

BOOK REVIEWS

Matthew Bell and Gary Armstrong (2014). *Steel and Grace: Sheffield's Olympic track and Field Medallists*. Bennion Kearney Limited.

This meticulously researched and unique contribution to the literature on the Olympic movement spans over 100 years of history to portray the lives and times of nine Olympic medallists from the City of Sheffield. The life histories and athletics travails of Harold Wilson and Archie Robertson (1908 London), Ernest Glover and William Cottrill (1912 Stockholm), Ernie Harper (1936 Berlin), John and Sheila Sherwood (1964 Tokyo, 1968 Mexico City, 1972 Munich), Sebastian Coe (1980 Moscow, 1984 Los Angeles), and Jessica Ennis-Hill (2012 London) are richly interwoven with and contextualised by the developing story of the Olympic movement itself from its modest 'amateur men only' status in 1908 to the commercial and all professional global phenomenon that we have today. There is also an unfolding critique of the British Olympic movement and the unwillingness of government for more than seven decades to follow the path of other major sporting nations by providing the necessary training and competition facilities for athletes and investment in the Olympic teams themselves to secure success.

Chapter 1 provides the background to the events on track and field internationally as well as in Sheffield. Baron de Coubertin's restoration of the Olympic principles is eloquently paraphrased by Ethelbert Talbot, a Pennsylvanian bishop, at a service at St Paul's Cathedral at the beginning of the

1908 London Games — 'Our prize is not corruptible, but incorruptible, and though only one may wear the laurel wreath, all may share the equal joy of the contest. All encouragement, therefore, be given to the exhilarating — I might also say soul-saving — interest that comes in active and fair and clean athletic sports.' How was he to know how sternly those principles would be tested in the years that were to follow.

The rise of commercialism (cigarette advertising in 1964, sponsorship on a major scale), the advent of television for the first time in 1936 and the inevitable lure of money to be made that saw amateurism become shamateurism and then full blown professionalism by the 1990s. The role of the state in the UK is critically investigated, for it was not until the governments of Major and Blair that the significance of sport (élite and for all) was recognised in any measure and its potential contribution to national pride and morale identified. Sheffield's hosting of the 1991 Universiade is used to demonstrate the dilemma facing cities who wish to host a major event. The Sheffield City Council invested £150 million in new facilities for the Games, facilities that hosted training camps for athletes attending the 2012 London Games some 20 years later, but some of which have been closed or demolished including the Don Valley Stadium, the principal site for the Universiade. The commitment to the 1991 event remains controversial to this day.

Chapter 2 traces the athletics careers of Harold Wilson (son of a nomadic joiner who finally settled in Sheffield with his large family) and Archie Robertson (son of

a Glasgow-born surgeon who settled in Harthill on the outskirts of Sheffield). Team-mates in the GB and Ireland squad for the London Games of 1908 they were an unusual pairing — Wilson of working class background and Robertson educated at a private school and of a family that boasted two servants. Interlaced with their races and fortunes is the story of the rise of athletics in Sheffield — the founding of Hallamshire Harriers (still going today) and Sheffield United Harriers, two of the first clubs in the country; the history of ‘pedestrianism’ in the city with huge crowds and prize money; and the many venues for athletics located around public houses, recognised stadia like Bramall Lane and Hillsborough and many others. Also emerging in these early years are the very different approaches of the British system with its Victorian gentlemanly ethos and the USA with regimental training methods and heavy expenditure to support their athletes. In the event Wilson, the first man to run 1500 metres in under four minutes, won silver in London and Robertson silver in the 3,200 metres steeplechase. Even the 1908 games were not without controversy — the Americans complaining about bias in the judges resulting in re-run races and hostility between the two teams.

Chapter 3 traces the athletic lives of William Cottrill (born in Woodhouse to a family of potato merchants and steeped in athletics) and Ernest Glover (born in Darnall and coal miner by trade). Both secured medals in the 1912 Stockholm games that once again illustrated the differences in preparation and athlete support. The USA and Germany hired liners to accommodate their athletes during

the Games, the British athletes were put into cheap accommodation wherever it could be found. The poor overall team performance led the Sheffield Daily Telegraph correspondent (‘Harrier’) to express his disgust at the AAA’s organisation of the British team and their failure to learn from the experience of 1908.

Chapter 4 features Ernie ‘Evergreen’ Harper. Born in Clay Cross, Derbyshire he moved to Sheffield from where he won two national cross country titles before winning silver in the 1936 Berlin marathon. A committed ‘smoker’ he refused to take fluids during races. There are vivid descriptions of Hitler’s preparations for the 1936 Games which were to demonstrate the might of the Nazi regime and racial superiority. For the public the Games were emphatically the ‘Jesse Owens Show’ despite the German media’s racist coverage. For his part Harper returned to Sheffield as a hero and moved into a new house thanks to public subscriptions in his honour.

Chapter 5 belongs to PE teachers John and Sheila Sherwood. Sheila Parkin was born in Parsons Cross, Sheffield, represented England in the 1962 Commonwealth games long jump aged 16 years. She went on to take part in three consecutive Games from 1964 to 1972, the highlight being her silver in Mexico in 1968 the year she married John. John, born in Selby, has lived for over 40 years in Sheffield and won bronze in Mexico. What is most striking about their careers is their determination to succeed despite injuries and the absence of decent training facilities and support from the hierarchy for athletes in the North. Sheila had to train on an old

cinder run up in Hillsborough in sharp contrast to the modern surfaces she would encounter at the Games. This enduring ‘fend for yourself’ attitude from the authorities provoked much criticism from athletes who were still amateurs and depended upon the goodwill of their employers for time off to compete.

Sebastian Coe, four Olympic medals (two gold and two silver), world records galore, Member of Parliament, the House of Lords and architect of the 2012 London Games, is the subject of Chapter 6. Coe ran at a time of Olympic boycotts (Moscow and Los Angeles), drug abuse and at the time when the Olympic Movement finally recognised the huge commercial potential that professional athletics offered. Coe himself straddled old and new eras but with endorsements and winnings he became the highest earning athlete of his time. Described by the authors as ‘dignified and articulate...ever the diplomat’, Coe will be remembered for his will to succeed at everything and for delivering London’s finest festival of sport.

Chapter 7 features golden girl Jessica Ennis–Hill, a millionaire by the time she won her gold medal. Born of a Jamaican immigrant to Sheffield in the 1960s and a Sheffield woman almost half his age, Jess was born in 1986. The chapter traces her early career in school athletics; the choice dilemma facing young adolescents between the unremitting training regime elite athletics required and nights out with the girls; her early successes despite her small, scrawny frame; her youthful rivalry with the more senior Kelly Sotherton; and her hugely successful partnership with coach Toni Minichiello. Jess became the face of London 2012, demonstrating the

success of the UK’s post–Major approach to elite sport. Fully funded by the lottery, she could focus on athletics full–time and fully justified that funding in her success as an athlete.

This work takes one urban setting, a city in Yorkshire, to investigate and record the development of the Games through the lives of a few Olympians who achieved glory at one or more Games. The detail of the conditions in which athletes lived, trained and competed is enriched by extracts from original local and international sources such that the reader can share the pain of failure, the glory of success and the frustrations of those competing in earlier times with the organisation of their sport. This is not a local history for its pages carry all the turbulence, intrigue and politics that accompany any major international event over time but the unfolding story is seen through the efforts of these few athletes from South Yorkshire. As such it commands a unique place in the literature of the Olympic Movement.

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Matthew Gandy (2014). *The Fabric of Space: Water, modernity, and the Urban imagination*. Cambridge Massachusetts, London England: The MIT Press.

The *Fabric of Space* is an important book that ought to be read by anyone interested in the future of cities. In 351 pages including an abundant body of footnotes, a rich bibliography, photos and index, professor Matthew Gandy, a geographer who was the director of the UCL urban laboratory, wrote a very convincing fresco

based on a large variety of data and academic literature, completed by novels and artistic works that provide real sensibility, density and realism to the book. Everybody interested in the past and the future of cities as well ought to read his book. The guiding principle is to highlight some main topics of the modern urban making, from the mid-nineteenth emergence of the water engineering to the present climate disorders. He focuses on six cities that have special relationships with water: Haussmann Paris, Weimar Berlin, the colonial and post-colonial Lagos, modern Mumbai, Los Angeles and its concrete river, the inundation of London.

Water is an excellent red thread to describe cities' contemporary evolution: it 'lies at the intersection of landscape and infrastructure, crossing between visible and invisible domains of urban space' (p2); it connects every home to the public technological networks. Sewers, adduction systems, floods and swamps accompany the modern transformations of cities all over the world for two centuries at least, and constitute some of the major technical issues for the following. Water allows to make a world tour of several topics of urban life and policies.

There is no general model of evolution of cities or internal consistency of these models. Water management has often been seen as a constant progress index, following the Hausmanian model of Paris. Some engineers and urban planners, in Nigeria as elsewhere, still believe it. The route to urban modernization ought to be via water infrastructures: draining of marshes in Lagos, Mumbai or London, safe water adduction and sewage disposal

system in every city, flood control in Los Angeles, Mumbai or London, water entertainment and sports in Berlin. It implies a public sphere that would be able to assume expensive public works and that is powerful enough to impose its policies. Thus, during the '40s, the British colonial administration in Lagos tried to eradicate malaria, but it has been a failure and malaria is still active. In Los Angeles, the Congress approved the construction by the Army Corps of Engineers of a fifty-one-mile-long concrete channel to canalise the river that regularly flooded the city. It is now a concrete river which depends on thirteen water departments which hardly agree on coordinated strategies on irrigation or renewal of flood defence. In London, the British government built the Thames Barrier to preserve the capital from the inundation that could come from the estuary, but more and more people, not having confidence in the gigantic dam, work to restore 'idealized ecosystem from the past' (p. 207).

Before the climate crisis, the main contrary to the evolutionist city and the engineering model is the social collapse that occurs more and more. This point is well exemplified by Global South cities: in Mumbai, 'severe disparities in public health can persist because of the array of technological, scientific and architectural innovations that enable wealthy households to insulate themselves from the environmental conditions of the poor' and 'the public health crisis facing slum dwellers does not directly endanger middle-class residents' (p.135). In Lagos, 'the relationship between disease and segregation established in the colonial era persists in terms of middle-class

intolerance (consecutive to the) “miasmatic disdain” for the olfactory proximity of the poor’ (p. 108). Dickens and Conrad remind us that, in social imagination and in reality as well, the Thames estuary was a place of abandonment and social malaise. Consequences of climate change are particularly illustrated by London. ‘There is tacit acknowledgment among many government agencies (...) that increased flood risk is inevitable’ (p. 196). Technical solution will not solve this problem, above all in a country that dramatically weakened the strategic planning role of the Environment Agency. Solution ought to be found somewhere between restoration of the traditional ecological role of the estuary, education, individual responsibility and a renewal of public policies.

Water policies have never been strictly technical. Hygiene, disease control, comfort and entertainment were used to civilize urban people and to control urban space. Water policies make it possible to better understand public policies in general, but also contestation, local autonomy and popular appropriation of the urban space. In many places water exemplifies the contested terrain of local policies, strengthened between the knowledge of engineers and the knowledge of the population. During the 1990s and until now, the question of water played a major role in the emergence of the urban political ecology and its connection with the dwellers. But ‘the intersection, between water, democratic deliberation, and the public realm has been extensively occluded’ (p.14). However, placing democracy and its practical forms in the urban development — particularly

managing water resources, combating disease as malaria or developing ecological responses to reduce the effects of global warming — constitutes probably one among the main issues of the present. In Mumbai local mobilisations organize supplying in drinking water. Nongovernmental organizations convince local authorities to have an emphasis ‘on measures such as rainwater harvesting as a rediscovery of traditional approaches to water management’ (p. 130). Social unrest over access to drinking water and health led by some nongovernmental organizations leads to ‘grassroots campaigns to extend citizenship rights to marginalized communities’ and ‘the deployment of repertoires of local knowledge has allowed some of the poorest communities in the city to become visible for the first time’ (p.130). In Los Angeles an ‘ecological urban citizenship’ emerges that initiates ‘a myriad of grassroots initiatives and new forms of public engagement with nature’ (p.149) where water is a constant feature. They origin with a grassroots organisation called the Mothers of East LA, which was created in 1984 to campaign against polluting and health-threatening industrial facilities near too poor and predominantly Latino or African American residential neighbourhoods (p. 176).

The possibility of new forms of ‘urban ecological citizenship’ (...) requires reflections on the different modalities of power within the urban arena (p. 218). But dramatic events occur even more quickly when an even long time [lags] between events and response. Models lose their practical utility, experts’ knowledge becomes inefficient, sources of power are

dispersed, ‘and we are left to contend with ideological parameters of science fiction imaginary’ (p. 220). Now, ‘water both constitutes and delimits the public realm, not necessarily as a stable or coherent social formation, but as a set of spheres of contestation and negotiation’ (p. 221). Simultaneously, inequalities are widening between suburbs and gentrified downtowns, cities concentrate richness and power to the detriment of their rural hinterlands. Private investments are unable to respond both to the huge needs in water of the population and the devastating impact of climate change. Democratic solutions that would impose themselves to the public sphere and authorities are more necessary than ever.

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Andrew Gorman–Murray and Peter Hopkins (eds) (2014). *Masculinities and place*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Andrew Gorman–Murray and Peter Hopkins have edited a timely and insightful collection to explore the geographies of masculinities. The book, consisting of 26 chapters written by more than forty authors with an Introduction by the editors, has its origin in the annual 2012 conference of the Association of American Geographers in New York. With this proviso, it is easy to see this collection largely as a fresh look at geographies of masculinities — or as referred to by the editors as critical men’s studies — by geographers, particularly cultural and human geographers. Yet, the scope and interdisciplinary nature of the many

chapters defy this characterisation. The book is divided into eighth parts, each focusing on specific aspects of masculinities (place, relationality, home, domesticity, family, care, wellbeing and work). Careful and handsome editing, an extensive index and few photographs add to the volume’s tremendous intellectual assets. The interdisciplinary and international aspects aside, as an anthropologist I was wishing for at least a nodding acknowledgement of some earlier work done by anthropologists in this field (I am thinking about the pioneering work of P. Bourdieu, S. Brandes, G. Herdt, D. Gilmore, for example, or even the classic study of male sexuality and body by B. Malinowski). Some sort of amalgamation of disciplinary conclusions is even more of an issue here since both cultural geographers and anthropologists have made key interventions into the same enterprise: to dismantle masculinity as a taken–for–granted monolithic and hegemonic social category. Nevertheless, the many excellent points brought up in this volume enable me to state that it will be regarded by specialists in the field as a useful survey of where masculinity studies stands at the moment, and where it could progress in the near future.

Gorman–Murray’s and Hopkins’ Introduction offers an overview of the issues discussed in the chapters that follow and of how far masculinity studies have come in the past decades. As they contend, ‘a key focus for geographers interested in masculinity has been about exploring the contested constructions of gender identities and how these are constructed, negotiated and contested in different localities or places...and how this changes over time’

(p. 4). Thus, the aim in this volume is to describe ‘how young men construct and contest their masculine identities and how these are informed by their own identities, such as their class, sexuality, race, and ethnicity’ (p. 4). Most of the chapters speak specifically to these topics asking relevant questions about the formation and contestation of masculine identities in both western rural and urban settings. In part 1, three chapters map these issues elegantly and in detail. Although chapters on Euro–American westernized masculine identities are more numerous, there are studies on the United States, South Africa, New Zealand, Estonia, Fiji, Canada, Australia and the UK, the various locations where masculine identities are played out and the ways in which they are negotiated offers exciting reading material. Noble and Tabar (chapter 5) focus on sexuality and displacement as key factors influencing the identities and lives of Lebanese male migrants in Australia. In the next chapter, Datta and McHwaine contend that Brazilian migrants in London negotiate migrant rights ‘manifested through everyday citizenship practices in terms of overall gendered patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the city in relation to civic participation and access to financial services’ (p. 93). Childs (Chapter 7) discusses personal experiences on ‘trapping on leather’ by reviewing the mostly gay scene of the International Mr Leather (IML) community, an annual weekend event held over Memorial Day in Chicago. He concludes that it is ‘a simultaneously a welcoming and ostracising place and privileges a hyper–masculine, hegemonic male aesthetic’ (p. 120). In a somewhat similar fashion, Chris

Gibson (Chapter 8) describes pervasive cowboy masculinities not as simply a hegemonic male identity but one ‘dependent on interpreting the cowboy figure nota as a singular stereotype, but as a palette of discourses, representations, commodifications and material cultural interactions — from which diverse, unfolding and often contradictory subject positioning emerge’ (p. 125).

Atherton (Chapter 9) observes geographies of military inculcation and domesticity by describing the ‘changing sense of “home” for army men during their military service and subsequently following demobilisation’ (p. 143). Home, domestic labour and family are subjects described throughout Parts 3–5, issues of violence (Meth) homelessness (May), home repairs (Cox), fathering and ethno–poetics (Aitken), grandfathering and ageing (Tarrant), intergenerational relations (Richardson), interior design (Gorman–Murray) and domestic foodwork (familiar to some more as cooking, in Meah) provide fascinating insights on how masculine identities have been changed, forged and negotiated.

Chapters in Part 6, present an interesting look at men in various caring relations. In Chapter 18, England and Dyck describe the interdependence of home–care triads (caregiver, recipient, and professional). The next chapter is a truly collective effort by Brown, Bettani, Knopp and Childs to debunk the myth of gay bars as unhealthy, uncaring and careless. In Chapter 20, Trelle and van Hoven introduce us to various informal and leisure male bonding activities of Estonian rural youth influencing masculinity and the ways in which ‘masculinities are performed in

different spaces' (p. 322); specifically, regular boat trips on different rivers and dancing at the local House of Culture.

Part 7 directly relates to the previous one as chapters take up health and wellbeing as related to masculinity. In Chapter 21, Wilton and Evans address the recent advancement in the field of men's health by looking at the specifics of geographies of drug and alcohol treatment. The next chapter, by Lewis, describes HIV risk and prevention among gay men in Nova Scotia, Canada. In Chapter 23, Keppel analyzes the myth of the New Zealand 'kiwi bloke', a stubbie-wearing, beer-drinking, sheep-shearing, emotionless heteronormative masculinity. Her findings suggest that New Zealand men experience emotional stress, anxiety and depression, which is why a new national mental health program is being created to cater to their needs.

The final part, Chapters 24 through 27, focuses on employment, workplace and the labour market by analyzing their importance on masculinities and masculine identities, attitudes and behaviours. McDowell, Rootham and Hardgrove (Chapter 24) examine the marginality of working-class British youth in a service-dominated economic highlighting how masculinity is marked as a disadvantaged, dangerous and a failure. In Chapter 25, Presterudstuen looks at the Fijian traditional and post-colonial capitalist modes of gendered work. In the last two chapters, Warren examines competing masculinities in the context of surfboard industry in Hawai'i, Australia and Southern California; Pini and Mayes look at the contemporary construction of hegemonic masculinity in the Australian

mining industry by revealing 'how place-related aspects of masculinity and rurality are enrolled in the process of gender identity formation' (p. 439).

Given the value and intellectual scope of *Masculinities and Place*, the shortcomings I mentioned earlier pale in comparison. For those interested in geography and masculinity studies, this text will prove invaluable, and this applies especially to graduate students. For anthropologists, I recommend it to be read in conjunction with similar ethnographically-oriented works such as for instance the volume edited by Cornwall and Lindisfarne (*Dislocating Masculinity*, 1994).

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Susannah Hagan (2015). *Ecological Urbanism: The Nature of the City*. London and New York: Routledge.

This is a book about urban design but one that goes beyond design to include anthropology, politics, governance and environment in a consolidated approach that is termed 'ecological urbanism', a term that the author agrees is not popular but gaining ground. At the outset the reader is told that ecological urbanism is about cultural practice and demands a transformation in thinking from those in charge of the urban environment; architects, planners and power holders. This concept is separated from related terms like urban ecology and sustainable cities; the former is about the green spaces in the city and the latter about maintaining some kind of equilibrium state, but

ecological urbanism is neither. It is a modified view of city planning that recognizes that those in charge of building and maintaining the city as well those living in it, must recognize that 'urban apocalypse' (p150) is to be attributed to the 'four horsemen' of urbanisation, environmental degradation, climate change and wealth being concentrated in the hands of the few. As the majority of the people in the world are moving to urban areas, not always voluntarily, the dreams of a good life are often shattered as many of them are pushed into unliveable conditions, often having to struggle to find their own solutions to survival, like building on places that should not be built on. Such unplanned growth may cause havoc on the lives of citizens as well as on the environment; a tragedy that is being manifest in climate change, urban pollution and manmade urban disasters.

This volume prioritizes the human elements and focuses on the negative aspects of planning and of governance globally; namely power, profit and the essential inequalities of urban life. Solutions may not be found in absolute terms to deal with problems of inequity and injustice, as the author realises that utopian conditions are not possible. Yet as this book tries to explain, design and technology can be used to advantage if planning and architecture incorporate 'an ethics of size, of social mix, of density and public space' (p. 8). In other words urbanism needs to situate itself within the matrix of human culture and its bio-physical environment. One cannot emphasise one at the expense of the other. The author has not talked in metaphoric terms but illustrated each of her arguments

and propositions with examples of real cities and also visions of ideal places like Lilypad.

The first section of the book deals with the definition and understanding of key concepts such as urban ecosystem, cultural ecology, landscape and environment. The second section describes three major models of city planning and design; the Garden city, the city within boundaries and the city unbound; the last being where the rural and urban are seen as shading into one another. The issues raised in this section include the role of citizens, 'civic pride' in maintaining spaces like the garden city and the gradual loss to corporate and capitalist interests that are taking over city planning. This section describes how sacrifice of cultural and human interests to the needs of capital gain and profit has played havoc with many city environments. The compact cities which represent the second model are bound around a strong centre and often the materialist connotations override the cultural and social ones as these are governed by a central power. Here questions of democracy, of control and access to resources may become paramount. In contemporary times, issues of carbon footprints and pollution may be of critical interest as are questions of density, energy and that of relation of city and suburb, both environmentally and politically. The concept of the Broadacre city brings in thinkers and planners like Patrick Geddes and Ian McHarg, whose visions were to incorporate the natural within the social. Geddes had emphasized mapping histories before planning, an innovation not attempted before. One is introduced to the concept of a

‘performative landscape’, where any place is evaluated not as empty but in terms of its cultural and ecological content.

The reader is offered several conceptual models with real examples, like Edge city and the Seed Catalogue, to deal with urban intensification and spread. The seed catalogue is an interesting concept that provides various solutions to varieties of environments like wetlands, brownfields, and so on. The next section describes ideal cities, often small ones that may be real like Auroville or fictitious like Lilypond or simply metaphoric like a future eco-city, the possibility of which remains open.

The book has based itself on a large corpus of factual data, discussing actual planners and architects, real cities as examples and also contains relevant drawings and diagrams as illustrations. It contains historical material from the times of ancient cities to the very modern ones bringing in architects, planners and social thinkers ranging from Vitruvius, Le Corbusier, Howard, Henri Levebre, De Certeau and Marx, to give theoretical depth to the understanding of city planning. The ultimate goal of this book is about power and control and its message very clear; unless there is a synchronization of the top down and the bottom up perspectives, unless there is participation of masses and heed paid to their needs, no city planning can be successful. A dysfunctional city embodies both social and environmental disasters and is ultimately economically non-viable such that even in the interest of future viability, ecological urbanism is a way out and a solution worth considering.

The practicality of wedding technology to humanism, planning to the

human element is clearly demonstrated and makes this slim volume an important resource for both analytical and for applied purposes.

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