

Sport, Museums and Cultural Policy

By

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Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This study set out to understand the position of sport as a subject matter for museums and its relevance to wider cultural policy in England between the years of 1997 and 2012. Prior to this investigation, sport in museums has been relatively unexplored within the literature, and where it has been discussed, there is a concentration on sport specific museums. In addition, those working in museums have a limited knowledge and understanding of sport in museums, and their lack of confidence in conducting programme evaluations in general has meant that, consequently, few records exist which discuss sporting exhibitions, and even fewer which allude to its impact. As a result, little is known about: the historical development of sport as a subject matter for museums; the reasons which lead to the creation of sport specific museums and sporting exhibitions; the barriers which prevent museums interacting with sporting collections; and the impact that sporting exhibitions have on wider economic and social objectives. These limitations in our knowledge prevent a coherent argument from being made that sport is a relevant subject matter for museum consideration and, furthermore, that sport in museums supports cultural policy agendas which should encourage greater investment. Therefore, this thesis sought to answer four specific research questions:

1. Why, and to what extent, are sporting exhibitions relevant as a subject matter for museums in England?
2. What have been the main motivations and barriers for the delivery of sporting exhibitions in museums in England between 1997 and 2012?
3. Do sporting exhibitions in English museums attract new and different audiences to traditional museum visitors?
4. What is the impact of sport in museums in England?

This conclusion will examine the evidence presented to answer the four research questions. It will then address the theoretical and policy implications posed as a result of the findings of this study. In addition, the opportunities for future research which were outside of the scope of this study will be explored. Finally the limitations of the study will be discussed.

9.1 Major findings of the thesis

Due to the limited existing evidence available connected to sport in museums, the author conducted in-depth fieldwork to elicit evidence from those working within the museum sector, relevant associated fields of cultural and academic study, and the audiences of museums themselves. The findings of this research provide the following answers to the research questions and represent the major findings of this thesis:

- **Why, and to what extent, are sporting exhibitions relevant as a subject matter for museums in England?**

The evidence suggests that attitudinal barriers towards sport as a subject matter for museums which existed at the time of the earliest sporting exhibitions in the early twentieth century were still present at the time of writing in 2012. Primarily, that museums are places which address issues of 'high' culture, bestowing information towards their audiences rather than including 'low' culture and working together with audiences to explore pertinent issues through museum display. These attitudes place sport outside of the cultural field and, as such, render it irrelevant to museum display. This suggests that sport was viewed predominantly as a working class topic and that only once working class issues were seen as relevant to the study of museums, was it possible for sport to become relevant. Although it is difficult to establish conclusive evidence it appears that the exclusion of sport, at least to some extent, from museum display prior to the 1990s pushed those interested in sporting collections to establish museums specifically about sport as the only alternative. For sport in museums, therefore, there was not only the attitudinal barrier in terms of high and low culture, but also the place of sport in culture at all. It is only once sport becomes a legitimate

study for museums through the development of the field of social history, that we see sport being addressed in museum displays. Indeed, the evidence demonstrates that with the changing perception towards the representation of everyday culture in museums in the 1980s and 1990s, many working within the museum sector began to view sport as an opportunity to reflect this new museology. The use of sport, though, is not purely to reflect lower social classes and as euphemism for the working classes. It is more that sport provides many museums with the opportunity to engage new audiences, for some this may be because the new audiences they wish to engage are from the working classes. Coupled with the changing emphasis in government policy which positioned culture as a key driver for both economic and societal improvement in England and with it a greater access to funding, many working in social history departments in museums, or social history museums themselves, began to display sporting exhibitions as both an ethical and practical development of museum practice. However, even with the inclusion of sport, it is difficult to conclude that this has helped to democratise museums. On the one hand the reflection of sport provided a new angle for museum display and encouraged new audiences across the threshold; but on the other, the display was still one of objects and stories collected by museum staff, usually from middle class backgrounds, and presented subjectively. To present a totally objective exhibition, however, would be impossible. Someone would always need to choose the objects or stories, write the descriptors, and place the objects within the exhibition. Even with the more recent use of community partnerships which attempt to share ownership with the very communities museums are hoping to represent, presents issues of exactly whose history they are presenting. One person within a community may very well have a very different story to tell from another. And so, the role of the museum must be to provide an eclectic programme of subjects and exhibitions which provokes thought and discussion about the objects. Its role is not to tell the absolute truth, because the absolute truth does not exist.

Although, then, this gradual inclusion of sport in museums suggests a positive transition towards reflecting more populist cultures, it also implies that there are issues concerning the views of museum employees towards the topic of sport. Firstly, that there is a connection between the topic of sport and the working classes. The ability of sport to reflect the working classes and culture which is other than high

culture was often argued by the respondents to the author's survey as a valid reason for choosing to host sporting exhibitions. This decision was not based on any derision on the part of the museum staff, predominantly made up of middle class employees, but through their ethical beliefs that museums should display all histories and explore stories of relevance to all. In general, it appears that museums choose to explore the sports most linked to their communities, irrelevant of their links to the working class. Therefore, their decisions to host sporting exhibitions are based primarily on the needs of local communities and the ability of the museum to reflect these communities through objects and display. The Ironbridge Museum for example chose to explore cycling and swimming, whereas the North Lincolnshire Museum in Scunthorpe focused on Football. Where museums had a strong idea about the communities they wished to engage and the collections they wished to use, the exhibitions reflected an insight into localness and relevance to audience need far more successfully than exhibitions which had sought to explore 'low' culture as a bi-product of attracting new audiences.

However, throughout the author's discussions with museum staff, there was an undercurrent of concern from several of the respondents who stated that colleagues had often alluded to the fact that sport was not a relevant subject for museum study. Their responses suggest that there are still employees within the museum sector who view sport as an add-on subject that is not centrally placed to the work of the museum, and not of sufficient gravitas to be given additional funding, time, or human resources to place it as a mainstream museum subject. Therefore, the findings of this research demonstrate that sport in museums is entirely relevant as a subject matter for museums, both in terms of its ability to respond to wider cultural policy, but also to support the ideological stance of those working in the sector towards the representation of varied cultures, however there are still facets of the sector which fail to understand the potential of sport in museums and as such inhibit its growth, development and positioning as a relevant subject matter.

- **What have been the main motivations and barriers for the delivery of sporting exhibitions in museums in England between 1997 and 2012?**

The evidence presented within this thesis concludes that there are two competing over-riding motivations which have led to the development of sporting exhibitions in museums: the position of culture in government policy which has increasingly impacted on the level and type of funding museums are able to receive; and the ideological change in museum perception that places audiences at the centre of museum delivery and, therefore, a need to provide engaging and representative museum display. Although the evidence suggests that there are still attitudinal barriers present within the museum sector whereby some still hold fast to traditional middle class opinions about the role of the museum which positions sport outside of the realm of museum display, in general the perception of the place of sport as part of the narrative of the historical development of society is now accepted, and in many instances, welcomed, amongst museum professionals. Although there are still some working within the sector which believe museums are the domain of the elite classes and should reflect as such within their displays, on the whole the majority of museum professionals recognise the place of the museums as a community venue, with all that entails. This is not to say that museums have become bastions of political correctness which only seek to appeal to new audiences in order to ensure they do not offend certain sectors of society. Quite the opposite, museum staff understand the importance of recognising all histories from all communities in order to make sense of historical events, the present and the future.

In terms of sport specific museums, the evidence suggests that the decision to create these organisations has been primarily due to a need to protect and accommodate a collection amassed by an interested individual or individuals. In addition, the findings conclude that there are a number of additional motivations which effect the decision making process of those working in non-sport specific museums towards creating exhibitions about sport. These include: the need to increase museum audiences; the influence of the London 2012 Olympic Games and a wish to present exhibitions which tied in with this theme; a personal interest in sport being reflected in their professional activity; the opportunity to work with new and different partners; and the opportunity to use existing sporting collections.

The barriers for all museums of all types included a limitation of funding, reflecting their ability to deliver effective exhibitions about sport. A major difficulty in the ability to attract funding into sport in museums is most likely due to the issues concerning the sport and culture debate. Those organisations which traditionally fund cultural activity view sport in museums as the responsibility of sport, and those which traditionally fund sporting activity view sport in museums as the responsibility of culture. Sport as a subject within the narrative of the past of human-kind, is no more and no less relevant than any other subject. Therefore, its place as a subject for museums is obvious. That being the case, although there is an argument for some support from the sporting worlds in the same way, for example, that the BBC may sponsor exhibitions at the National Media Museum, the responsibility for collecting, preserving and providing access to sport in museums rests almost exclusively in the realms of the cultural sector. However, the evidence established that the industry of sport is the major funder of sport in museums, specifically in terms of infrastructure and sport specific museums, with local authorities and funders such as the HLF a close second, supporting project work and temporary sporting exhibitions. Although the evidence demonstrates that sport in museums presents an ideal opportunity to deliver central government cultural policy, it also found that no funding is supplied from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) towards sport in museums. DCMS provides funding for museums with a focus on a range of other subject areas, but not sport. This suggests that although those working within the museum profession on the ground position sport as a subject matter for museums, those working within the decision making and funding structures which surround museums often do not. This presents a significant barrier to sport in museums as without the funding specifically to support activity of this kind, the motivations of those working in museums are irrelevant.

However, although the issue of funding was cited as a significant barrier by those working in museums, the greatest obstacle to them delivering sporting exhibitions was actually found to be their lack of knowledge and understanding of sporting collections, where to find additional objects to support exhibition development, and how to find out more about the objects already held. This lack of knowledge stems from a long-term distancing between sport and culture. The gradual understanding of a field takes

years to establish. Like other subject areas before it, sport has only recently reached a situation whereby museum staff recognise it as a relevant subject and wish to use it within their displays. Consequently, there is a need to support the gradual knowledge development of museum professionals to understand the subject of sport. The difficulty arises when funding for such support is directed by the over-arching cultural bodies whose views seem to continue to believe that sport is not part of culture. This in turn relates back to issues of the ruling elite remaining dominant and directing cultural activity irrespective of the aspirations of the general populace.

Finally, the distance between the fields of sport and culture were consistently cited as key reasons why museum staff found it difficult or impossible to host exhibitions about sport. Although the sport industries are the predominant funder of sport specific museums, the evidence concluded that their priority is towards the activity of the present rather than the past. As such, there is limited awareness on the part of those working in sports governing bodies and related organisations about what sporting collections are, where they are held, or how to look after them. In addition, although those working in sporting organisations are aware of the heritage of the sport, interested in it, and believe it is important, in reality the pressures on delivering organisational targets coupled with restricted finances mean that the heritage of the sport is usually a low priority. Consequently, those working in museums often find it impossible to build partnerships with sporting organisations, and, combined with their limited knowledge of the collections, this represents a significant obstacle to delivering a sporting exhibition. This again is evidence of the schism between sport and culture which sees the difficulty both sectors find in accepting their place within the others world.

Therefore, the findings of this research suggest that there have been many motivations and barriers which have helped and hindered the development of sport in museums over the last twenty-five years. The wish to increase museum demographics and with it funding presented a significant impetus to museum development, but at the same time an outdated belief held by those in power, has meant that funding for sport in museums has lagged behind other areas of museum activity, for example learning and community engagement. This is unfortunate, because the inclusion of sport in

museums, as explored in the next section, has the ability to support so many other museum agendas, at the same time as being explored as a subject in its own right.

Therefore to ensure that sport in museums is able to continue to flourish, there must be a number of factors put into place. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Increased advocacy and awareness of the role and importance of sport in museums across a range of objectives including health, education, and sports participation. Only by developing a strong argument about the role of sport in museums and demonstrating this argument using findings from the sector will it be possible to raise funding and support in the long-term for sport in museums, effecting attitudinal change towards sport as a subject matter for museums.

1. Increased funding specifically for sport in museums. At a time when funding for museums is in significant decline, museum services are often able only to draw on previous experience and programming. Consequently, they do not have the time or money available to explore new avenues of work, and those which have not already developed sporting programmes are unlikely to do so without investment specifically linked to sport.

2. Professional development of museum staff, particularly in the fields of knowledge development and creating partnerships with sporting organisations. One of the main issues affecting the delivery of sporting exhibitions is the lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of the museum staff. Only by increasing this knowledge and supporting professional development of those working in museums will this change.

3. Increased understanding of sports sector workers on the importance and relevance of sporting heritage, leading to increased partnerships. Although many of those working in the sport sector recognise the importance of the sporting past, they often fail to understand what that heritage actually is, how to protect it, or who to work with to develop sporting exhibitions about their sport. They also find it difficult to build in the space within their working time to allocated time to the material culture of

their sport. The knowledge of those working in sport is invaluable in the support of museum exhibitions about sport, as such this is a vital component to the success of sport in museums in the long-term.

4. Increased partnerships between museums, sports sector professionals, academics and community organisations. Only by ensuring there is a free-flowing dialogue and opportunity for discussion and exchange between these organisations will it be possible to truly support the understanding of the material culture of sport sufficiently to inform the development of sport in museums.

- **Do sporting exhibitions in English museums attract new and different audiences to traditional museum visitors?**

Chapter two explored the changing emphasis within the museum sector which placed a new importance on the relevance of the subject matter presented in museums to audiences. One of the key objectives of this new focus, in parallel with the repositioning of culture as central to government policy from the early 1990s, meant that museums intended to increase the number and type of their audiences. Prior to this time, museum audiences had tended to be drawn from wealthy, white backgrounds. However, with the changing emphasis on inclusion from cultural policy, museums were faced with the need to demonstrate their appeal to all audiences in return for funding. The evidence presented in Chapter four demonstrates that museum professionals believe that the subject of sport is a clear opportunity to encourage new, and different, audiences to visit museums and this influences their decision to host sporting exhibitions. Because many of these new audiences are from the social classes defined as C2DE, in other words, the working classes, there is a temptation to suggest that museum staff choose only to explore sport as a subject matter because it increases visitors to their museums. However, the evidence presented here demonstrates that where sport is used purely to engage new visitors, without the other barriers which prevent museum visiting being removed, the resulting exhibition is likely to be unsuccessful. Therefore, museums which choose to democratize their venues, and which choose to ensure that they are relevant to different audiences, whether for reasons of ethical belief or financial necessity must

put time and investment into removing all barriers. Indeed, many national museums still do not choose to cover the subject of sport, even though they are almost entirely funded by the government purse. In contrast, many independent museums, whose income, whilst sometimes linked to cultural policy through the need to draw in additional investment, is largely reliant from private sources, have chosen to explore the theme of sport because it is relevant to the narrative of the story their museum hopes to tell.¹ Therefore, the findings of this research suggest that the use of sport is primarily used to explore the wider issues concerned with a museum's particular mission statement, rather than as a tool to increase visitor numbers in exchange for greater financial rewards.

The evidence explored in Chapter six concludes that indeed, sporting exhibitions do attract non-traditional audiences to museums. This is largely because audiences of sport, especially those sports which can be most popular with the working classes such as football, rugby league, and boxing, are not traditional museum visitors. In relationship to those sports where audiences can be classed as traditional visitors, for example tennis, rowing, and cricket, there is less of an opportunity to attract new museum users. The fact that museums tend to explore a range of sporting themes, with the inclusion of middle class sports, suggests that they do not address the theme of sport purely to appeal to working class audiences. However, although the evidence establishes that sport in museums can support audience development in museums, it also concludes that the two most substantial museum programmes directly funded through cultural policy in this period, Renaissance in the Regions and Strategic Commissioning, delivered between the period of 2003 and 2011, had no activity related to sport in museums whatsoever. Furthermore, the evidence also argues that on its own, the use of sport is not sufficient to effect a change in museum audience demographics. There are many barriers which exist to prevent audiences visiting museums, and museums which fail to address these additional barriers are likely to produce unsuccessful exhibitions about sport, irrespective of the exhibitions relevance to the audience.

¹ For example the charitably run Bowes Museum and its *Our Sporting Life* exhibition.

- **What is the impact of sport in museums in England?**

Chapter seven discussed what is meant by impact including how this thesis defines the term, and Chapter eight continued to establish that sport in museums provides impact on a number of different economic and societal objectives. Although there is evidence that sport specific museums provide a positive impact to their local economies and non-sport specific museums are a shrewd investment on the part of funders in terms of cost per visitor, it is in terms of societal impact that the greatest evidence of the impact of sport in museums can be measured. The evidence explored in chapters four, six and eight establishes that: sport in museums increases the number and type of audiences to museum venues; supports an increased knowledge and understanding of historical subjects in addition to sport itself; increases the enjoyment of audiences; has the ability to change attitudes towards both museums and sport; supports local communities by improving dialogue and encouraging a greater understanding of different identities; increases opportunities for audiences to understand about health and wellbeing issues; and strengthens the ability of audience to become involved in public life.

To date, the findings uncovered within this research demonstrate that one of the most influential effects on sport in museums has been the London 2012 Olympic Games. Although it is difficult to surmise the true legacy of the Games in terms of sport in museums because it is too recent to truly determine, it is possible to conclude a range of positive and negative consequences brought about as a result of the Games. The initial concern held by the museum sector that the Games would divert funding away from the sector and towards sporting activity seemed to disappear as the Games became increasingly imminent. This resulted in a significant number of exhibitions about sport being mounted within museums, and different types of museums, across the country. The evidence suggests that these exhibitions encouraged museums who had not previously exhibited sporting collections to think about the role of sport within their organisation for the first time. The findings also suggest that these exhibitions led new and different audiences to access museum collections with the potential for this to be translated into repeat visits to museum venues. So the Games had a significantly positive impact to galvanise the museum sector to deliver sporting exhibitions which

created new opportunities for audiences, at the same time as broadening their own understanding of sporting collections and the place of sport as a relevant subject in wider museum delivery.

However, all of this happened on the periphery of the official activity of the Games and largely as a direct result of the *Our Sporting Life* programme which was not part of the official Cultural Olympiad. Funding was not allocated from LOCOG to encourage sport in museums activity and the rhetoric used within the Games documents suggests that sport and culture were still viewed by the organising committee as separate fields. This tension between the two spheres again demonstrates that sport and culture were still not perceived to be one and the same. This in turn had a direct impact on funding streams for sport in museums with cultural funders viewing sport in museums as the responsibility of sport and vice versa. In addition, there seemed to be a clear feeling from the museum sector that the subject of sport was neatly packaged up and delivered in 2012, meaning that there was a danger that future activity, at least for some time, would concentrate on other areas of work, and therefore, ignore sport. In effect, the many events that took place as a result of the Games, raised awareness of new collections, brought in new partnerships and audiences, and raised expectations about the use of sport in museums would become one-off events with little longevity or future impact on the position of sport in museums. This pattern was witnessed in the case of Euro '96 and the Commonwealth Games, where it was not until the next major sporting event that sport was rolled back out as a major subject for museums. However, as a direct result of these findings, the author created the National Sporting Heritage Day. The aim of the event being to provide an annual focus for sport in museums, drawing on the legacy and interest of the Olympic Games and keeping alive the interest and awareness about the importance and potential for sport in museums. This has resulted in a front page article and major feature in the September 2014 *Museums Journal*.² As Kevin Moore, Chair of the SHN and Director of the National Football Museum said "it is difficult to remember a time when the *Museums Journal* has, if ever, featured sport on the front cover and certainly not with such a big focus on sport in museums inside".³ It is hoped that this will continue to support the long-

² Mulhearn, D. *Game On*. September 2014. p.20-25.

³ Moore, K. Introduction. *Sports Heritage Network Conference*. September 19th 2014.

term attitudinal change within museums which positions sport as a central subject matter for research, collection and display outside of major sporting event activity.

Therefore, the London 2012 Olympic Games influenced museums other than sport specific organisation to begin to address the theme of sport. The lack of financial investment and official recognition however of the importance of sport in museums, meant that there was a significant danger that sport would be seen as a one-off activity only to be used to support major sporting events, and not as a mainstream subject relevant to the museum sector on a day-to-day basis. The resultant findings of this research however, led to a long term programme being established which will continue to demonstrate the value of sport in museums as an indirect result of the Games.

9.2 Implications for the Literature

As discussed above, the literature to date has shown little interest in the subject of sport in museums. Vamplew has argued on a number of occasions for the importance of sport in museums and the need for it to be taken more seriously as a subject matter for study.⁴ In addition Moore has argued that sport in museums has the potential to support non-traditional audiences to museums and that this, and other impacts of sporting exhibitions, should be explored in more detail.⁵ However, the two texts which currently exist with provide an exclusive study about sport in museums primarily focus on sport specific museums and a wider discussion about the narrative of sport in museums and collections used, rather than providing a contextualised understanding of how sport in museums is relevant and why.⁶ In addition, although several articles have explored the historical development of sport in museums to some extent, there

⁴ See for example Vamplew, W. 'Australian sports history: a research agenda'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no.2 (1989): p.252.

⁵ See for example Moore, K. 'Marketing Sports Museums: Attracting New Audiences?' *Revista de Museologia* 22, no.2 (2003a): pp.29-32; Moore, K. 'Sport in Museums and Museums of Sport: An Overview.' 93-106, in *Sport, History and Heritage: An Investigation into the Public Representation of Sport*, edited by Hill, J., Moore, K., and Wood, J. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012.

⁶ Hill, J., Moore, K., and Wood, J. *Sport, History and Heritage: An Investigation into the Public Representation of Sport*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012; Phillips, M. *Representing the Sporting past in Museums and Halls of Fame*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

has been no detailed study which has charted the changing landscape of sport in museums, and the reasons behind these changes.⁷ Finally, within museum studies literature the author was unable to find a single example which discussed the topic of sport in museums, apart from Moore's *Museums and Popular Culture* written in 1997, despite the fact that the concentration on museum studies over the last fifteen years has focussed on museums and audiences, and that the findings uncovered in this study demonstrate that those working in the museum sector value sport to increase audiences.⁸ Therefore, this study responds to the calls of Vamplew and Moore and expands on the existing knowledge of the sport in museums by: producing a clear argument of the relevance of sport as a subject matter for museums; a concise historical development of sport in museums including an understanding of the motivations behind its development; findings which establish that sport in museums attracts non-traditional museum audiences; and evidence that demonstrates the impact of sport in museums against wider cultural policy objectives evaluated using museum methodology.

9.3 Policy Implications

Cultural policy in England between 1997 and prior to 2012 focussed on the ability of cultural institutions to demonstrate their impact to wider societal and economic agendas. However, with the election of the coalition government in 2010 and also the economic recession, the position of cultural policy became less important and funding for cultural activity began to shrink. As a result, there was even less funding available for cultural activity and this had the effect of rallying cultural institutions to finally understand that evaluation and the ability to demonstrate the effect of cultural activity

⁷ See for example Boorish, L., and Phillips, M. 'Sport history as modes of expression: material culture and cultural spaces in sport and history'. *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 16, no.4. (2012): pp.465-477; Gammon, S. 'The Construction of Sport Heritage Attractions'. *Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice* 3. No.1 (2011). Accessed on April 23rd 2013.

<http://www.tourismconsumption.org/JTCPVOL3NO1RAMSHAW.pdf>; Johnes, M. 'British Sport History: The Present and the Future'. *Journal of Sport History*. 35, no.1 (2008): p.66; Moore, K. 'Sport History, Public History, and Popular Culture: A Growing Engagement.' *Journal of Sport History* 40, no.1 (2013): 401-417.

⁸ Moore, K. *Museums & Popular Culture*. London: Leicester University Press, 1997. pp.106 – 134.

on wider objectives, it is vital to ensure long-term sustained funding.⁹ Consequently, the findings of this research position sport in museums as a mechanism for delivering cultural policy objectives in England. Specifically, sport in museums increases the type and number non-traditional audiences to museums and impacts on social outcomes relating to health and communities. In addition, the findings suggest that sport in museums also impacts on the economic status of a locality. As such, sport in museums supports economic and urban regeneration policies.

9.4 Recommendations for future research

The defined time and resources available for a PhD study necessitates that there will be areas which arise that are outside of the boundaries of the research. In terms of this study, several opportunities for future research have been presented and would be worth future investigation. These include:

- What is the economic benefit and impact of sport in museums?

The findings detailed in this study suggest that there is an argument to be made that sport in museums supports both the financial opportunities of the museum delivering the exhibition, and also the wider economic infrastructure of the locality in which the museum is situated. An exploration of more precisely what this economic benefit is, and how it impacts on both the museum and the local environment would be beneficial.

- What is the position of sport in museums in England when considered in the wider context of sport in museums internationally?

Sport in museums is not unique to England. There are many examples of sporting exhibitions and sport specific museums in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, let

⁹ See for example Arts Council England (ACE). *The Contribution of the arts and culture to the national economy*. London: ACE. 2013. Accessed May 7th 2013.

alone the rest of the world. Consequently, it would be valuable to explore how sport in museums in England compares with its representation in other countries.

- What are the thematic approaches to sporting exhibitions in museum in England and to what extent to these differ depending on the host museum?

Within this study it was possible to identify a number of different approaches to the delivery of sporting exhibitions, for example the use of sporting heroes as the predominate focus, or the science of sport. It would be interesting to explore how different museums choose to approach the theme of sport in museums and what affect these diverse approaches have on the development of the use of sport as a subject matter for museums in general. In addition, it would be valuable to understand if different approaches have distinct impacts on wider social objectives.

- What are the interpretation methods used to display sport in museums in England, and to what extent does this impact on the audience the museum, or exhibition, attracts?

There are many diverse types of exhibition display and interpretation methods used in museums. For example the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum (WLTM) displays the history of tennis in a very different way to the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) Museum's presentation of cricket. An analysis of the types of methodology used and how these effect the perception of the audience towards the subject matter would be extremely interesting in terms of understanding more about both museum display in general, as well as the presentation of sporting objects.

- What are the opportunities for sport in museum to support educational curricula and wider adult learning opportunities?

The limitations in time and scope of this thesis meant that a detailed exploration of sport in museums in relationship to education policy, curricula, and wider learning objectives was impossible. A discussion of how sport in museums can respond to

education objectives would be an entirely separate and complete study of significant importance.

9.5 Limitations of the study

The perception of evaluation on the part of both the cultural and museum sector was singularly the most significant limitation on this study. As discussed throughout this thesis, the museum sector widely disregard the need to evaluate or share the findings of any evaluation it conducts, largely using excuses of time and funding constraints. However, this only succeeds in limiting any evidence of the impact of museums for further study, and prevents the construction of an argument for future increased funding into the museum sector, thus perpetuating the cycle of poor understanding of the impact of museums and restricted funding as a consequence. Due to this one particular factor, the evidence of the impact of sporting exhibitions is extremely limited, and piecing together the historical development of sport in museums especially complicated. In addition, there are few records of the existing practice of sport in museums, and where they do exist they do not explore the impact of the subject. Finally, reports relating to museum impact and development, such as those concerning Renaissance in the Regions, have been lost, because the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) failed to keep adequate central records, and when it was abolished, those it did hold were mainly eradicated at the same time. The author had prior knowledge of much of this activity. However, the opinions of one researcher without the documented findings which spanned over ten years, whilst important, are not sufficient.

The author's fieldwork therefore aimed to fill the gaps presented as a result of the absence of any other existing relevant evidence. The limitations of the fieldwork are discussed in chapter one of this study, and include the author's own preconceived opinions about the subject matter, although this is true of any researcher and cannot be avoided in any academic study. In addition, the self-selection of those who chose to respond to the author's surveys meant that they most likely already had a positive opinion of sport in museums which would have affected their answers. However, it was not felt that this would greatly skew the findings of the surveys due to the type of

information being requested, and the author sought out the opinions of other relevant respondents as a consequence. Furthermore, the self-selection of the members of the general public who attended the focus groups meant that the resulting attendees had a bias towards already being museums visitors. However, in general, the composition of the groups meant that this actually supported discussion around the barriers to museum visiting rather than inhibited it.

In terms of the *Our Sporting Life (OSL)* evaluation the limitations were in how the evidence was first provided to the *OSL* team. Due to the changes in the methodology half way through the project, and the focus on quantitative results rather than qualitative findings, the raw data made it extremely difficult to extract enough information by which to base a robust argument. However, with the addition of follow up conversations and detailed examination of the raw data, it was possible to identify enough relevant evidence to build a case of how *OSL* responded to both the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) and Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs).

Therefore, although there are unavoidable limitations to the evidence presented in this study, as with any study of this kind, the author developed additional strategies to reduce the risks posed, resulting in findings that can be considered to be both reliable and representative.

9.6 Conclusion

The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates that, although the topic of sport was largely excluded from museums until the latter half of the twentieth century, it is beyond doubt a relevant subject matter for museums in England. The exploration of the historical development of sport in museums within this study establishes that sporting exhibitions are nothing new. However, the use of sport in museums was inhibited by both the ideological nature of museums in favour of high culture, and the exclusion of sport as something 'other' than culture until the 1990s. Although, this perception gradually thawed throughout the latter part of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first century, the exclusion of sport from both the rhetoric and practice of the London 2012 Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad

demonstrates that even at the time of writing, there are barriers which separate sport and culture and therefore effect sport in museums. The findings, however, also provide the first conclusive proof that sport in museums attracts non-traditional audiences to museums and offers impact across a range of economic and societal objectives. As such it is the first study of its kind to contextualise the subject matter of sport in museums within cultural policy contexts, specifically in this case, between the years of 1997 and 2012. As a result, this thesis presents a well-defined argument that sport in museums responds to cultural policy objectives and with it, provides support for increased funding from public sector finances towards sport in museums.

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(VII) Survey Responses

(a) Responses to Appendix I

Anonymous. Curator. National Badminton Museum. April 15th 2012.

Chadwick, A. Curator, MCC Museum, Lords. April 1st 2012.

Dodd, K. National Hockey Museum. May 12th 2012.

Fare, M. Creator. National Fencing Museum. April 1st 2012.

Godfrey, H. Curator. Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum. April 1st 2012.

Mains, P. Director. River and Rowing Museum. April 1st 2012.

Moore, K. Director. National Football Museum. May 1st 2012.

Rowe, M. Curator. World Rugby Museum, Twickenham. April 1st 2012.

Snelling, G. Curator. National Horse Racing Museum. April 12th 2012.

(b) Responses to Appendix II

Anonymous. Aberdeen Arts Gallery and Museum. April 12th 2012.

Anonymous. Birmingham Museum and Galleries. May 8th 2012.

Anonymous. Bradford Industrial Museum, Bradford. April 26th 2011.

Anonymous. Buxton Museum and Art Gallery. March 13th 2012.

Anonymous. Devon Heritage Service. April 10th 2012.

Anonymous. Denbighshire Heritage Service. April 14th 2012.

Anonymous. Dudley Museum and Art Gallery. March 12th 2012.

Anonymous. Fusilier Museum, London. March 20th 2012.

Anonymous. Ironbridge Museums Trust. May 10th 2012.

Anonymous, Curator. Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum. April 1st 2012.

Anonymous. Lower Saxony Sport History Association. February 25th 2012.

Anonymous. Manx National Heritage. March 20th 2012.

Anonymous. Museum of Liverpool. November 30th 2011.

Anonymous. National Badminton Museum. April 12th 2012.

Anonymous. Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service. April 5th 2012.

Anonymous. North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe. October 24th 2011.

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Anonymous. Surrey Heritage. May 12th 2012.

Anonymous A. Weston Park Museum, Sheffield. November 1st 2011.

Anonymous B. Weston Park Museum, Sheffield. November 1st 2011.

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Baggaley, S. Curator. Gallery Oldham. March 20th 2012.

Broadbent, J. Curator. Wigan Leisure and Tourism Trust. April 1st 2012.

Daber, A. Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. April 2nd 2012.

Done, S. Liverpool Football Club Museum. March 6th 2012.

Douglas, O. Curator. Museum of Rural Life. May 11th 2012.

Ferry, G. Toon Times Project Coordinator. Newcastle United Foundation. May 15th 2012.

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Keogh, H. Leeds United Museum. March 12th 2012.

Light, R. University of Huddersfield. 30th March 2012.

Owen, B. Curator. Royal Welsh Fusiliers. May 1st 2012.

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Perrin, L. Somerset Cricket Museum. May 5th 2012.

Poulton, G. University of Manchester. March 1st 2012.

Ure, F. Leicestershire City Council. April 1st 2012.

Wiley, M. Manchester United Football Club Museum. March 5th 2012.

(c) Responses to Appendix III

Anonymous. England Athletics. April 10th 2012.

Anonymous. British Gymnastics Association. March 19th 2012.

Brewer, C. Hockey Wales. March 19th 2012.

Gosling, C. England Korfball. February 29th 2012.

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(d) Response to Appendix IV

Anonymous Bradford A. Bradford Industrial Museum, Bradford. April 26th 2011.

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Anonymous. Museum of Liverpool, Liverpool. November 30th 2011.

Anonymous. North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe. October 25th 2011.

Anonymous Sheffield A. Weston Park Museum, Sheffield. November 1st 2011.

Anonymous Sheffield B. Weston Park Museum, Sheffield. November 1st 2011.

(e) Responses to Appendix V

Bentley, A. Museum Development Officer. Yorkshire. May 1st 2012.

Dhami, G. Museum Development Officer. Area unknown. February 13th 2012.

Douglas, O. Museum Development Officer. Reading. February 10th 2012.

Grundy, L. Surrey Heritage. March 2nd 2012.

Neathey, E. Museum Development Officer. Bath and North Somerset. March 3rd 2012.

Perrin, L. Trustee, Somerset Cricket Club Museum. March 2nd 2012.

Turnpenny, M. Museum Development Office. Yorkshire. March 2nd 2012.

(VIII) Oral Interviews and Speeches

(a) Oral Interviews

Anonymous. England Athletics. Telephone conversation. April 25th 2012.

Anonymous. British Gymnastics Association. Telephone conversation. April 15th 2012

Anonymous. Curator. National Media Museum, Bradford. In conversation with the author. July 18th 2013.

Benson, M. Director. Beades World, Newcastle; ex- Director of Ryedale Folk Museum. In conversation with the author. July 2012.

Bentley, A. Museum Development Officer, East Riding of Yorkshire. In conversation with the author. May 12th 2012.

Callahan, M. Curator, Bradford Industrial Museum. In conversation with the author. September 20th 2011.

Chadwick, A. Curator, MCC Museum. In conversation with the author. April 12th 2012.

Funnel, P. Director, Oakmere Solutions. Response to survey by the author. March 12th, 2012.

Gallagher, P. Curator. National Museums, Liverpool. In conversation with the author. 30th April 2012.

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Terwey, M. Chair. Social History Curators Group. In conversation with the author. April 2012.

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Willoughby, D. Learning Co-ordinator, Bradford Industrial Museum. In conversation with the author. November 10th. 2012.

Willoughby, D. Learning Coordinator, Bradford Industrial Museum. In conversation with the author. August 4th 2012.

Willoughby, D. Learning Coordinator, Bradford Industrial Museum. In conversation with the author. July 8th 2014.

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Appendix I: Survey Conducted with Sport Specific Museum Staff

Section A - About your institution, building, staff and governance

A1. What is the name of the sports museum / collection?

A2. What is the address, including post code and county?

A3. When was the museum established?

A4. Were there any specific decisions that led to the museum being located where it is?

A5. How and why was the museum established?

A6. How would you describe the size and type of museum building?

A7. How many visitors attend each year?

A8. How is the museum governed?

A9. Could you outline how many members of staff the museum employs, including job titles, whether full-time, part-time, or temporary project staff?

A10. Do any members of staff currently hold / or are working towards museum qualifications, for example the AMA or a Museums Studies award?

A11. Does the museum work with volunteers and if so, how important are they to the museum? Are there any barriers to prevent the museum from working with volunteers?

A12. Does your museum have a mission statement (please attach)? If not, what would you say is the main purpose of your museum?

Section B – About funding

B1. Who funded the initial development of the museum and why?

B2. How does the museum sustain its running costs? And if possible, are you happy to disclose these costs?

B3. Does the museum regularly attract external funding for project and development work? If so, could you provide brief examples?

B4. Does the museum have any financial support from local authorities or wider government departments?

B5. Does the museum have any financial support from sporting bodies or individuals?

Section C - About your collections and exhibitions

C1. Does the museum have a collections policy? If so are you happy to attach a copy in response to this survey?

C2. Does the museum display temporary exhibitions? If so how often and how do you decide on themes?

C3. Where are the museum collections stored?

C4. Is the museum accredited? Does the collection hold designated status? Do you feel these are relevant to your museum or are there issues for sports specific museums in attaining them?

C5. Does the museum work with individual collectors of sports artefacts and archives to support its work? Could you provide brief details and the importance of this area of work?

Section D – About your audiences

D1. Who would you describe as the museums target audiences and why?

D2. How easy is it to get to the museum and is it accessible?

D3. Do you evaluate who visits and why? If so, what type of evaluation do you use and what do you do with the results? Would you be happy to share the findings with this research?

D4. Does the museum deliver specific learning and outreach opportunities? Could you provide brief examples?

Section E – About partnerships

E1. Does the sporting body and / or club have input in the museum's day-to-day running? Does it have any other direct input? Please give brief details.

E2. Does the museum have input from sporting professionals linked to the sport? Please give details.

E3. Does the museum work in partnership with any other organisations? Please give details.

E4. Does the museum conduct any research to support the museums or sports development? Please give details.

E5. Does the museum work with local authorities or any other cultural institutions, or museums? Please provide brief details if so.

Appendix II: Survey Conducted with Non-Sport Specific Museums Staff

1. Please provide your name, organisation name, and contact details.

2. What type of museum do you represent?

3. Has your organisation hosted an exhibition about sport in the past? If so, please provide details.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Further details

4. What are the reasons likely to encourage you and your organisation to deliver an exhibition about sport in the future?

5. What are the main problems and issues that you currently face in terms of delivering sports programming?

6. Do you think the museum sector values sporting heritage collections on a par with other heritage collections?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe

7. Have you heard of the SHN? Are you aware of any programmes conducted by the SHN? Please provide details if so.

Appendix III: Survey Conducted with Staff of Sporting Organisations

1. To what extent does your organisations view sporting heritage as important?
 - Very Important
 - Quite Important
 - Neither important nor unimportant
 - Quite unimportant
 - Very Unimportant

2. Is anyone in your organisations specifically responsible for heritage?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Further details

3. Has your organisation ever been involved in a project concerning the heritage of sport?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Further details

4. Do you know where the collections relating to the history of your sport are held?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Further details

5. What, if any, do you think are the responsibilities of sporting organisations towards the heritage of their sport?

6. What are the main factors which inhibit your organisation from having more involvement in the heritage of the sport?

Appendix IV: Questionnaire Conducted with Museum Visitors¹⁰

1. Would you consider yourself to be a museum visitor?
2. What was the main reason for your visit to the museum today and why?
3. Have you visited a sporting exhibition before?
4. Would you consider visiting an exhibition about sport again?

¹⁰ The questionnaire was kept deliberately short to ensure the visiting experience of the respondents was not inhibited.

Appendix V: Survey Conducted with Museum Development Officers

8. Please provide your name, organisation name, and contact details.

9. What type of museums do you represent?

10. Do you think the museum sector values sporting heritage collections on a par with other heritage collections?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe

Please provide additional comments:

11. In your opinion, what do you believe are the motivating factors leading museums to deliver exhibitions about sport?

12. In your opinion, what do you believe are the main barriers preventing museums from delivering exhibitions about sport?

13. Have you heard of the SHN? Are you aware of any programmes conducted by the SHN? Please provide details if so.