

The SABR(UK) Examiner

Number 6



October 1995

THE JOURNAL OF THE BOBBY THOMSON CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH (UK)

SABR(UK) 1995 AGM Report

On Saturday, 6 May 1995, most of the world was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. While the final defeat of fascism in this century was not far from our minds, another, smaller, group spent the sweltering weekend at the SABR(UK) Annual General Meeting, celebrating the return of baseball, the history of baseball, and just baseball in general.

Our venue again was the wonderfully quirky and extremely hospitable Kings of Clerkenwell pub, appropriately situated in the heart of Clerkenwell in the heart of London. And being a wonderfully sunny Saturday, of course there was a wedding at the church right outside the door. Life goes on despite anniversaries and AGMs. SABR(UK) had had some smaller meetings in recent months, e.g. the Burns Night meeting and the Mark Alvarez get-together, but this is the first time in a while that the entire group could get together.

Because of the timing, the Bobby Thomson Chapter accepted the apologies from a number of key members who could not be present that weekend. After these were read, the Chapter took care of some of the usual business, like reading the last meeting's minutes (I don't think there were any, because we lack a Secretary).

Mike Ross then stood up and gave the Chairman's report. He said that the Chapter had to be clear of its identity and its purpose. Unlike American fans, he said, British baseball fans don't have the opportunity to absorb baseball all the time. In the States, with baseball everywhere for half the year, SABR becomes a much

more historical group. In England, it is often the only chance our members have to talk baseball. He noted that the Chapter's main function is research, and reinforced his interest in the Spalding Trophy. Mike also said that he was trying to bring Monte Irvin over from his home in Florida, but that funding would have to be found.

And speaking of funding, Andy Parkes gave his Treasurer's report. He said our assets were in four figures, and that's counting the decimals. Fundraising continues to be an issue. Andy mentioned that funds could be raised through auctions of certain items, such as his famous Stretford team's memorabilia. He pointed out that, as 1997 would be the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Saints, he would try to organise a reunion of the players.

Research then took centre stage. Patrick Carroll, Chairman of the British Baseball Historical Committee, gave his report. He talked about the Burns' Night meeting at Mike Ross' flat; you'll read about that later. One central issue that interests the Committee is the 'mists of time' period, otherwise known as the 'black hole' of British baseball. Why did it die out as a mass sport in the country of its origin? Patrick said that answers to these questions would produce an essay which ultimately would be the introductory chapter of a book on the history of baseball in the UK and Ireland.

Patrick then listed projects that were in varying stages of completion. Among the topics of study were Welsh baseball, Francis Ley (who built Derby's "Baseball Ground"), semi-pro ball in the West of England, the London major league of the mid-30's, and the 1938 five-game Test Series between England and America. On the last topic, Ross Kendrick's widow was still

alive and a request through SABR in the USA had produced someone who had researched seven members of the U.S. team. Interest was mentioned in the connections between baseball and cricket, a complex and technical topic. Mike Ross reported on his unusual encounter with a man who claimed to have inside information about a long-sought-for relic. It was a real Maltese Falcon episode; see Mike's column on Page 2. "This is the stuff dreams are made of", Bogart said.

Martin Hoerchner then reported on the Newsletter. He said that it had no regular schedule, but that the publication would depend on his prior time commitments and numbers of articles submitted for publication. There was applause from all present when the Examiner was described by a member as "excellent". Martin of course humbly demurred.

After the official business ended, the meeting continued with a viewing of an "inning" of Ken Burns' "Baseball". A vote was taken, and the Fifties was the decade chosen to watch. A section of the silent film "Speedy" was also shown, in which Harold Lloyd picks up Babe Ruth and whizzes him through the streets of New York. Afterwards Tony Darkin, SABR's reigning statistician, gave an exacting baseball quiz. It was won by a team headed by Patrick Carroll, but only after a tie with the team headed by Martin Hoerchner was settled by a tie-breaker. Yeah, we wuz robbed!

The food, as always, was incredible, and the guv'nor, John Eichler, showed hospitality supreme. It was an afternoon thoroughly enjoyed by all present. Baseball is and always shall be, despite the troubles.

- Martin Hoerchner

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR *by Mike Ross*

Those of you who attended the very first meeting of SABR UK, or read the subsequent minutes, portions of which have been published by Martin Hoerchner in the Examiner, will recall mention of the Spalding Cup which disappeared around 100 years ago. At the time I sort of jokingly suggested that we should try to discover its whereabouts, and to treat the cup as the Holy Grail of British Baseball.

I believe - let's say dreamed - the mystery of the disappearance of the cup and its subsequent discovery would, lo and behold, take us back to the golden days of yesteryear, and with accompanying clues we would learn how the game went astray and failed as a British sport.

In other words, the Philistines who stole our cup and trivialised its significance surely are the very villains that squelched the growth of the game. This is heady stuff for our SABR research and part of our *raison d'être*.

Well, all joking aside, a few clues have miraculously surfaced that may lead us closer to the cup's whereabouts and perhaps to the other lost cups.

It all started one evening months back with a phone call from a gentleman claiming to have rare baseball photos for sale. The price suggested that they were printed on gold. When I asked to

see copies of them I was told I could not, that he feared he would turing him with two trophies. One has been identified as the Spalding Trophy which he claimed to be in his possession. I believe he has a Spalding Trophy, not the Spalding Trophy.

I have been rather sworn to secrecy so cannot name the man or the city but I am at liberty to say that the trophy was discovered several years ago in the safe of a burnt-down hotel somewhere in Britain, and that the gentleman in question was originally writing a book on sports history for his particular locale. He was not aware of who Spalding was, and when he learned about the British tour of 1874, he was surprised to find out that the affair was common knowledge to most SABR members.

Recently, in hopes of getting him out of the closet and into the SABR mainstream, I sent him a National Pastime and Research Journal hoping he'll disclose his full secret. I also sent him a illustrated article with the caption: "the London Thespians, UK Champions 1893-4", who are seen with "the Spalding Trophy...contested until 1896 when it was stolen. It has not been seen since."

This trophy, along with the one from the burnt-out hotel, are the ones pictured with his grandfather on his wall of his home. He has since disclosed that his tro-

phy had been stripped of its baseball trimmings (here's the travesty) and was converted into a soccer trophy, before being retired to safety, who knows when. Furthermore there is mention in said article of the "John Moores Trophy" presented to Moores in 1930's by John Heydler, President of the National League in the U.S., for the benefit of British amateur baseball. This article states that the Moores trophy is "safely under lock and key in Liverpool". Another item quoted at the first meeting has it that "the [Moores] trophy went missing in the Liverpool area around 1959".

A.G. Spalding, the master himself, presented his cup to honour the champions of British baseball. One has to wonder how baseball's heavenly growth in America and subsequent attempts at promotion over here, with all the enthusiasm put to the task by Spalding & Co., failed to make a lasting impression.

Thinking further into the calamitous situation: the game principally was invented in England and taken to America by its own sons, and developed there. With its impeccable blood lines which lead back home to the dreamy fields of yore, how did it fail to impress the land of its fathers, cousins, uncles, brothers, sons and daughters? It is all a bit odd if you ask me. I would like to understand it. I need to understand it.

OFFICERS AND GENTLEMEN

Chairman: Mike Ross, 2 Maida Avenue, Suite B, Little Venice, London W2 1TF (Tel: 0171 723 9848; Fax: 0171 266 3166) **Treasurer:** Andy Parkes, 84 Hillingdon Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 8PJ (Tel and Fax: 0161 865 2952) **Procedural Advisor:** Hugh Robinson, 567 Kings Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 8JQ (Tel: 0161 864 1250) **Chairman of British Baseball Historical Committee:** Patrick Carroll, 10 Court Barton, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7HP (Tel: 01460 74183) **Publications Editor:** Martin Hoerchner, 3 Sheridan Crescent, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5RZ (Tel: 0181 467 2828; E-Mail: Martin@mhoerch.demon.co.uk) **European Co-ordinator:** Laurens De Jong, Carnisseweg 61, 2993 Ad Barendrecht, Netherlands

THIS SABR'D ISLE

by Martin Hoerchner

I've just come back from holiday in Greece. "Yeah", I hear you grumble, "that's why the *Examiner's* late!" So I found myself in a bookshop with old books from many countries, looking for something to read. And I found it. I was not familiar with the title of the book - "The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant" - but I did recognize the straddling figure of Gwen Verdon on the cover. Yes, it was the book that the film "Damn Yankees" was based on.

The story is based on the legend of Faust, a man who sold his soul to Satan in exchange for having his dream fulfilled. I confess to never having seen the film - I didn't read Faust either - but the book fascinated me. It was first published, if not written, in 1954, and my copy was a 1958 printing. The story's events take place in the year 1964, ten years in the future from the writer's standpoint. Given this perspective, it's bound to be interesting. And it was fascinating. This book is uncanny in some of the predictions. It has the Yankees taking 10 straight pennants after 1954. That prediction was incorrect. The Yankees only took 9 out of 10. This figure is close to impossible (certainly it has never been approached), yet it was almost foretold. The book's prediction of the year that broke the Yankee's stranglehold on the American League is also stunning, though again a tad bit off. 1965, not 1964, marked the end of the Yankees' dynasty. And the team that overthrew them was, as the book foretells, the Washington Senators, though transplanted to Minneapolis and renamed. And the team they faced in the World Series was, again predicted, the Dodgers, though also transplanted.

One entry I found really topical. In it the Devil confesses his hatred for the Dodgers (so we have something in common, except for that other thing), and says that is why they have never won a World Series. But then there is a footnote stating that "he means, of course, the *Los Angeles* Dodgers." This comment could only have been written in 1958 - the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers won the World Series, they moved after the 1957 season, and the 1959 Los Angeles team won the World Series (against the White Sox, the only year in that time span the Yankees didn't win the pennant).

So I'm writing this now, just finishing up this train of thought, and I've got AFN on behind me. Then I hear that a certain player just signed a multi-year contract with the Devil.

No! I swear that's what he said! Can it really be another amazing prediction? The announcer continues, and I realize he's talking about the Devils, the ice hockey team from New Jersey that won the last Stanley Cup. Whew! That was a close one. My nerves are shattered. There should be a law against Satanic nicknames. The Devil is not some cute little cuddly red guy with horns and a pitchfork. He is the evil force that stripped New York of two beloved baseball teams in 1957.

I'll tell you who sold their soul to the Devil - those slimeballs that sold off the name of Candlestick Park. I don't care how much money they got, I'll never call it "Widget 6 Stadium". I note with increasing dismay the continuing commercialization of the game. Many ballparks have now started putting huge advertisements right behind the backstop, in constant view of the television camera whenever the pitcher delivers to the batter. This cheapens the game. A player of the stature of Ken Griffey Jr. is dwarfed by a gigantic "Schmaltzputz Lager" sign. I will resist this movement every step of the way. This seems to be the standard in Europe (yes, including Britain), but it's not right. Commercial interests shouldn't overshadow the game at hand. I know many speak of fondness about Gem Blades and Abe Stark, but this new wave is more insidious. And in case that sounds a bit paranoid, a few weeks ago I heard a baseball broadcaster telling us about the "NRA play of the game". What's next, the Michigan Militia Most Valuable Player? It's time to fight back!

Maybe it's about time I change the subject, before I get into big trouble. You never want to give them an excuse to go after you. One of the things I really enjoy about being a SABR member in England, is that you get a chance to meet a lot of interesting SABRites from the States. When they travel over here, the first thing they do is to look up the local members. A few of us got to meet Mark Alvarez, the Publications Editor for SABR (and my international counterpart, I suppose) at Mike Ross' a while back. He was younger than me and full of interesting stories. And early this year, in a pub off Russell Square, I met Tom Schrier, who had just gotten his article "The Evolution of the Diamond" published by SABR. He is also the Chair of the Pictorial History Committee.

Old photographs fascinate me. I told Tom about how I scanned an old baseball photo, i.e. converted it to a

computer image. The photograph was that one taken in Hilltop Park, showing the Highlanders in a game against the White Sox. You could use the computer to magnify any section you wanted, to go as deep as you wanted, and then move on to another section. It was amazing the detail you could get. It was like that machine in "Blade Runner" that he used to scan the photograph, panning and zooming to voice commands. You could read the smallest of the outfield advertisements. You could see the detail of the uniforms, close enough to, using Mark Okonnen's Baseball Uniform book, narrow down the time frame to a single year. It was 1909. This kind of examination brings out the character and flavor of the time in sharp detail. It was like being there. It was like travelling in time.

The last time I was in the States, I saw a TV show called "Sliders", about four people who go zapping around to alternate realities. It got me thinking; these sorts of *what-ifs* fascinate me. I wondered what it would be like if the same spark that ignited baseball from a being a children's game to become a fully-developed adult pastime - if it had happened in Britain instead of America. Well, a copy of the SBBR Examiner from that alternate reality dropped on my doorstep last week, no doubt through a pan-dimensional wormhole. I'll quote from it:

"This has been a good year for British Baseball, and both Leagues showed healthy profits. A lot of the excitement was caused by the pennant race between the Canterbury Royals and the Oxford Athletics, which went down to extra innings on the last day of the season, and the resurgence of the once-lowly York Mets, who took the crown in the Northern League. The Dean of baseball writers, Mike Ross, said it was the most exciting year for baseball drama he'd ever seen. Patrick Carroll, the head of SBBR, said "I don't think baseball has had this exciting a year since 1826, the year of the triple pennant playoff contest." Andy Parkes, manager of the Stretford Saints, said he'd never seen a year like it, even though his team was pipped at the post. Tony Darkin, compiler of the Baseball Encyclopedia, stated that records were set in many offensive and defensive categories, while Martin Hoerchner, editor of the Sporting News, said that his staff of writers enjoyed this year more than any since their beer allowance was taken away."

Starting from Home

I chose the title deliberately to indicate that this is my first attempt, however minor, at baseball research, and that this is a look at an aspect of the possible origins of baseball in this country. It arose from Mike Ross' article in the January 1995 Examiner, "1847 Sporting Life articles shed light", and seeks to firm up some of the references cited in that article. As such, this piece can hardly be regarded as a piece of original work, but it might assist fellow SABRites in their work.

What intrigued me about Mike's article initially was the reference to an order of Parliament during the reign of Edward III banning the playing of 'base' around the Palace of Westminster. I had just been working with the volumes of Parliamentary material of that period and was sure that they would contain the full, official version of the relevant order. The index to the Parliamentary Rolls records not one but 14 (!) different orders of this type during Edward III's reign. In these early days, Parliament did not meet on a regular 5-yearly cycle as we have nowadays. The King would summon a Parliament, which may have lasted only a number of days or weeks, as and when he needed money or other assistance from his subjects, so new Parliaments may have been summoned a number of times a year, and orders, such as the one in which we are interested, will have been issued anew each time.

As SABR is a research body, I will disturb the flow of my narrative to provide you with the full citation for those who may wish to look up these orders: Rotuli Parliamentorum pp64a (1331-2), 66a-b (1332), 68b (1332), 103a (1339), 107a (1339*), 112a (1340), 117b (1340), 126a (1341), 135a (1343), 146b (1344), 157a (1346), 164a (1347*), 235a (1350-1) and 236b (1351-2). All the orders are in Old French, which, with Latin, was the official language. The

English translation of the order, taken from the first recorded instance in 1331-2, is as follows:

"Our Lord the King forbids on pain of imprisonment that any child or others should play in the area of the palace of Westminster, during the Parliament which is summoned there, at bars or other games, nor at knocking people's hats off nor laying hands on them nor any other hindrance which would prevent each person from peacefully going about their business." All the orders cited use this phraseology, some with minor variations, except the two marked * above which do not have the "a bares" phrase in which we are interested. It is the "bares" which Mike's article cites as 'base'. The crucial question is "Does the Old French word 'bare' either mean 'base' in a baseball sense, or refer to some game which itself can be regarded as an ancestor of baseball?"

The entry for 'bares' in Robert Kelham's "A dictionary of the Norman or Old French language" (1779; Tabard Press, 1978) is "at bars, a game so called." Not very helpful beyond confirmation that it is a game. So, if in doubt, go to the obvious source, the Oxford English Dictionary. Under 'bar' it has an entry for the plural 'bars': "*the game of 'prisoner's base' or 'chevy,' The players, after choosing sides, occupy two camps or enclosures, and any player leaving his enclosure is chased by one of the opposite side, and, if caught, made a prisoner. Still used in northern dialect*". It cites several examples back to c1400.

Dr Samuel Johnson's "Dictionary of the English Language", has an entry for 'base' in similar terms: "*An old rustick play, written by Skinner, bays; and in some counties called prison bars; in which some are pursuers, and others are prisoners, one party being opposed to another in the trial of swiftness. It is yet in use.*" [Todd's ed., 1827]. Johnson also cites several uses of the word, including

the quotation from Shakespeare's Cymbeline cited by Mike in his article:

Posthumus: "*He, with two striplings, - lads more like to run The country base than to commit such slaughter, With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer Than those with preservation cas'd, or shame, Made good the passage;*" [Act V scene ii lines 19-23; editions vary]

For our purposes, the most interesting citation is the OED's reference to Strutt's Sports and pastimes, also cited in Mike's article. Joseph Strutt's "The sports and pastimes of the people of England" (1801) is a beautiful book with stunning illustrations, and it contains a lengthy description of 'base' or 'bars' or 'prisoner's bars' or, citing Johnson's Dictionary, 'bays'. Unfortunately there were no illustrations of the game that I could see. As this book may not be easily accessible to all SABRites, I will quote at length from Strutt [pp61-3]:

Base "*is a rustic game ... and as the success of this pastime depends upon the agility of the candidates and their skill in running, I think it may properly enough be introduced here. It was much practised in former times, and some vestiges of the game are still remaining in many parts of the kingdom.*" Strutt then says that the first mention he had found was the Parliamentary order in Edward III's time, and, as his text is virtually word for word that of the 1947 TSL article quoted by Mike, it is safe to assume that the TSL piece was based, at least in part on Strutt's book. Strutt also quotes the lines from Cymbeline, again in the form cited in the TSL rather than the version quoted above. Base was "*most assuredly played by the men, and especially in Cheshire and other adjoining counties, where formerly it seems to have been in high repute.*"

Strutt then explained how the game was played. "*The performance of this pastime requires*

(or back to basics)

by Barry Winetrobe

two parties of equal number, each of them having a "base" or home, as it is usually called, to themselves at the distance of about twenty or thirty yards. The players then on either side taking hold of hands, extend themselves in length, and opposite to each other, as far as they conveniently can, always remembering that one of them must touch the base; when any of them quits the hand of his fellow and runs into the field, which is called giving the chase, he is immediately followed by one of his opponents; he again is followed by a second from the former side, and he by a second opponent; and so on alternately, until as many are out as choose to run, every one pursuing the man he first followed, and no other; and if he overtake him near enough to touch him, his party claims one towards their game" [Strutt here has a footnote: "It is to be observed, that every person on either side who touches another during the chase, claims one for his party, and when many are out, it frequently happens that many are touched."] "and both return home. They then run forth again and again in like manner, until the number is completed that decides the victory; this number is optional, and I am told rarely exceeds twenty."

He then recalled a game of base he saw "about thirty years back", i.e. c1770, "in the fields behind Montague House, ie the British Museum". This game was played by "twelve gentlemen of Cheshire against twelve of Derbyshire, for a considerable sum of money, which afforded much entertainment to the spectators". Strutt described the Essex variation of base "with the addition of

two prisons, which are stakes driven into the ground, parallel with the home boundary, and about thirty yards from them; and every person who is touched on either side in the chase, is sent to one or other of these prisons, where he must remain till the conclusion of the game, if not delivered previously by one of his associates, and this can only be accomplished by touching him, which is a difficult



Barry Winetrobe pictured with our Chapter's namesake, Bobby Thomson

task, requiring the performance of the most skilful players, because the prison belonging to either party is always much nearer to the base of their opponents than to their own; and if the person sent to relieve his confederate be touched by an antagonist before he reaches him, he also becomes a prisoner, and stands in equal need of deliverance." He concluded his short piece by noting that "the addition of the prisons occasions a considerable degree of variety in the pastime, and is frequently productive of much pleasantry."

Now, it is all too tempting when doing any form of historical research, especially that which seeks the origin of something, to

'make the history fit'. We can see in the 'prisons' a form of dugout; the London game Strutt saw between representatives of two Northern English counties for "a considerable sum of money" may resemble a mixture of barnstorming and the early days of professional baseball in the USA, and so on. Whatever the truth of these theories, it does seem that Mike's suggestion that 'barrs',

'base' or 'prisoner's bar' may be part of the origin of the running game in baseball is very possible. Of course running and 'tag' games must be as old as humanity itself, and there are no doubt many variants in every country, and we cannot pounce too eagerly on anything which happens to contain the word 'base' or something similar to it. Look at any good dictionary and you will see the many derivations of the word, most of which have nothing to do

with the origins of baseball. I had a brief moment of excitement on a recent visit to Hampton Court Palace, which has a courtyard area called 'Base Court'. Unfortunately it simply means that it is the lower, secondary courtyard.

The idea that baseball is an amalgam of several games, i.e. running games and ball-and-stick games, seems very plausible. If 'barrs'/'base' is part of that origin, then at some point not only did the two aspects of running and ball-and-stick games combine, but so did the methods of scoring of each game. How these amalgamations took place, presumably a long slow process over centuries, may well be the answer to the question of the origins of baseball.

The Best Young Talent in Baseball by Tony Darkin

This is a study that was first done by Bill James in his 1984 Baseball Abstract. The object of the exercise is to try and identify which teams have the most young talent. I make no apologies for reporting that the 1984 effort based on 1983 statistics predicted that Cal Ripken, Rickey Henderson, Robin Yount, Lloyd Moseby and Wade Boggs were the American League's five most valuable pieces of real estate. If it worked then it should work now.

I do not wish to get technical by writing down all the mathematical formulas involved, but I feel that a little background is necessary before going any further. Bill James invented a stat called the Value Approximation Method. The VAM measures player performance in a series of scales; for example 1 point for hitting .250, 2 points for over .275, etc. There are other scales for slugging percentage, stolen bases, defensive position, fielding average etc. For non-pitchers there are thirteen different calculations and for pitchers five. The system does not claim absolute accuracy in identifying the best player. It attempts only to sort seasons into groups of similar value. If you look at groups of players who are valued at 12 or 9 or 5 you will find them to be comparable. The tool can be used to evaluate which club has had the best farm system in recent years, how good is a team's General Manager in trades and can help provide answers to many other questions. Using VAM James then developed a formula which, when using a player's age and value, would predict that the average remaining Value Approximation Method would be say for a 25-year-old player with an AV of 12. This method is called Reservoir Estimation Technique and this is what I have used for the study.

The first charts show the ten players expected to have the brightest futures in both leagues:

NL Hitters:

1.	Bagwell	114	Houston
2.	Mondesi	80	Los Angeles
3.	Bichette	72	Colorado
3.	Bonds	72	S Francisco
5.	Sosa	71	Chicago
5.	Williams	71	S Francisco
5.	Piazza	71	Los Angeles
8.	Cordero	68	Montreal
9.	Bell	63	Houston
10.	McGriff	60	Atlanta
10.	Biggio	60	Houston

AL Hitters:

1.	Thomas	154	Chicago
2.	Lofton	125	Cleveland

3.	Griffey	114	Seattle
4.	Belle	107	Cleveland
5.	Baerga	71	Cleveland
6.	Rodriguez	68	Texas
7.	O'Neill	66	New York
8.	Fryman	57	Detroit
8.	B. Williams	57	New York
8.	Salmon	57	California

There are no pitchers on either list. This is because predicting their futures is difficult and generally they do not stay in the game as long. Four of the five players that lead the American League are almost certain to go to the Hall of Fame. The 1984 study was done when Ripken had played 285 major league games, and Boggs 257 - less than two full seasons. The system has worked incredibly well. Ten years down the road it will be interesting to see how well these guys have done. An average regular player would normally have an Approximate Value of 9 or 10, so do not be surprised if Frank Thomas is still around in the year 2010 aged 42.

As stated earlier, pitchers are harder to figure. The top five American League pitchers in the 1984 study were Richard Dotson, Jack Morris, Dan Petry, LaMarr Hoyt and Storm Davis. Having evaluated over 800 players based on their 1994 stats I will list the top ten pitchers in both leagues.

NL Pitchers:

1.	Maddux	59	Atlanta
2.	Jones	39	New York
3.	P.J. Martinez	36	Montreal
4.	Trasumel	36	Chicago
5.	Nen	33	Florida
6.	Hoffman	30	San Diego
6.	Beck	30	S Francisco
8.	Ruffin	29	Cincinnati
8.	Hamilton	29	San Diego
10.	Carrasco	27	Cincinnati

AL Pitchers:

1.	Alvarez	43	Chicago
2.	Messina	40	Baltimore
3.	Hentgen	40	Toronto
4.	Bere	36	Chicago
5.	Ayala	34	Seattle
5.	Benes	34	Milwaukee
7.	McDonald	30	Baltimore
8.	Wetteland	30	New York
9.	Sele	27	Boston
10.	Gordon	26	K.C.

The final chart lists the total "future value" of each team in their respective divisions. The players name to the right are the two expected to have the brightest futures. Asterisks show that a club has additional players in the top ten.

	Pitchers	Hitters	Total
NL East			
1.	Atlanta*	175	260
	(Grissom 57, Justice 37)		
2.	Montreal*	136	258
	(Alou 51, Lansing 31)		
3.	New York	99	234
	(Kent 43, Vizcaino 37)		
4.	Florida	88	194
	(Sheffield 49, Conine 43)		
5.	Philadelphia	53	185
	(Jeffries 43, Stocker 30)		
NL Central			
1.	Houston*	114	392
	(Gonzalez 37, Plantier 35)		
2.	Cincinnati	166	283
	(Larkin 49, Boone 49, R. Sandson)		
3.	Chicago*	93	234
	(McRae 38, Wilkins 33)		
4.	St. Louis	78	219
	(Lankton 38, Cooper 37, Zeile 37)		
5.	Pittsburgh	75	172
	(Bell 43, C. Garcia 31)		
NL West			
1.	San Francisco*	86	288
	(Clayton 47, Lewis 43)		
2.	Los Angeles*	54	311
	(Karros 37, DeShields 35)		
3.	San Diego	120	218
	(Gwynn 41, Cedeno 38)		
4.	Colorado*	81	230
	(Walker 43, Weiss 28)		
AL East			
1.	New York*	137	273
	(Stanley 20, Polonia 20, P.Kelly)		
2.	Boston	85	281
	(Vaughan 56, Jn. Valentin 43)		
3.	Baltimore	113	252
	(Palmeiro 46, Barbarie 37)		
4.	Toronto	113	196
	(Alomar 49, Olerud 43)		
5.	Detroit*	32	206
	(Curtis 49, Gomez 42)		
AL Central			
1.	Cleveland*	89	494
	(Thome 47, Ramirez 45)		
2.	Chicago*	162	280
	(Ventura 38, Johnson 20)		
3.	Milwaukee	98	234
	(Nilsson 56, Js Valentin 38)		
4.	Minnesota	64	224
	(Knoblauch 56, Puckett 36)		
5.	Kansas City	106	118
	(Hamblin 37, Jose 24)		
AL West			
1.	Seattle*	95	305
	(Buhner 34, T. Martinez 31)		
2.	Texas*	61	288
	(Gonzalez 47, Palmer 35)		
3.	California*	48	192
	(DiScarcina 37, Edmonds 21)		
4.	Oakland	60	169
	(Javier 28, Bordick 24)		

- continued on page 8.

An Historical Burns Night - by Patrick Carroll

The first formal meeting of the SABR (U.K.) British Baseball History Committee --

The house in the Little Venice quarter of London where Bobby Thomson Chapter Chairman, Mike Ross, lives has recently been adorned by a Blue Plaque commemorating the late English comic actor Arthur Lowe, best known to most people as the star of the highly popular television series "Dad's Army". On January 28th last another army (or, at least, platoon) gathered at Mike's in order to carry on the good fight of promoting baseball research in Britain. The get-together had been hailed as a double-barrelled Burn's Night during which we would meet, schmooze about baseball, possibly take a dram or two of Robert Burns' and our Chapter Patron's native tippie, view the first "inning" of the Ken Burns "Baseball" documentary and, most importantly, to hold the first formal meeting of the British Baseball History Committee. In the event a good round dozen of us were present. We had, reluctantly, to accept regrets from some of our most diligent members who, through illness, unavoidable prior commitments or lack of time to make the journey to London, were unable to attend. As well as the Burns film and the good baseball talk, highlights of the evening included the wonderful 15-year-old Glenmorangie whisky thoughtfully provided by our -for the occasion - most appropriately named member, Robert Bruce, and the appearance of SABR (UK) Examiner editor, Martin Hoerchner, resplendent in an authentic full replica uniform of the New York Giants, circa 1923. However, the main business of the meeting was to review our present position, and to plan our future strategy as a newly-accredited SABR Committee. After the proceedings were opened with the reading of a welcome letter from SABR stalwart Norman Macht, who has been instrumental in encouraging and championing both our Chapter and Committee, we moved on to specifics.

Several members have as a priority the subject that some of us have come to think of as "The Mists of Time" or "Black Hole" Department. This reflects a desire to study as closely as possible the actual evolutions and differentiations within the family of bat and ball games from which baseball springs: a study that must neces-

sarily have important roots in Britain. Mike Ross, Martin Hoerchner and myself as Chair of the Committee particularly are intent on pursuing and identifying these developments in the various games with special reference to answering the question of why baseball in these islands never evolved, as it did in America, from a casual childrens' pastime into a maturely-codified, mass-participation sport, considered a suitable challenge for the most gifted and accomplished of athletes. This is a question that has, of course, not only purely sporting but also important social, economic and even political aspects. We regard this study and its results to be the starting point for our present ultimate aim: to create as definitive a history as is possible of baseball in Britain and Ireland. For us the first formal steps in this process have been Mike Ross' and my visits to the British Library Periodical Library where we are attempting to gather material for an index-matrix to be put at the disposal of British baseball researchers. This, like almost all worthwhile research, is going to be a long, time-consuming business, but one that has already given us some valuable and intriguing information and a good deal of solid satisfaction.

In order to further this project the meeting resolved that the Committee apply for a Reader's Ticket for the British Library's main reading room in the British Museum. In our application for this jealously-rationed privilege we will hope for support not only from the SABR Executive but also from our colleagues in the Association of Sports Historians, especially ASH President, Dr Wray Vamplew.

As well as examining this keystone project, other Committee members outlined some of their own particular lines of enquiry. Regionally, Hugh Robinson and Andy Parkes will be haunting the libraries and newspaper archives of Manchester, Hugh with particular reference to his speciality of English baseball in the years immediately proceeding and post-dating World War I. Martin Dodd will be doing similar work in Birmingham. Harvey Sauker has developed an interest in the game of Welsh baseball, which has a long history of its own and which still thrives in the Principality and on Merseyside. There are also, of course, many salient individuals involved in British baseball

history. Among them are Sir Francis Ley, the industrialist and late-Victorian baseball enthusiast who built the Baseball Ground in Derby, whose life is being studied by Pico Brown. Other figures whom Committee members wish to research include Harry Wright and his family, as well as the other (and, as far as we know, unrelated) Wright, Joseph, whose fascinating papers concerning the Middlesbrough Pioneers club give us the clearest insight we now have into British baseball around the turn of the century. There is also old Albert Goodwill himself, funder of the original forerunner of the British Baseball Federation and contributor of the Spalding Cup, the long-lost English baseball championship trophy, concerning which we may soon be hearing some remarkable revelations. Another personality of interest to us is Sir John Moores, founder of the Littlewood's Pools empire, who supported the semi-professional baseball that flourished in the North of England in the 1930s, a study of which was the subject of an excellent paper by Committee member Ian Smyth. Ian (who could with some justice be termed the current ace of the SABR(UK) research staff) is presently engaged on a study of the 1938 'Test Series' between England and the American Olympians. He is grateful to have been aided in his research by members of the SABR Minor Leagues Committee, and has lately made contact with both the widow and a surviving playing colleague of Ross Kendrick, the Canadian-born pitching star of the England team in the 1938 series. Ian has further plans to go into the post-World War II history of baseball in the North of England, a study which will necessarily involve some research into the history and evolution of the British Baseball Federation itself; a study which Ian, as a serving officer of the Federation is well-placed to pursue. As well as the excellent Malt, Robert Bruce also brought to the meeting his resolve to delve into the complex historical relationship - sporting, technical and cultural - between baseball and cricket. This must be a rich field, the gleanings from which will certainly be of use to all of our researches. Although he was unable to attend the meeting, we are assured that Daniel Bloyce is continuing his researches into the various visits to Britain and Ireland by American baseball professionals, beginning with the Wright/Spalding tour of 1874.

- continued on page 8.

Fan Fest Attracts 90,000

-by David Ballheimer

An estimated 90,000 people attended Major League Baseball International's Fan Fest in London's Covent Garden over the weekend of 5, 6 and 7 August. It was the first foray into Europe for this cavalcade of baseball fun.

The Fan Fest was essentially the same one that had been seen three weeks earlier during the All-Star Came events at Arlington, Texas. It contained numerous participatory entertainments, including batting tees, pitching-speed timers, timed astroturf basepaths, a baseball card booth and a video batting cage.

There were also a small exhibition of baseball memorabilia (unfortunately, a replica baseball uniform was stolen on the first night, and an item on the 1927 Yankees was illustrated with Babe Ruth's famous called shot against the Cubs in 1932), a store selling modern baseball merchandise, a BBF tent and a video cinema which showed a selection of videos introducing baseball.

By general consent, the video batting cage was the best of all. This involves a batter (who must wear a helmet) stepping into a batters' box in a darkened tent 60 feet 6 inches away from a video screen. The batter is then given the chance to face one of six pitchers: Jim Abbott, Roger Clemens, Tom Clavine, Dwight Gooden, Randy Johnson or Nolan

Ryan.

The video screen flickers into life and the pitcher of choice is shown on the mound going into his wind-up. This is taken from a real game, with the pitcher displaying his usual mannerisms (Nolan Ryan was the least popular pitcher with the operators because of his deliberate wind-up). As the pitcher releases the ball on screen so a real ball comes through a hole in the image, travelling at a quite-quick-enough 53 mph. A booming "cybervoice" imitates a

b e n c h jockey between pitches.

The only participation booth which was not free was the Donruss Baseball Card tent. There, for only £2 (£1 for children), baseball fans could have their photograph taken wearing the uniform of their favourite Major

League team in batting pose. The picture is then put on a Donruss baseball card, on the back of which are the person's name, birthplace and position, just like a real card, together with random statistics, all of which a superstar would kill for. Your correspondent, for instance, batted .338 in 1994 (slugging .714), blasted 45 home runs, 112 RBI's, stole 60 bases, had 92 walks and struck out 34 times. If only!

The Fan Fest was aimed predominantly at the younger fan, and almost everyone who participated in one of the events was given a memento, either a cap, batting glove, mitt, or one of several posters. All in all, a good time was had by all.



Burns' Night, continued

All in all a useful and mutually instructive meeting. We are aware that there is a massive amount of work to be done, but many hands make shortstops - sorry, short work - and the overall picture is beginning slowly to become more coherent, and all the members of the History Committee are becoming clearer about the figures in the British Baseball landscape that particularly engage and interest them.

- Patrick Carroll, Chair,
British Baseball History Committee

Best Young Talent, continued

Before you go betting the mortgage on Cleveland and Houston a few words of warning. These figures are based on 1994 performance and the system will not predict accurately how a player coming back from injury will perform in the future e.g. Mark McGwire. Highly touted rookies like Chipper Jones are not yet eligible to be included, although Bill James invented a formula for translating minor league stats. Again using the AV of 10 as a productive season for a regular you can look for 58 seasons of good hitting from the Cleveland lineup, who have three players in the top ten and two not far out. Frank Thomas alone accounts for more than half of the expected future hitting of the White Sox, although their pitching is not too shabby. Likewise Bonds and Williams account for half of the Giants' hitting.

Whilst I expect the figures to be highly accurate, they are only one of a number of indicators that can be used to measure future performance. Thanks to Bill James for giving me the inspiration to complete this exercise. Apologies to him for lines that have taken directly from the book. If you ever get to read this, Bill, please don't jump on the phone to your lawyer.

Should anyone want to discuss this study with me please write to 46 Adelaide Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 9LP or phone 0161 477-5658.

Next issue: Baseball on the Internet. It's out there, and there's a lot of it!