendship in the midst of conflict.

While Coubertin was setting up the Congress of Physical Training for the 1889 Paris Exposition, Dr. Brookes responded to a newspaper notice, and Coubertin was invited by him to visit Much Wenlock, which he did in October 1890, and his published description has been quoted above. During his visit he planted a tree at the Linden Fields, whose original commemorative plaque is now in the local museum, and he was made an honorary member of Brooke's Olympic Society. It was in 1892 that he made the first public suggestions in his campaign for the acceptance of the concept of the Modern Olympics. His lecture at the Sorbonne on 25 November 1892, at his dinner to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Sports Clubs Union, was received with an ovation. But there were many inspirations, Coubertin did not so much dream up the idea as make it a reality. Though throughout he rarely had contact with any athletes.

He was utterly bemused and delighted by what he saw at Much Wenlock. Coubertin was not usually taken by such an amalgam, but the ceremonial and *bonheur*, indeed what we might call the theatricality of the Wenlock Games quite distracted him. For all its strangeness, Coubertin found such syncretism tasteful and charming. The processional opening likely added to the impressions he had already received from the opening solemnities of the Paris Exposition and contributed with them to the character of the later opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games.

In his 1897 article on the history of modern sports and gymnastics he remarked,

... such meetings are of essentially modern character; the games are modern; modern are the rules, the dress and the prizes. In Wenlock only something of the past has survived; it is safe to say that the Wenlock people alone have preserved and followed the true Olympian traditions.

This seems to have been occasioned by the inclusion of prizes for literary compositions and artistic works, the Greek banners, slogans, and songs and above all, "such displaying of etiquette and stateliness" as "no modern athletes" had ever known.

In his periodical *La Revue Athletique* of December 1890,

... and of the Olympic Games which modern Greece has not yet revived, it is not a Greek to whom one is indebted, but rather to Dr. William Penny Brookes ... now aged 82 ... still active, vigorous, organising and animating them ... Athletics does not count many partisans as convinced as W P Brookes.

Only rarely have women crowned champions in the modern Olympic Games, but since the 1920's it has become a regular custom to have the prizes borne forward by young maidens from the host nation. This practice, and the idea of victory ceremonies themselves, were planted in Coubertin's imagination at Much Wenlock. He arranged sporting meets in Paris in the early 1890's, combining them with parades, banquets and ceremonies.

His second official visit to the USA was in 1893 representing France at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He formed the first International Olympic Committee in 1894 in Paris at an eight day long meeting, funded by himself, now remembered as "*The Congress of the Sorbonne*" held from 17th to 24th June, attended by 79 delegates representative of 12 nations and 21 others sent messages of support. But 2,000 attended the opening dinner! It closed with unanimous support for a resolution for a revival in 1896. On Thursday, 24th May a meeting of the Wenlock Olympic Society read the programme for this International Athletic Congress to be called about "*Amateurism and Professionalism in Athletics*". They wanted them to be only amateur, to underline de Coubertin's view of the noble and chivalrous character of physical exercise. Dr. Brookes sent his best wishes but was unable to attend because of failing health, but he was listed as an honorary member of the Congress. However the Olympic committee did not become a working one until after 1908.

Coubertin wrote for 50 years, about 55,000 pages, enough to fill 25 normal sized volumes.

## 18 THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPICS BEGIN

### *Athens*

Coubertin intended that the first Olympics would be in Paris in 1900, but it was considered that the wait would have been too long, so IOC opted for 1896 in Greece. They were not genuinely Olympic, in that only the running, long jump, discus and wrestling were borrowed from the original, and each was now different, the rest of the events were either unknown or never included by the ancients. The choice of events was appropriate to the times.

The Games in Athens ran from Easter Monday April 6th 1896 until April 13th. The Stadium had been restored according to the ancient plans in marble by a gift of nearly one million drachma (roughly £36,500 at the 1896 exchange rate) from Georgios Averoff, who lived in Alexandria, and from a lottery, and the sale of souvenir stamps and medals. The money for the Zappeion Olympics was not released as had been hoped. As the IOC was helpless, Coubertin created the Olympic Organising Committee, all of whom were Athenians who knew how to get things done in their city.

The new cinder track, laid by men from London, measured 333.33 m, had very sharp turns, and the competitors ran in a clockwise direction. They were the first meeting to have a unity and integrity of rule, purpose and form. Much of the organisation was owed to the efforts of Crown Prince Constantine and his brother Prince George. On the first and fifth days the crowds, perhaps 60 to 80 thousand or more, were for then the largest ever gathered for a peaceful celebration in the modern world.

Many athletes entered privately, including holiday makers, and two employees from the British Embassy in Athens tried to enter the bicycle race, but were told that as working men they were not strictly amateurs and therefore did not qualify. A French sprinter insisted in wearing his gloves to run before royalty. Some nearly missed the occasion not realising that Greece still used the Julian not the Gregorian calendar!

One unrepeatable event occurred, Robert Garrett of the USA Princeton team, took up a discus, never having seen one so light and small, and threw it further than the Greeks for whom it was the classic exercise! Another American, James Connolly won the very first medal, this for the triple jump. For these Games the event winners received a silver medal and a crown of olive leaves and the second a copper medal and a crown of laurel, at the insistence of Prince Constantine. A gold medal was thought to be too much like a cash prize.

All the associated ritual symbols of the games, solemn music, processions, flights of birds, sacred plants, flags, mythic and divine images, invocations, crownings, wreath laying, statue dedications which populated the opening, victory and awards ceremonies, followed by banquets, group photograph sessions and ceremonial leave taking, were more novel than the actual Olympic Games, but have lasted. The king had all the competitors to breakfast on the first day. Another innovation was the raising of the national flag of the event winners. The Olympic Hymn was written in 1896 by two Greeks and, despite various attempts to modernise it, it still remains in use. There were artistic events in Athens associated with the Games, concerts, performance of ancient drama, a non-competitive torch race, many receptions and extensive flood lighting. It amounted to a charming carnival of Boy Scoutish idealism and with a minimum of the pompous military and religious ritual of later games.

The swimming events were held in the ice cold sea at the Bay of Zea. The cricket and soccer competitions were cancelled for lack of entries! The yachting was cancelled because of bad weather. Sir George Stuart Robertson, the Greek scholar and hammer throwing Oxford blue, entered the tennis tournament because it was the only way to obtain the use of a court! He also did the shot putt and discus, and composed and recited the valedictory Greek Ode at the final day.

Coubertin set about organising the 1900 Olympics. The argument about it being kept in Greece failed because of another war between Greece and Turkey. The Parisian World Fair organisers ignored his proposals. Instead of having a separate zone, they chopped the events up and distributed them around, gymnastics with the fair's children's games, rowing and yachting in the exhibition of ocean going ships, and fencing next to a display of knives and forks. In Paris the OOC were the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Public Instruction. Coubertin formed an alternative OOC, but then the Union of French Athletic Sports Clubs declared itself the only legitimate

IOC. Its list contained many prominent active politicians, and as a non-political President of the IOC, he could not associate closely with them. He concentrated on the non-IOC matters and tried to set up permanent National Olympic Committees in each country. There was no track, only stakes marking a course across a badly cut grassy field full of hills and bumps. Clumps of trees stood where the throwing events were and often throws could not be measured.

### *Paris*

The games in Paris (July through October 1900 in the Bois de Boulogne, spread over 5 months) as part of the 5th Universal Exposition, and at St Louis (1904 at the Washington University, spread over 4½ months) World Fair were relative disasters, with epidemics of bad temper and high level confusion, and that at London (1908 at the Shepherd's Bush Stadium), replacing Rome because of financial difficulties following the 1906 eruption of Mt Vesuvius, was transitional, because they were all amalgamated with world fairs, and only those in Stockholm (1912) and Paris (1924) were independent triumphs for the Olympic Movement. At Paris in 1900 many athletes learned that they had participated in the second Olympics of the modern era only when they noticed the inscriptions to that effect on the medals and certificates. The official programme did not even contain the word Olympics. There were more contestants than spectators. The 1896 winner of the discus in 1900 threw on each attempt into the crowd! The swimming was held in the River Seine, going downstream. Raymond Ewry, who was a former polio victim eventually over several Olympics won eight gold medals, all in the standing jump events that have been dropped since. His records are high jump 5' 5", long jump 11' 4.88", triple jump 34' 8½". Paris included team sport events which Coubertin opposed vigorously but he was outvoted. In later Olympics there were less familiar sports introduced as demonstrations, but the 1970 regulations defined the amateur sports that could qualify as those if men played them in 40 countries on 3 continents and for women in 20 countries on 2 continents.

### *St Louis*

The 1904 games had been intended for Chicago, having considered Philadelphia and then New York, but were transferred to St Louis to join the 100th anniversary celebration of the Louisiana Purchase at the request of the US President Theodore Roosevelt. Here the carnival like atmosphere sunk to a grotesque low with a two Olympic "*Anthropological Days*" of demonstrations in which African Pygmies, Patagonian and Phillipine Igores and Moris from sideshows at the World's Fair competed in mud fights, pole climbing, stone throwing, steeplechase running and other so called "native games". But a Zulu was 9th in the formal marathon! Fred Lorz the first arrival in the marathon looked remarkably fresh, and was found to have received an eleven mile lift in a car after having cramp, and then had returned to running after the car broke down. Incredibly George Eyser, aged over 30, won 6 medals in the gymnastics, and he had a wooden leg! One event was for Roque, similar to croquet, but played on a hard surface with raised sides, another was proposed for tobacco juice spitting!

If the marathon, the most popular event in the first Olympics, had not been won by a Greek, Spiridon Loues, there might never have been a repeat Games four years later. The response amongst the populace was the momentum that carried the Olympic experiment on to Paris in 1900. Unfortunately the French reaction was less than enthusiastic and the ensuing St Louis

competition, involving mostly Americans, drew even less support. The whole movement would have ground to a halt had not the Greeks come to the rescue with the Panhellenic Games, now the so called "Intermediate" or "Intercalated Games", held in Athens in 1906. The excellent competition and the public support rekindled interest. These Games introduced the gold, silver and bronze medals for the first three places. It was planned to hold a Games in Athens every four years between the main Olympics, but that for 1910 was cancelled because of the economic situation and the political unrest between Greece and Turkey and in the Balkans generally, and were never reconsidered after WWI.

### ***London***

The 1908 Games had been intended for Rome, but they backed out for financial reasons and they were given to London at the Shepherd's Bush Stadium. 1908 was the first Games for which the entries were by countries rather than on a personal basis, and the teams entered behind their national flags. About a quarter of a million people watched the marathon. This was never an ancient event, but still it commemorated the run of Pheidippides to Athens in 490 BC, he having already twice run long distances to ask for reinforcements. The marathon distance was supposed to have been about 25 miles, but when the start in 1908 was moved to Windsor it became 26 miles. Then Princess Mary asked for the start to be moved to below the royal nursery, making it 26 miles and 385 yards, which it remains! At London medals were given to the third placed for the first time.

### ***Introductions***

A public address system and electrical timing was introduced in 1912, but there was no boxing as it was illegal in Sweden. The IOC flag of five interlaced rings on a white ground, based on an emblem found at Delphi in 1913 by Coubertin himself, was first unfurled at Antwerp in 1920. They are to represent the five participating continents of Europe, Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Americas. The public pronouncement of the Olympic Oath by a representative also started in 1920. The Olympic motto, *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (faster, higher, stronger), learnt in 1895, was used from 1924, but it was first displayed at a huge party Coubertin hosted for the IOC's 20th anniversary meeting in Paris. This was extravagant even by the Baron's standards, there were 17 receptions, plays, operas, choral concerts, banquets and a speech by the President of France. The Olympic Flame was introduced at Amsterdam in 1928, burning throughout the Games, together with a large results board and the release of pigeons, the three level winners podium at Los Angeles in 1932, the torch relay from Olympia in Greece where the first one was ignited by focussing the sun in 1936. From that year there was a special torch design for each host city. The first time all the athletes entered en masse at the closing ceremony was in 1956, and mascots for each Games were introduced in 1968, as was sex testing for women. After the closing ceremony of each Games, the host of the next Games was ceremonially presented with the Olympic flag.

### ***The Pattern***

At the opening ceremony Coubertin's words are displayed,

"The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part.

The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well."

Then the IOC President and the president of the organising committee and head of state enter.

"Citius, Altius, Fortius" is displayed.

The teams enter. The Greek athletes always lead the opening procession, then nations follow in local alphabetical order, but with the host country last.

Then the head of state is asked to open the Games. The Olympic flag is raised to the Olympic Hymn and the official flag, given in 1920 by the Belgian Olympic Committee, is handed to the mayor of the host city to keep to the next celebration. Pigeons are released, a salute of three guns fired, the final runner with the Olympic torch arrives, and the flame is lit.

The Olympic Oath is taken by a competitor from the host country,

"In the name of all competitors I promise that we will take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams."

### ***Obsolete Events***

These early Games also included such athletic events as standing long, high and triple jumps but also free style javelin throwing, as well as discus, shot and javelin where the winner was the one who threw the best aggregate distance with their left and right hands separately. 1896 saw one handed weight lifting. The gymnastics, for a while from 1896 to 1932, on and off, included climbing a 10 m rope. There was a 200 m swimming obstacle race in 1900, involving three sets of obstacles, the swimmers had to climb over a pole, over a row of boats and under another row of boats. Also there was underwater swimming with 2 points for each meter and one point for ever second underwater. Even live pigeon shooting occurred! Croquet and Cricket were also played in 1900. England hold the only cricket gold medal when the Devon Wanderers CC beat a French team of largely British expatriots living in France by 158 runs. The sports included archery, golf, handball, lacrosse, polo, rackets, and tennis. The 1900 schedule also mentioned angling, cannon-shooting, bowling, leapfrog, three legged races, automobilism, pelota and running wild boar shooting but it is not known if they ever happened. In 1904 there was throwing a 56 lb weight, and in 1906 throwing a 14 lb stone. In 1906 at Athens there were rowing races for 6 and 16 sailor naval boats. The London City Police beat the Liverpool Police in the tug o'war in 1908, in an event recognised from 1900 until 1920. The USA are the reigning rugby union champions, the sport having been last competed in 1924. They also are the champions at the western martial art of *single stick* as part of the fencing held in 1904. There has been considerable technical progress in the classical events, no more so than in the high jump, which has progressed through scissors, eastern roll, western roll, and straddle to the fosbury flop.

There have been odd combinations of sports by some contestants. G Fuchs competed in sabre, rowing and bobsledding, Ralph Craig was a sprinter and a yachtsman, Evgeny Grishin a cyclist and speed skater, and Eddie Eagan a boxer and bobsledder.

## *Women*

Coubertin did not want women in the Olympics, he called this kind of mixing "promiscuity in sport". His genteel belief was that women have but one task, that of crowning the winner with garlands. Their participation grew very slowly, as shown in annex B. In 1900 it was for croquet and lawn tennis, in 1904 for golf and archery, and swimming from 1912. In 1921 at Monte Carlo there was a special women's only meeting with 100 competitors, including javelin, high jump, shot putt and six running distances. There were 300 women in 1922. Mini-Olympics were held in France and then Sweden so successfully that women's athletic events were introduced into the full Olympics from 1928. But mixed teams had been accepted in yachting from 1908, and women competed directly against the men in equestrian events from 1952 and in shooting from 1968. Some women were very distressed in the longer distance track event of 800 m in 1928 so distances above 200 m were not included for many years, but now, with proper training, from 1984 there is even a marathon event. However one woman, Melpomene, actually tried to enter the marathon at Athens in 1896. Of course she was refused, but she ran anyhow and finished only 1½ hours behind the winner, as many do in the London Marathon.

## **19 CULTURAL SIDE**

Coubertin intended from the beginning that the Modern Olympics would include cultural events as in the ancient festivals. His conference in Paris in 1906 recommended five aesthetic areas, architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature, with prizes for the best new works that found their inspiration in sport. He tried in vain to interest the organisers, London was sympathetic but too pressed for time. Stockholm made a valiant first effort with all the fine arts entries to have an appropriate affinity to the Olympic sports. The first literature prize was for a long poem called "Ode to Sport" submitted under a *nom de plume* by Coubertin himself. The modern art competitions introduced were architecture, painting, graphic arts, sculpture or plastic arts, applied arts, literature and music. Uniquely Walter Winas of the USA in 1912 won a silver medal in shooting and a gold medal for sculpture. The competition lasted from 1912 until 1948 after which it was abandoned because of the mediocre quality.

In April 1915 Coubertin moved the IOC to Lausanne in Switzerland on the shores of Lake Geneva. His family moved to a simple hotel called Beau Séjour made available by the city where the IOC office was accommodated in his hotel suite.. He now had to live frugally, and the days of huge banquets and parties was over. The IOC meeting in April 1919 asked Antwerp to host the 1920 Games, even though the city was in ruins. Athletes had to sleep in children's cots in a schoolhouse, eight to a room. Belgians were so poor in 1920 that few could afford to attend, so free tickets were given to schoolchildren. Coubertin asked that the 1924 Games be switched from Amsterdam to Paris before he intended to retire. Lausanne was so proud of Coubertin that it gave a substantial mansion, Mon Repos, for the IOC headquarters. When he retired he was given the honorary title of "President for Life of the Olympic Games" and promised that the title would never be given to anyone else. The IOC headquarters is now Olympic House in the grounds of the Château de Vidy.

Amsterdam had a final exhibition of 1,150 works of art, 450 architectural, 40 literature entries and 22 musical. There were 1,100 exhibits in Los Angeles (1932), at which a German won a prize for poetry. However there never were classes for the other performing arts, other than the Ice Dancing since WW II, and certainly no obvious chance for folk dance, except perhaps in the opening non-competitive displays. However in the English Folk Dance Society magazine EFDS News No.7, May 1924, page 169, it stated,

Olympic Games : It is just possible that the Society will be represented in Paris at the Olympic Games.

So there may have been a possibility. It has been impossible to follow this particular implication up as the Director of the EFDS, Cecil Sharp, died after a short illness on 23rd June 1924, just before the Games were to start, and his death preoccupied all the EFDS records of the period. There may be an indirect reference in Coubertin's deposited papers.

The opening displays have become enormous. There were 3,500 musicians at Los Angeles in 1932. At Moscow there were 16,000 performers. Whereas at Los Angeles in 1984 there were 10,000 performers, flags, pageants, a 960 voice choir and 84 baby grand pianos, and the release of millions of white and gold balloons. At Seoul there were 13,625 performers with displays of folk dancing, rituals and martial arts. \$28 m was spent at Barcelona for an allegorical confection.

However the loss of competitions did not stop exhibitions, performances, dramatic ceremonial and often spectacular new architecture. In Mexico in 1968 it was coupled with a year long Cultural Olympiad. At Munich in 1972 there was colossal sculpture by Otto Piene. Los Angeles in 1984 had a ten week Arts festival with 100 exhibitors and performers from twenty countries. Barcelona in 1992 had fifty newly commissioned urban sculptures. There has been a parallel art exposition at Atlanta in 1996, but how to find the details is unknown!

From the beginning the Official Posters blending the Olympic symbolism with the spirit of the host cities were considered part of the "National Art Exhibitions" called for by the Olympic Charter. The poster for 1912 was considered so daring, with a naked man barely decent with a few strategically positioned ribbons, that it was not distributed to a number of countries. The Olympic symbol of the five rings has appeared on every poster since the Winter Games of 1928. Commemorative medals besides the victory medals have always been provided for all competitors and officials. Anyone attending in any role or as a spectator could always obtain an Olympic Pin. Often there have been special host country commemorative postage stamps.

Coubertin was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936, but he was not selected. His sponsor surprisingly was Hitler, because he was against the other nominee Carl von Ossietzky, a pacifist and writer who was being tortured in a Nazi prison camp. He died from a stroke on 2nd February 1937, aged 74. He had gone for a walk and sat down on a park bench. He was buried in the Bois de Vaux cemetery in Lausanne, but his heart was buried at Olympia.

### *List of Presidents of the IOC*

1894-1896	Dimitrios Vikelas	Greece
1896-1925	Baron Pierre de Coubertin	France
1925-1942	Count Henri de Baillet Latour	Belgium
1946-1952	Sigfrid Edstrom	Sweden
1952-1972	Avery Brundage	USA
1972-1980	Lord Killanin	Ireland
1980-2001	Juan Antonio Samaranch	
2001-	Jaques Rogge	

### *Protests and Problems*

Because of the attention that focuses on this summit of sports and games there have always been problems and protests. In Paris in 1900 the French judges refused to be impartial. The London Games were a contribution to international acrimony rather than to harmony, particularly between the American contestants and the British judges. In 1924 the French spectators booed during the national anthems, but in 1932, during the US Prohibition exception was made for the French team because they claimed wine was a necessary part of their culture.

Medals were withdrawn from winners who were found to have even slightly infringed the rules on amateurism, although sham amateurism was rife, often playing under false names. For example, Jim Thorpe, a Sac and Fox native American Indian, was outstanding in 1912, but was asked to return his medals as it was found that he had when young accepted expenses for playing American football.

Colour and race has been an issue at times. As a sign of things to come, in 1908 England tried to prevent to use of the Irish flag and the Russians of the Finnish flag before these countries became independent. In 1936 Hitler refused to met Jesse Owen the US gold medals winner, but also that year Hélène Mayer, who was half Jewish and had gone to the USA because of racial prejudice, returned to fence for Germany but received little recognition for her achievements even though she responded to winning with the Nazi salute. Then there was the fuss more recently about the athletes who used the "black salute" of a raised clenched fist.

The ill feeling against the belligerents in the two World Wars meant that Austria, Bulgaria, German, Hungary and Turkey were barred from the 1920 Olympics, Germany in 1924, and Germany and Japan in 1948. The USSR did not join the Olympic movement until 1952, South Africa was suspended after 1960.

There have been boycotts. Many were unhappy at the award of the 1936 Games to Berlin and an Alternative Games were proposed for Barcelona, but these were cancelled as the Spanish Civil War started the day before they were due to begin. The 1940 Games had been given to Tokyo, but were taken away because of the Japanese invasion of China and given to Helsinki. These in turn were cancelled when Russia invaded Finland. The 1976 Games were boycotted by African countries, the 1980 Games by America, etc.

### ***Local Contributions***

The Aldershot area was used for some events in the 1948 Olympics because of a lack of equestrian facilities near the White City. The individual and team dressage, and the dressage section of the three day event were held on Twesledown. For the cross country section the eventers covered 15 km of roads, tracks and a steeplechase course, starting from Queen's Parade across Twesledown to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst's training ground at Camberley, involving 34 jumps in the area around Saddleback Hill, Old Dean. The show jumping was held on the Command Central Ground in Queen's Avenue. The modern pentathlon included riding, fencing and swimming. The fencing was held in the gymnasium in Queen's Avenue and the swimming at the Aldershot Municipal Bathing Pool, now the Lido.

I knew Raymond "Neddy" Harrison who was part of the British épée team under Alan Jay which came second at Rome in 1960. As a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF he had worked for me in Guided Weapons Department, at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, for a couple of years. He was a left handed fencer, noted for quirks like painful blows to opponents feet. At an RAF mess party at Farnborough he cut an artery and a nerve in his left wrist on a broken wine glass. The nerve was rerouted by surgery and he had to work a tennis ball endlessly to regain flexibility and his grip. Naturally all the work he did for me was in decipherably written with his right hand, but he did produce the design and did the calibration of a copper heat transfer calibration rig used in rocket exhausts at Westcott and in a ram jet at Bristol. His fencing continued but he arranged to have the weapon bound to his hand, to claim it was "slipping" was a useful ploy that would break opponents concentration.

### ***Copyists***

Other Sporting championships have started since the modern Olympic Games :

South American Games	1919	
World Student Games	1924	
British Empire, now Commonwealth, Games		1930
European Championships	1934	
Pan American Games	1951	
Asian Games	1951	
African Games and Championships	1965	
IAAF World Cup	1977	
World Championships in Athletics	1983	

Separate *Paraplegic Games* are now held as well, but in 1984 Neroli Fairhall of New Zealand competed in a normal Olympic event at archery from a wheelchair.

There is now an Olympic Museum at Lausanne, Switzerland, on the shore of Lake Geneva which opened in June 1993. It contains articles, memorabilia, historical artefacts and a vast library of books, photographs, films and video.

## **21 REMEMBERANCES INVOLVING WENLOCK**

In 1980 a special Festival was held to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Amateur Athletic Association in 1880. In 1986 the Society celebrated its own 100th Games with distinguished visitors from the British Olympic Association, and the International Olympic Committee, with the grand-nephew of Baron de Coubertin, Geoffrey de Navacelle as the Guest of Honour.

Following their failed attempt for the 1992 Games, as part of the Manchester bid for the 1996 Olympics, the preparing team visited Much Wenlock in July 1990 to gain some historical support. They bid again in 1994 for the 2000 Games. There is very little documentary evidence in the Manchester reference library for the 1992 bid, more, quite a nice book but not the full bid for 1996, however with the full bid for 2000, apparently none of them make any reference to Much Wenlock. Birmingham bid in 1986 for the 1992 Games and might have some reference as it is close.

As 1990 was the centenary of Coubertin's visit, the Guest of Honour was HRH The Princess Royal, as a Member of the International Olympic Committee and the President of the British Olympic Association. She led representaives from the BOA including the chairman Sir Arthur Gold and Dr. Don Anthony, who had done so much to forge the link between the Wenlock Society and the BOA. She also planted a tree.

The 7th president of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the Marques de Samaranch, visited Wenlock for two hours on Wednesday 13th July 1994, to plant an oak tree near that planted by Coubertin in 1890, which now towers over the playing fields, to acknowledge its part in the rebirth of the Olympic movement. This event followed the 108th Wenlock Olympic Games.

Although the Morris has not been associated with any Olympics since the end of Dover's Games in the middle of the nineteenth century, other than a Carnival Morris Troupe on a special occasion at Much Wenlock, there is expectation that it could be shown as part of a future opening ceremony. Dances were performed by the Auckland Morris at the start of the Commonwealth Games in Auckland, New Zealand in 1990, both to illustrate the white immigration, in an adaptation to a somewhat Celtic tune to which all the British groups danced simultaneously, and then the English Cultural contribution with more authentic material. A video of the performance exists.

V 1.0 © R L Dommett, 1980

V 3.6 © R L Dommett, 2002

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This work initially depended heavily on the research by Whitfield and Powell for Dover, with small details from the other sources. The Wenlock background is mainly from the books on the origins of the Modern Olympiads, plus local material from individuals, particularly Mr Wood and the local librarian in Much Wenlock, as well as the staff of its museum and of the

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Sir D Birley            *Sport and the making of Britain*  
Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1993

### **The Ancient Games**

L & G Poole            *History of Ancient Olympic Games*  
Vision Press, London, 1965 edition

H Schobel            *The Ancient Olympic Games*  
Studio Vista Ltd, London, 1966

L Drees            *Olympia : Gods, Artists and Athletes*  
Translated into English from German  
Pall Mall Press, London, 1968  
The best on the buildings and statuary.

M Finley  
H Pleket            *The Olympic Games*  
The First Thousand Years  
Chatto & Windus, London, 1976  
The best on the background.

J Swaddling            *The Ancient Olympic Games*  
British Museum Publications Ltd.  
London, 1980 (reprinted many times)  
The best and clearest description of site and sports with illustrations  
from models and maps.

V Olivova            *Sports and Games in the Ancient World*  
Orbis Pub. Ltd, London, 1984.

W Sweet            *Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece*  
OUP, New York, 1987 [to see]

D Sansone            *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport*  
University of California Press, Berkeley, USA, 1988.

### **The Cotswold Games**

E Cuming            *The Coteswold Games* (page 306)

A History of the Country of Gloucestershire, Volume 2,  
Victoria History of the Counties of England,  
Reprint by University of London in 1972 of the 1907 edition.

- C Whitfield *History of Chipping Campden and Captain Robert Dover*  
Shakespeare Press, 1958
- C Whitfield *Robert Dover and the Cotswold Games :*  
A new edition of Annalia Dubrensis  
Henry Sothorn Ltd, London, 1962.
- T Coleman *The Railway Navvies*  
Hutchinson, London, 1965.
- R Graves *The Spiritual Quixote*  
Reprint edited by C Tracy, OUP, Oxford, 1967
- ed. E Vyvyan *(Dover's) Cotswold Games, Annalia Dubrensis 1636*  
Tabard Press, London, 1970, facsimile reprint of 1879 edition  
by Williams & Sons, Cheltenham
- Annalia Dubrensis 1636*  
Facsimile by Scolar Press, 1973
- W Vamplew *The Turf*  
A Social and Economic History of Horseracing  
1976 [to see]
- G R Crosher *Along the Cotswold Ways*  
Pan Books, London, 1977.
- F Burns  
(hon. sec.) *Heigh for Cotswold :*  
A History of Robert Dover's Olimpick Games.  
Robert Dover's Games Society, Chipping Campden, 1981.  
(available from the Chipping Campden Tourist Office)  
Based on an MA thesis "An edition of Annalia Dubrensis and  
a History of the Cotswold Games", Sheffield University, 1960.
- R Christiansen *Thames and Severn*  
Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, Volume 13  
David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1981.
- G Powell *The Book of Campden*  
Barracuda Books, Buckingham, 1982.
- Dover's Hill* - leaflet

National Trust, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, 1989

- C Bearman            ***The Ending of the Cotswold Games***  
Thesis
- A & E Jordan        ***Away for the Day***  
The Railway Excursion in Britain 1830 to the Present Day  
Silver Link Publications, Kettering, Northhamphshire, 1991
- K Chandler           ***"Ribbons, Bells and Squeaking Fiddles"***  
The Social History of Morris Dancing in the English  
South Midlands 1660-1900.  
Publication of the Folk Lore Society : Tradition 1  
Hasarlik Press, London, 1993
- C Middleton         ***The Shin-Kicking Games***  
Weekend Telegraph, Saturday 25th May 1996, p 13
- Editors :             ***The Oxford Companion to British Railway History***  
J Simmons            From 1603 to the 1990's  
G Biddle              OUP, Oxford, 1997

Chipping Campden Public Library has a small local history collection of books. The main local source is the North Cotswold local Studies Centre at the Stow-on-the-Wold County Library in the Square. It is backed by the Gloucestershire Collection at the Gloucester County Library.

### **The Much Wenlock Games**

- J Gale                ***Much Wenlock in Victorian Times***  
Shropshire Books, Shrewsbury, 1990.
- S Mullins            ***Dr. Brookes and the Olympics***  
Shropshire County Museum Service  
Information Sheet No.9, 1982.  
(leaflet available from the Much Wenlock Museum)
- Anon                 ***Much Wenlock and the Olympian Connection,***  
***William Penny Brookes***  
***Founder of the Wenlock Olympian Society***  
(leaflet available from the Much Wenlock Tourist office)

Helen Cromarty, a member of the Wenlock Olympic Society, is preparing a booklet to be a biography of Dr. Brookes and the Wenlock Olympic Games.

Much Wenlock Public Library has only a very small collection of local materials and refers enquirers to the Shrewsbury Local History Collection.

### **The Modern Olympiads**

- E A Bland                    *Olympic Story*  
The definitive story of the Olympic Games from their revival in 1896. Illustrated, with an appendix of results and records. Rockliff, London, 1948.
- J Durant                    *Highlights of the Olympics* : from Ancient Times to the Present  
ARCO Pub. London, 1961
- R Bateman                    *The Book of the Olympic Games*  
Stanley Paul, London, 1968
- R D Mandell                    *The First Modern Olympics*  
University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976.
- Lord Killanin  
J Rodeau                    *The Olympic Games*  
80 Years of People, Events and Records  
Barrie and Jenkins, London, 1976  
includes                    *Art and the Olympics* by Henri Pouret, pp 160-164
- M Tyler  
P Scar                    *The History of the Olympics*  
Marshall Cavendish, London, 1980 printing
- J Lucas                    *The Modern Olympic Games*  
A S Barnes, New Jersey, 1980
- G Powell                    *This Great Symbol*  
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.
- B Holmes                    *The Olympic Games in Athens 1896 :*  
The First Modern Olympics  
Grove Press, New York, 1984  
(eyewitness account by one of the world's great travel writers of the time)
- D Wallechinsky                    *Book of the Olympics*  
Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1984
- A Blue                    *Faster, Higher, Further*  
Women's Triumphs and Disasters of the Olympics  
Virago, 1988

- S Greenberg            ***Guinness Olympic Fact Book***  
Guinness Publications, Enfield, Middlesex, 1991
- D Kristy                ***Coubertin's Olympics***  
How the Games Began  
Lerner Ub, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1995
- Susan Wels            ***The Olympic Spirit : 100 Years of the Games***  
Collins Pub. San Francisco, 1995  
Published through Southern Living Magazine a sponsor of the  
Atlanta Games with permission of the Atlanta Committee.
- S Greenberg            ***Olympics Facts and Feats***  
Guinness Publishing, Enfield, 1996
- ***Chronicle of the Olympics***  
Dorling Kindersley, London, 1998

Hilter's 1936 Games generated a masterpiece of Nazi Cinema directed by Leni Riefenstahl. It has been released on video in 1996 by DD Vidoe under the title "Hitler's Olympics, The Nazi Olympics 1936", in two parts, "Festival of the People" and "Festival of Beauty".

There is an Olympic Museum at Lausanne in Switzerland opened in 1993. This is the third of its kind there. Coubertin organised the first which closed in 1970. In 1980 a temporary one was set up. The current one is in a white marble building, tracing the history of the Games and of individual sports. There are exhibits of medals, posters and pins, and many letters and documents.

There is also a museum at Olympia with many of the surviving statues on exhibition. It is also the site of a learning academy run by the Greek IOC members covering athletic training, sports administration and sports medicine.

file : dover.wri /morris

## ANNEX A

### OLYMPIAD STATISTICS

#### THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

No.	Year	Venue	Date	Nations	Women	Total Entry	Sports	Events
I	1896	Athens	06 - 15 April	14	-	211	9	43
II	1900	Paris	14 May - 28 Oct	26	19	1225	24	166
III	1904	St Louis	29 Aug - 07 Sept (01 July - 23 Nov)	13	6	687 t	6	104

IV	1908	London	13 - 25 July (27 April - 31 Oct)	22	36	2035	21	110
V	1912	Stockholm	06 - 15 July (05 May -22 July)	28	57	2541 +	13	102
VI	1916	Berlin	cancelled					
VII	1920	Antwerp	14 - 29 August (23 April - 12 Sept)	29 a	64	2607	21	154
VIII	1924	Paris	05 - 27 July (04 May - 27 July)	44 b	136	3092	17	126
IX	1928	Amsterdam	28 July - 12 Aug (17 May - 12 Aug)	46	290	3015	14	109
X	1932	Los Angeles	30 July - 14 Aug	37	127	1408 t	14	117
XI	1936	Berlin	01 - 16 August	49	328	4069	19	129
XII	1940	Toyko,	then Helsinki, finally cancelled					
XIII	1944	London	cancelled					
XIV	1948	London	29 July - 14 Aug	59 c	385	4689	17	136
XV	1952	Helsinki	19 July - 03 Aug	69 d	518	4925	17	149
XVI	1956	Melbourne	22 Nov - 08 Dec	67 e	384	3342 t	17	151
XVII	1960	Rome	25 Aug - 11 Sep	83	610	5348	17	150
XVIII	1964	Tokyo	10 Oct - 24 Oct	93	732	5558	17	163
XIX	1968	Mexico	12 Oct - 27 Oct	112 f	844	6059	18	172
XX	1972	Munich	26 Aug - 11 Sept	121 g	1070	7156	21	195
XXI	1976	Montreal	17 July - 1 Aug	92 h	1251	6085	21	198
XXII	1980	Moscow	19 July - 1 Aug	80 i	1088	5326	21	204
XXIII	1984	Los Angeles	28 July - 12 Aug	140 j	1620	7078	21	221
XXIV	1988	Seoul	17 Sept - 2 Oct	159 k	2186	8405	23	237
XXV	1992	Barcelona	25 July - 8 Aug	169	2707	9364	24	257
XXVI	1996	Atlanta	19 July - 4 Aug	197	3513	10310	26	271
			The " <i>Centennial</i> " Games					
XXVII	2000	Sydney	15 Sept - 1 Oct					
			The " <i>Millenium</i> " Games					

Numbering of the Olympiads continues whether there is one or not.

Bracketed dates are the full extent, first are the period of core atheltic events.

Numbers of participants for any of the games vary between the sources depending upon which events are included in the total. The above are the claimed latest views of the historians of the Olympics.

### Boycotts

e, h, i, j, k = various politically motivated boycotts by the following number of countries, (7), (24), (45-50), (19), (2) respectively.

### Ins and Outs of Countries

a = Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey excluded.



1992 - 2 - 2 3 19 2 19 7 4 e 1 6 1 1 1 3 4s 2 7 2  
 1996 - 2 - 2 3o19 4 20 8 4 e 1 6 1 1 1 6 5 2 7 2d

m = individual and also mixed doubles (= d)

# = separate indoor and outdoor competitions

p = individual and also pairs competitions

y = yachting - mixed teams accepted from 1908, do not know how often occurred so blank

w = transferred to winter games

e = equestrian - women acceptable on equal terms with men from 1952

s = shooting - women competed in men's skeet and trap events 1968-1992

o = open event for men and women

The women's events in 1900 and 1904 were unofficial, at London they were recognised as official competitors, and at Stockholm there were the first real athletic events, albeit swimming. Women began to organise their sports and holding their own competitions. The first equivalent to the Olympics was in Paris in 1922, which drew 22,000 spectators. By 1928, pressure forced the IOC to add the major sports for women.

1996 also introduced soccer, softball and beach volleyball

2000 to introduce taekwondo

## ANNEX C

### WORK THAT CAN BE DONE

More checks needed in DNB and Grove, etc.

#### The Cotswold Games

Look for references to horse racing at Chipping Campden

Battle of Stow from Stow museum?

Add more on E Porter, find the books.

What is the Edith Brill reference, must be one of two books?

What about a reference to Hobbinol? Where is there a copy, ask the librarians.

What has happened to the contents of the Campden Museum?

Check Railway collection at Winchester.

Check railway records for excursions etc. Clues to sources in book on Railway geneology?

OWW Railway references.

Are there programmes and recent newspaper accounts? Is there an C.C. archivist?

How long in Evesham Journal?

Gloucester County Library & Notes and Queries?

Contact the Chipping Campden and Stow-on-the-Wold libraries. Ask which 19th & 20th century newspapers were relevant.

Ask Keith Chandler on the detail of his search.

Ask Bearman about progress in publishing his thesis.

See Whitfield's History of Campden again.

### **Much Wenlock Games**

More material from the Shrewsbury libraries about the Dr. Brookes and the Much Wenlock Olympic Games to be incorporated. Address and Telephone number?

Include letter from organiser.

What newspapers?

What about the AAA early history?

Examine programmes, etc, for the special years 1950, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1994.

What displays might have been put on?

How long did the special visitors stay?

Has Manchester Library got a copy of their city's Olympics bid with reference to Much Wenlock? They bid in 1986 for 1992 Games, in 1990 for the 1996 Games and in 1994 for the 2000 Games.

Birmingham bid in 1986 for the 1992 Games - try Birmingham Reference Library.

Is there a Much Wenlock volume of the Victoria County History?

### **Modern Olympiads**

Quote NZ Sphere reply on what Auckland danced in 1990.

Does a fuller description of 1904 St Louis exist?

Need more about the artistic events.

British Olympic Association - ask for Swiss address - do they have an archivist or library?

What part did BOA play in UK bids?

Sport in Farnborough Library Libraries index.

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