

BOOK REVIEWS

The Official Olympic Book Series. Three Volumes (Volume 3 - pending) Published by J. M. Stenersens Forlag A. S. in Oslo, Norway. Reviewed by Tony Bijkerk. In English. \$69 (US) for each of the Three Volumes.

Already in 1989 Stenersens Forlag started with the first book in a series, which will eventually encompass three volumes. The first volume is entitled *Destination Lillehammer*. The book was edited by Mr. Knut Ramberg and the foreword was written by the former HRH Crown Prince Harald of Norway (now HRH King Harald of Norway). In addition to general information about the Norwegians and their beautiful country, this book also highlights the Olympic city, Lillehammer, and its surroundings and it describes the efforts to obtain the nomination for 1994.

The Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl, famous for his historic transoceanic voyages with Kon-Tiki, Ra, and Tigris and who will play a prominent role in the opening ceremonies, wrote the first chapter with the title "Norway in the World." The following chapters give information on the Norwegians as a people, and Norway as the Land of the Winter Sports. This last chapter is especially interesting as it contains many beautiful photographs, most of them historic ones and it also mentions the very specific place occupied in the hearts of all Norwegians by King Olav, himself an Olympic gold-medalist in 1928 in yachting. In this chapter the many Norwegian Olympic successes are highlighted, as well as the early history of skiing and skating. The next chapters, "The Road to the Olympic Games," and "The Olympic City," describe how Lillehammer made it to the Olympics and the history of Lillehammer as a town, including of course **Maihaugen**, the creation of Anders Sandvig. Maihaugen is Norway's largest open-air museum and it contains many valuable old buildings with antique furniture. The famous **Gudbrandsdal** is the subject of the next chapter. The book ends with two chapters going back to the Olympic Winter Games; one describing the impact of the Olympics on Norway and its environment and "The Pieces Fall into Place?" speaks for itself. The first volume has 311 pages and many beautiful photographs, most of them in color. It is fairly large, measuring 30 x 25 centimetres (the other volume is of equal size.)

The second volume of this series was published at the end of 1992 under the title *This is Norway*. Editor for this volume was Arne Bonde. The second volume begins with a foreword from HM Queen Sonja of Norway and the following chapter describes how Norway became an independent nation in 1905, releasing the country from its union with Sweden. The Norwegian Constitution from 1814 is the second oldest in the world, after that of the United States. This chapter is entitled "Norway - Poverty to Prosperity" and as a true friend of this country (we will be going there this year for the 23rd time!), I have read this chapter with surprise as it contained so much new information to me. In the following chapters, titled respectively "Norway as an Industrial Nation" and "When Norway Became an Oil Nation," the story of the Norwegian's people industrious nature and their success as an industrial nation is told. Politics is not complete omitted, as the chapter "Norwegian Politics" one gets a view of this true democracy, which in 1905 chose their own King Håkon VII. Both he and his son, Kong Olav V, were remarkable People's Monarchs, loved by all. King Harald and his family continue in the same tradition. In the current government led by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the amount of female ministers is remarkable - about 50% !

The history of the Norwegian people is divided into a number of distinctly dissimilar periods. The Old Norwegian Culture emerged during the High Middle Ages, between 900 and 1300 AD. Then followed the "Four Hundred Year Night," when Norway was reduced to a Danish colony and its own culture was conspicuous by its absence. With the political liberation of the 19th century, the country experienced an unparalleled cultural renaissance. Norwegian cultural heritage had survived centuries of Danish domination. This is well described in the chapter "Norway's Cultural Heritage: Four Great Artists," dealing with Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg, Knut Hamsun, and Edvard Munch. Who has not listened to the music of the Peer Gynt Suites or read the stories of Ibsen? Munch the painter and Hamsun the writer were also great artists and the description of their lives belongs to this story on their home-country. "A Thousand Years of Norwegian Food" is the next chapter and it is surprising to read how many dishes can be made from fish!

When speaking about Norway how can one forget the explorers on the polar expeditions. Fridtjof Nansen, Otto Sverdrup, and Roald Amundsen are the subject of the chapter "Great Feats in the Frozen Wastes." Having visited the FRAM-Museum with this ship and having looked up the pole mast in Vadsø from which Amundsen's airship *Nobile* started its fateful trek over the North Pole, I read this chapter avidly.

Many philatelic collectors will find the chapter "The Philately of the Olympic Games" the most important one of the book! As a former collector myself, I truly enjoyed it and I saw some very collectible items. Back to the Games themselves, the chapter that follows is entitled "From Albertville to Lillehammer," which tells in detail the story of Norway's greatest triumph ever in the Olympic Winter Games, with the expectation that Norway will surpass this in Lillehammer. "The Obstacle Race" tells the story of the problems experienced by the Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee (LOOC - pronounced look) and the Lillehammer City Council in order to organize the Olympic Winter Games. They were many and not easily solved, but be assured that they XVIIth Olympic Winter Games will be a great success.

The last two chapters in the second volume are "The Art Olympics" and "Gerhard Heiberg." In the chapter on the Art Programme attention is given to many aspects of this programme, but one item should be mentioned in particular and that is the Lillehammer Olympic Aid for Sarajevo! Sizable sums have been collected to aid the children of the beleaguered city. An interesting interview with the President of LOOC, Gerhard Heiberg, forms the fitting end to this second volume. We can certainly look forward to part three of this series, which according to the current plans will appear in September 1994.

[See a special note concerning this book from Tony Bijkerk in the *Members Forum* section]

The Guinness International Who's Who of Sport. Written by Peter Matthews, Ian Buchanan, and Bill Mallon. Published by Guinness Publishing, London, England. ISBN #0-85112-980-3. In English. £14.99. Reviewed by Stan Greenberg.

This excellent book has been compiled by Peter Matthews, aided by Ian Buchanan and Bill Mallon - notably all founding members of ISOH. Believed to be the first of its kind, the book contains data on the career highlights of some 2,600 all-time greats of all major, and most minor, sports. Succinct but detailed information is given, including dates and places of birth, and, where known, of death. There are numerous useful examples of extended information, such as all Sergey Bubka's world records, and Michael Jordan's NBA record.

Entries include men, women, horses, and greyhounds, and include everyone that I could immediately think of. One fascinating entry is on the great singer Paul Robeson, who

was a star American football player and all-around athlete in his youth. However, in a work such as this, no matter how large it may be - and there are over 700 pages - there will always be omissions of those one could argue should be there. To me, as a British athletics enthusiast, it seems strange that sprinter Linford Christie is missing, although the book did go to print prior to his great victory in last year's World Championships.

All in all, the compilers seem to have got the balance right, with plenty of current stars added to heroes of long ago. Undoubtedly future editions will see more contemporary idols included, but personally I enjoyed most the entries on the great names from the past. A list of entries by sport is a useful appendix, and the acknowledgments to those who assisted with the particular sports and countries is in itself a Who's Who of international sports expertise, and emphasizes the scholarship in this work.

Oxford Companion to Australian Sport. Edited by Wray Vamplew, Katharine Moore, John O'Hara, Richard Cashman, and Ian Jobling. Published by Oxford University Press, 1992. 430 pp. In English. ISBN 0-19-553287-2. Reviewed by Paul Jenes.

This 430 page hardback book attempts to be the first comprehensive presentation of sport in Australia. Whilst there have been other books in Australia dealing with multi-sports and history, the Oxford Companion deals with a diverse range of entries and not records and results.

The basic format is alphabetical and covers sport, Games, Institutes, Clubs, Associations, individuals, trophies to name a few. Each entry is a small biography of sch legends as Betty Cuthbert (athletics), Dawn Fraser (swimming), Donald Bradman (cricket) to the legendary cricket barracker of the 1920's and 1930's Stephen Gascoigne, known by everyone as "Yabba" for vocal comments from the infamous "hill" at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

A brief history of each sporting association appears including small sports in Australia such as gridiron and korfbal to animal baiting. Woodchopping gets a much larger entry as it is still very popular but chess and dancing are not included. The book does deal with the major sports in Australia primarily but certainly does not diminish the other sports.

A history of venues such as Kooyong (tennis) and MCG (cricket, football, 56 Olympics) are included along with major events such as the Melbourne Cup (horse racing) and trophies such as the Brownlow Medal (Aussie Rules Football). Disabled athletes are also included. The book is well illustrated with photos of past and present sporting identities, places, events, etc. A very good bibliography is included.

Obviously the editors had to decide who and what to include or exclude which will always create debate. However it is clearly explained in the forward by the President of ASSH Richard Stremski. This is a fine reference book with well-written abbreviated histories which make for good reading.

The Golden Book of the Olympic Games. Written by Erich Kamper and Bill Mallon. Published by Vallardi & Associati, Milan, Italy, 1993. 672 pp. In English. ISBN 88-85202-35-7. \$55.00. In English. Reviewed by John A. Lucas, Ph.D.

Many doubt the aphorisms that "bigger is better." In this special example, ***The Golden Book*** is not only the biggest but by far the best book on the modern Olympic Games, Winter and Summer, that has ever been published. There are a million facts contained in this

encyclopaedia, as well as a hundred splendidly selected and reproduced photographs. For the remainder of this century, it is unlikely there will be a rival to this Kamper and Mallon masterpiece. Erich Kamper is the master encyclopaedist of the modern Olympic Games; his co-author, medical doctor Mallon, is the heir apparent. Both have written scrupulously accurate factual and anecdotal Olympic history texts. Right-year-old Kamper published his first book in 1964: *The Encyclopaedia of the Olympic Winter Games*, followed by *The Encyclopaedia of the Olympic Games; Lexikon der 12,000 Olympioniken; Lexikon der 14,000 Olympioniken* (1983); and *Olympischen Heröen* in 1991. Dr. Mallon (born Paterson, New Jersey in 1952), orthopaedic surgeon in Durham, North Carolina, has written, previous to *The Golden Book, Quest for Gold: The Encyclopaedia of American Olympians* (1984) in collaboration with Ian Buchanan. In 1987 he wrote *The Olympic Record Book* and then two monographs on the poorly documented Olympic Games of 1904 and 1920. For both Kamper and Mallon, their new book is the capstone, thus far, of their careers. For this reviewer, *The Golden Book* is a purposeful, highly skillful melding of encyclopaedia, dictionary, biography, oceans of statistics, and good Olympic Games (winter and summer) history.

The dozen chapters or sections are titled: Abbreviations, Notes and Sources, Olympic Games - Participating Nations, Olympic Winter Games - Participating Nations, Records of the Games of the Olympiads, Records of the Olympic Winter Games, Olympic Records by Sport (Summer), Olympic Records by Sport (Winter), Discontinued and Demonstration Sports and Art Contests, Olympic Records by Nations, Records of the Games of the Olympiads, Records of the Olympic Winter Games, and Ancient Olympic Records. This last portion (possibly it should have been placed first in this book) is only ten pages in length, but it is the most lucid of its kind that I've read. An integral part of the book structure are "believe-it-or-not" (youngest, oldest, most) compilations that nearly defy description. For this reviewer, in some kind of Olympic surrealistic way, these categories of superlatives are both the book's most intriguing dimensions and (after five hours of continuous reading), the most difficult to appreciate. Stating it differently: read this slowly - a little bit at a time.

As stated above, many Olympic aficionados will find the thousand or so categories of "most," "youngest," and "oldest" among the most enthralling contributions of this text. A random look at pages 19-27 reveals that Hungary's Aladár Gerevich (born 16 March 1920, died 14 May 1991) won a fencing sabre gold medal in 1932 and repeated the same victory in 1960, 28 years later (see also pages 19 and 449). He won four additional medals in 1936, 1948, 1952, and 1956! The book is replete with similar Olympic anomalies including Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina's 18 gold, silver, and bronze medals 1956-64 (see pages 21 and 567). We are told on page 24 that an "unknown French boy of less than ten years won a rowing medal in Paris 1900," and that Oscar Gomer Swahn (born 20 October 1847, died 1 May 1927) of Sweden won a shooting gold medal in 1908 at age 60 and a silver medal at age 72 in 1920 at Antwerp, Belgium (see pages 25 and 539). Three men and one woman won Olympic medals in both winter and summer Games, led by Colonel Eddie Pagan, the only one of the four to win gold medals at both seasonal Games. There is not an infinite number of these stories, but it seems so.

Almost nothing has escaped the Olympian minds of the near-perfect team of Kamper and Mallon. What an interesting "Total Medals" categories one finds on page 17 . . . and one must trust the two authors' arithmetic when they note that between 1896 and 1992 exactly 18,189 athletes won 24,585 medals (4,562 men and 20,023 women) in the Olympics. There is absolutely nothing frivolous in this gigantic Niagara of Olympic facts and figures. Dr. Mallon, inspired by Erich Kamper, heads a small cadre of statistical and biographical historians that publish *Citius, Altius, Fortius: The Journal of the International Society of Olympic Historians*. In a single year of publication, they have kept to their word of correcting Olympic Games history and uncovering brand new materials on the winter and summer festivals.

I read this book for profit and pleasure, and not with any laborious eagle eye for errors. The latter is almost not possible for these two best Olympic researchers. A double mistake

appears on page 13, endnote 28. Korean marathoners finished first and third in the 1936 Berlin Marathon, not 1896 as printed, and, puzzlingly, there is no endnote number 28 in the text. I ask this question rather than challenge the authors. Is that really James Lightbody running with a baton in his left hand and wearing an eagle T-shirt on page IV? In this same photographic section, pages VI and VII, explanatory note #17 asks the reader to see three photos of Paavo Nurmi, but only one photo of the Phantom Finn can be found. My last comment deals with the Bishop of Central Pennsylvania (see page 30 under "Olympic Creed"). The statement reads: "Talbot's exact words that day [19 July 1908 in St. Paul's Cathedral] were 'The important things in these Olympics is not so much winning as taking part.'" This reviewer located Bishop Talbot's quite remarkable 2,000-word sermon in The Archives of the Episcopal Church of America and what he said, in part, was:

We have just been contemplating the great Olympic Games [and] a new rivalry is invented . . . well, what of it? The only safety after all lies in the lesson of the real Olympia - that the Games themselves are better than the race or the prize.

We thank the modern day Olympic historian from Stockholm, Ture Widlund, for discovering Ethelbert Talbot's name and his correct title, the Bishop of Central Pennsylvania. [Editor's Note: See Widlund's enclosed article on Ethelbert Talbot] But most of all, we thank the authors of *The Golden Book of the Olympic Games* - Erich Kamper and Bill Mallon. On a gymnast's scoring table, this book has earned a number lying somewhere between 9.95 and a "perfect 10."

The 1936 Olympic Oaks: Where Are They Now?. Written by James Ross Constandt. Published by James Ross Constandt, 13603 Grace Drive, Eagle, Michigan 48822 USA, 1994. 69 pp. In English. \$10.00. In English. Reviewed by Bill Mallon.

The work of producing this journal is considerable. But then I receive a small book like this and it all becomes worthwhile again. Jim Constandt is a new member of ISOH who has produced a small monograph which is a wonderful little contribution to the Olympic literature. While in Lausanne recently, President Samaranch held up a small book which was sponsored by the IOC and which discussed the relations between the IOC and the Town of Lausanne during Coubertin's life (*Les Relations de Lausanne et du Mouvement Olympique à l'Époque de Pierre de Coubertin 1894-1939*, by Christian Gilliéron [1993: IOC]). He commented that this was exactly the type of study of the Olympic Movement which he was trying to encourage. I think he would also approve highly of Constandt's book.

Perhaps not known by all is the fact that in 1936 all Olympic champions were given, in addition to a gold medal, a small seedling of an oak tree. Dubbed the "Olympic Oaks," Constandt in this work attempts to trace all of those trees. There were apparently 130 Oaks awarded (only one in team events). Constandt was able to trace 33 of these, of which 17 are no longer living. His research is highly detailed in the book and was exhaustive. When he located a tree, living or dead, he told its story, usually in the words of the Olympic champion himself. Several pictures of the living trees are also included.

The only complaint I would have is that only about 25% of the trees could be traced, but this is hardly Constandt's fault, as replies from National Olympic Committees and the athletes and their families were sporadic at best. Perhaps with more contacts via ISOH, more of these trees could be located in the future.