

Institution: De Montfort University
Unit of Assessment: 30 History
Title of case study: Sport and the British: The History of Sport and the Public
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This case study is centred on public understanding of the history of sport. Dominant public narratives have tended to trivialise sport's historical role in society. Working with media outlets and public bodies, the International Centre for Sports History and Culture (ICSHC) has utilised its ground-breaking research to enhance public understanding, and raise the profile, of the role of sport in history. The centrepiece of its impact strategy has been to establish its own mass media project, and this was achieved through its collaboration with BBC Radio Four on the 'Sport and the British' series between 2009 and 2013. The main beneficiaries of this impact have been the BBC, its listeners and wider sections of the general public. Alongside the enhancement of public understanding of sports history and the contribution to cultural life facilitated by the BBC series and associated activities, the research of the ICSHC team has informed and influenced popular sports history publishing, and contributed to the policy of public history providers and the content of their sites.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Based at DMU, the ICSHC is the leading research unit for the historical study of sport and leisure in the world. Established in 1996, it is made up of world leading researchers in the history of sport, with a particular focus on rugby (Collins) and football (Carter, Mason, Porter, Taylor and Williams) as well as on sport and heroism (Holt), sport and business (Porter), sport and the military (Mason), sport and international diffusion (Collins, Holt, Mason and Taylor) and women's sport (Williams). Researchers in the Centre have made a significant contribution to the field through monographs, edited collections, peer-reviewed journal articles, theoretical analyses and general histories. They have led developments in the field through editorships of key journals and book series and the creation and joint organisation (Porter) of the UK's leading research seminar series in the field (the Institute of Historical Research's 'Sport and Leisure History', from 2009). Taken together, this research and research leadership has been instrumental in securing widespread recognition within the wider discipline of the importance of sport in our understanding of social, cultural and political change.</p> <p>Professor Collins (Research Fellow at DMU 1998-2006; 2011 - Director of ICSHC; Leeds Metropolitan University 2006-2011) is an international expert in the history of rugby in Britain and beyond. In an interlinked series of three books – <i>Rugby's Great Split</i> (1998, revised edition 2006), <i>Rugby League in Twentieth Century Britain</i> (2006) and <i>A Social History of English Rugby Union</i> (2009) – Collins has outlined the unique history of a sport polarised and fractured around two cultural and athletic antipodes, rugby league and rugby union. These works have established the distinctiveness of the two sports' cultures and demonstrated their relationship to broader social developments within the British working and middle classes over the past 150 years. Collins's most recent book, <i>Sport in Capitalist Society</i> (2013) examines the emergence of modern sport as an integral part of the globalisation of capitalism. Taken together, these studies offer a unique window on the history of class relations in the modern era and represent a key example of the return to class themes among social historians of Britain. Collins's research sits alongside other significant research on sport and social relations at DMU, undertaken by Mason (at DMU as Professor of History from 2000), Porter (Senior Research Fellow from 2004 and Professor of History since 2012) and Taylor (Junior Research Fellow, 1993-2001 and Professor of History from 2007).</p> <p>Professor Holt's (Professor of History at DMU since 1996) research examines the history of sport in Britain and France, with a particular emphasis on comparative sporting cultures, sports heroes and amateur ideology and the diffusion of sport. His co-written <i>Sport in Britain, 1945-2000</i> (2000) built upon his ground breaking 1989 study <i>Sport and the British</i> to explore the contemporary history of British sport, while co-edited collections on European sports heroes and sport and the transformation of Europe has extended his work on comparative sporting histories and cultures. His research is widely debated in sports and leisure and mainstream history journals and has received special attention in the British Society of Sports History, which in 2011 devoted a special issue of its journal to his work and made him one of its inaugural Fellows. Connected research within the ICSHC on sporting celebrity and cultural transfer includes the work of Carter (Senior</p>

Research Fellow at DMU from 2004) and Williams (Senior Research Fellow at DMU from 2005).

3. References to the research

- Tony Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society* (Routledge, 2013): peer-reviewed book.
- Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (Frank Cass, 1998; second expanded edition, Routledge, 2006): winner, Aberdare Prize for sports history book of the year, 1999.
- Richard Holt and Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain, 1945-2000* (Blackwell, 2000). Peer-reviewed book.
- Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter (eds), *Amateurs and Professional in Post-War British Sport* (Frank Cass, 2000), originally published as special issue of *Contemporary British History*, 14:2 (Summer 2000); leading peer-reviewed academic journal.
- Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Longman, 2008): shortlisted, Aberdare Prize for sports history book of the year, 2009.
- Jean Williams, *A Game for Rough Girls: A History of Women's Football in Britain* (Routledge, 2003). Peer-reviewed book.

4. Details of the impact

The ICSHC has used broadcast and print media, and publications for a general readership, alongside a series of public talks and events, to promote information, serious discussion and debate, and to refute myths, particularly among non-sporting organisations and constituencies, about sports history and its place in national cultural life in Britain and beyond.

This approach led to the ICSHC's involvement in BBC Radio Four's series 'Sport and the British'. Broadcast originally between January and March 2012 (i.e. in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games), the series of 30 programmes was developed by members of ICSHC in close collaboration with Lucy Lunt, a senior Radio Four producer and Clare Balding, one of Britain's best known sports presenters. The series aimed to tell the story of 'how Britain made sport and sport made Britain' in daily 15-minute programmes spread across six weeks. Its intention was to explain to a general audience – some of whom would know very little about sport – how sport had changed in step with British society in the last three hundred years.

The ICSHC's standing as a leading sports history research centre led Lunt to make initial contact in 2009 and the series was conceived and developed by the ICSHC in collaboration with Lunt, Balding and other BBC radio staff over the next three years. The ICSHC team, led by Collins and Holt, played a pivotal role in 2009 in pitching the idea for the series to senior Radio Four executives, who have rarely commissioned any sport content on the station.

Following from the commission in 2009, scripts for each of the 30 programmes were written by one or more researchers from the ICSHC (all of whom were employed as series consultants) and centred on information and ideas drawn from their own research. Collins, for example, authored four programmes which drew directly from chapters in *Rugby's Great Split* and *A Social History of English Rugby Union* (Programmes 5, 11, 18 and 28); Taylor's scripts on 'The Dawn of Professional Football' (9) and 'Anyone but England' (17) were adapted from sections in his *The Association Game*; while Holt's 'Cricket and the English Hero' (16) and 'Sport for All' (26), along with Mason's 'War Games' (21) were based on relevant passages of their co-authored *Sport in Britain*. The title of the series was borrowed from – and partly based on the structure of – Holt's acclaimed and highly influential *Sport and the British* (1989). The ICSHC team provided a total of approximately 90 interviews, representing the vast majority of the expert opinion that drove the narrative of individual episodes and the series as a whole.

'Sport and the British' was conceived as the flagship historical Radio Four short programme series for 2012, following the acclaimed political histories of the United States (2008), Russia (2011), and James Naughtie's history of Classical Music (2007). [text removed for publication]

Podcast downloads up to the end of July 2013 were 379,591 in total (246,829 in the UK and 132,762 overseas), with the series reaching #4 (and #1 in the 'Sport and Recreation' category) in the British iTunes Chart at the beginning of February 2012. The series was also chosen for inclusion on the British Airways inflight entertainment package, representing a potential audience of approximately 13 million travellers, of various nationalities, between February 2012 and February 2013. An audiobook of the series was

published by BBC Audiobooks Ltd., and marketed as 'the landmark Radio 4 series', in May 2012.

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The series received considerable attention in the print media, including a front page preview, and 3-page cover story, in the *Daily Telegraph* 'Culture' section (30 Jan 2012), which included quotations from interviews with Collins and Holt as well as Balding. The *Telegraph's* Paul Hayward described the series as an 'epic history', with a narrative of 'impressive clarity'. There were positive reviews, too, in national newspapers such as the *Independent on Sunday*, the *Independent*, the *Observer*, *Daily Telegraph*, as well as reviews and features in specialist publications such as Catholic weekly *The Tablet* (by the novelist and biographer D. J. Taylor), the *BBC History Magazine* and a one-page feature in the *Radio Times*. Twitter and blog comments from listeners included: 'fascinating...genuinely brilliant radio', 'consistently excellent' and 'very compelling'. The series won a bronze award from PODIUM, the further and higher education unit for the 2012 London Olympic Games, in the Best Creative Cultural Project category.

One particularly important impact was on the broadcasters themselves. The series provoked a lively debate in the press, discussion forums, Twitter and on other Radio Four programmes about whether sport was an appropriate topic for the station. The debate featured centrally on an issue of Feedback, Radio Four's forum for audience comment (10 Feb 2012).

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ICSHC members have also used their research to influence and inform the historical narratives of sporting bodies and public history providers. Throughout 2013, the ICSHC collaborated with the National Football Museum (NFM) in Manchester and the University of Central Lancashire to deliver 'Football 150', a series of public lectures to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Football Association. As a result of their research expertise, Holt, Mason, Taylor and Williams have also all been members since 2008 of the influential Historian Panel, which recommends which players and teams to induct to the NFM's prestigious Hall of Fame. The work of ICSHC members has also influenced heritage policy and increased public access to, and awareness of, sporting archives. Due to his ground-breaking research into rugby history, Collins has become a member, and since 2012 the chair, of the Rugby Football League Heritage Committee. The Committee is a part of Rugby League Cares (of which Collins is also Trustee), a charity dedicated to supporting 'the past, present and future' of the game. In March 2011 he was appointed as academic representative to the Rugby Football Union's Museum of World Rugby advisory committee. In these roles, he has advised on the historical aspects of a number of HLF bids and the purchasing of museum items, but has also taken a leading role in mapping out future strategies and policy. Moreover, the Centre has been centrally involved in establishing the Sports Heritage Network with representatives of the UK's major national sports museums and joining with the National Archives in campaigning for the foundation of a national sporting archive. [text removed for publication]

Impact has also arisen indirectly and directly through the embedding of ICSHC research in various popular texts, publications and books for general readerships. The author Helena Pielichaty contacted Williams to use material from her research on the history of women's football in a popular book series for young adults ('Girls United') and for a non-fiction book aimed at school children, *Here Come the Girls* (Collins, 2012). The latter book was selected for the 2013 Premier League Reading Stars initiative run by the National Literary Trust and has been used by charities such as Coaching for Hope in South Africa and Friends of EduSport in Zambia to encourage literacy and reading among girls. ICSHC researchers have also contributed to a resurgence of popular sports history writing. Collins has written and edited two volumes of writing on rugby league history for a general readership and collaborated on a play, *Broken Time*, by the playwright Mick Martin in 2011, based on Collins's *Rugby's Great Split*. Collins acted as historical advisor for the play, provided extensive notes for the performance programme and gave talks to the audience in each of the venues where the play was performed.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Sport and the British Radio 4 Series:

- [text removed for publication]
- Evidence for the position in the iTunes chart is available at: <http://www.itunescharts.net/uk/artists/podcast/bbc-radio-4/podcasts/sport-and-the-british/> (accessed 28/08/13)
- [text removed for publication]
- [text removed for publication]
- Examples of reviews in national media can be accessed via the following links (accessed 14/08/13), all reviews referenced in the text can be made available upon request: [http://www.google.co.uk/#bav=on.2,or.&fp=1a274aa53a42b7f1&q=sport+and+the+British+Daily+Telegraph+\(15+Feb+2012\);](http://www.google.co.uk/#bav=on.2,or.&fp=1a274aa53a42b7f1&q=sport+and+the+British+Daily+Telegraph+(15+Feb+2012);) <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/sport-and-the-british-radio-4-mondayfridayworld-class-brass-radio-2-mondaygreat-lives-radio-4-tuesday-6378426.html>
- For a typical blog post see: <http://jonsmalldon.wordpress.com/2012/01/30/on-radio-4-sport-and-the-british/> (accessed 14/08/13)
- For a typical twitter post see: <http://topsy.com> and enter the search term 'sport and the british radio 4' (accessed 28/08/13)
- Evidence for the PODIUM award is from personal correspondence with the Head of Podium.
- Evidence for the debate around the appropriateness of sport for Radio 4 is <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/feedback/all> - 10 February 2012 edition, entitled 'Too much sport on Radio 4?' (accessed 28/08/13)
- Evidence for Collins' on-going contribution to evolving BBC sports policy can be provided by the Head of Marketing, BBC Sport and Radio Five Live; for his involvement with the BBC Academy, see personal correspondence with Events Producer, BBC Academy (available upon request).

Contributions to the Preservation and Recognition of British Sporting Heritage:

- For more information about the Football 150 series please see: <http://football150conference.wordpress.com/> (accessed 14/08/13) DMU's logo features at the top of the page, and several ICSHC researchers are referred to by name in the following text.
- For more information about the NFM historians panel and the NFM hall of fame please see <http://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/hall-of-fame/about/> (accessed 14/08/13)
- Further information about the Rugby League Heritage Committee and Rugby League Cares can be provided by the general manager, Rugby League Cares. For Collins' involvement see <http://www.rugbyleaguecares.org/heritage> (accessed 23/10/13)
- Museum of World Rugby Advisory Committee, evidence of contribution to historical and heritage issues, please contact the museum curator.
- For more information about the Sports Heritage Network please see <http://www.oursportinglife.co.uk/about-us/sports-heritage-network> (accessed 14/08/13)
- Evidence for involvement in decision over granting of export licence for Sheffield FC book, personal correspondence, Lead Curator, History & Classics, British Library.

Contributions to Popular Texts and Publications:

- For more information about 'Girls United' please go to <http://www.helena-pielichaty.com/girls-fc/> and for more information about *Here Come the Girls* please see <http://www.helenapielichaty.com/books/here-come-the-girls.php> (both accessed 14/08/13)
- For information on Premier League Reading Stars initiative, see http://www.literarytrust.org.uk/premier_league_reading_stars/about_plrs (accessed 29/09/13). Full details of this, and of the use made of the book by Coaching for Hope and Friends of EduSport, are from personal correspondence with the author.
- For a review of Broken Time please see <http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/33625/broken-time> (accessed 14/08/13). Three Stones Media produced Broken Time – see <http://www.threestonesmedia.com/#/1> (accessed 14/08/13).