

The SABR UK Examiner

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1997 AGM ANOTHER SUCCESS

This year's Annual General Meeting of the Bobby Thomson Chapter of SABR, also known as SABR UK, took place once again in the Kings of Clerkenwell pub. This eccentric venue is situated just outside the line of the ancient city walls that have defined the City of London since Roman times. It's a fifteen-minute walk to St. Paul's Cathedral. You could probably make the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and Buckingham Palace in a half-hour at a brisk pace (they're all right next to each other). Also the Tower of London, in another direction. SABR being a historical society, I feel I must point out that the Bobby Thomson Chapter probably excels any other chapter's meeting place when measured by the sheer weight of history that surrounds it. Unless there's a Cairo chapter, maybe.

The meeting took place on 28 June, the middle of Wimbledon Fortnight, which of course means that the weather was dull and overcast, with threatening clouds. But it didn't matter; for a few hours that afternoon we were able to shut the rest of the world out and immerse ourselves in baseball.

We started out with the

duties that our charter demands we perform. We read out apologies from a number of stalwarts that couldn't make it, due to some prior commitment. This left us with the impression that, if all SABR members and kindred spirits in the UK could see clear to synchronise their schedules, it would be a wonderful affair. We also received greetings from Norman Macht via letter, and Monte Irvin via a phone conversation with Chapter Chairman Mike Ross, an excerpt of which was played.

Then Graham Winterbone was voted by acclamation into the long-vacant position of Secretary, in recognition of the work he has done. He then took his seat at the head of the class. Mike Ross noted that all the officers' terms expired next year and elections were due. He then went on to give an award for best services to baseball in Britain over the last ten years, and it went to John Gaustad of Sportspages bookstore. It may be hard for someone living in America to understand, but the wealth of material in their baseball section is like an oasis in a waterless desert. The prize was a signed

and numbered lithograph of Ted Williams by the renowned artist Peter Blake, and a Jackie Robinson portrait by Mike Ross. Both pictures were donated on behalf of SABR. Then Monte Irvin was nominated and approved by the meeting as an honorary member of the Chapter.

The Publications Editor, Martin Hoerchner, griped about how he had to commute for four hours a day, and said he wished he could bring out the Examiner more often. The role of Barry Winetrobe's "Number 23" newsletter was also praised. The Treasurer, Andy Parkes, confirmed we were solvent with assets in triple figures and some change. New Secretary Graham Winterbone explained the purpose behind the survey he distributed, which was to create a database for members to keep in touch with each other.

The Chair of the Historical Committee, Patrick Morley, then gave his report, which is printed in full on page 9. In his efforts toward shining some light on the darkness of British baseball history, Bernard Day was commended. Patrick Carroll had compiled a list of

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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR *by Mike Ross*

When I sit down to fill up this blank space which editor Martin Hoerchner inveigled me into writing, under the lofty heading of "View From the Chair", I have to confess that I have always felt like a tennis referee. Notwithstanding, view or no view, inventing relevant words of wisdom that are expected from someone so high up has not become any easier. My view tells me that my hype has become irrelevant.

So, before the membership sets me out on an ice flow (Eskimo retirement), I will fill this space with baseball talk, indeed history. If it has happened (already), it is 'history'. I was watching a game the other night, live on 5, when the defending National League champions Atlanta Braves started playing Little League ball. The nadir moment was Fred McGriff dropping a soft toss from second base. You know, the play your grandma could have made. This induced the announcer to exclaim for the second time, "Put a tent over this circus!" For historical reference: the same thing happened in a more crucial setting, in Game Six of the 1993 playoffs in Chicago. The Sox were battling Toronto to force a seventh game. Unfortunately Joey Cora and Mike Pagliarulo turned the right side of Chicago's infield into Passiondale, which had the Tribe's Jerome Holtzman shaking his head. The bottom line showed the Chicago White Sox at the short end of a 6-3 decision, and the Blue Jays with three unearned

runs. History: October 1986. Bob Stanley's wild pitch. Rich Gedman stretching to his right. Mookie Wilson knocked off his feet. The squiggler down to Bill Buckner - a game of inches indeed. The "Bookoo Ball" was in play that day in New York.

During my young teenage days at summer camp in Maine (100 years ago), I learned a rainy day lesson from a fine gentleman who showed up out of nowhere to teach me a lesson of life - about the Bookoo Ball. The rain was pouring down and all activities were cancelled. Me and Milton Silver were stuck in the Rec Hall trying to make a game out of busted ping-pong ball. Then this black man suddenly materialised. He watched us for a while and then asked if he could play. With each of his serves he sternly warned of the danger coming our way. "Watch out for the Bookoo Ball! The Bookoo Ball gonna get you. Watch out. Here it come!", he would exclaim each time a squiggler crossed the net. I never saw him before or since that day. But I loved him, and the lesson was learned. It was learned in Boston in 1986; it was learned with the Braves' four straight series losses in the '96 World Series. Now we have another indomitable Braves pitching staff, who played circus ball the other night, bound for post-season glory... Wait for it. Is history repeating itself? Circus ball again as the Braves lose game 1 of the NLCS on errors.

SABR UK has fleshed out. We are now on the internet. We

have become web wise. 'Baseball smart' folks from the USA have made that pitiless Atlantic Ocean a mere drop in itself. What was a 3000-mile big league gulf has been transversed. Me, I have to consider cashing in my empties, trading in my Model-T computer for a late 20th model (with whitewalls too).

SABR UK has a new member based off the coast of Scotland, on the Isle of Cumbrae. Scotsman Gerry Gallagher was a prospect in the Dodgers organisation way back. He has compiled a biography of all Scottish-born major leaguers, including of course our Bobby Thomson. Gerry has the original 1886 Cincinnati contract of Scots lad Kid Nichols which tells us that Nichols was paid \$1700 a season (that's when \$1700 was a lot of money), but for his services the contract further reveals he had no 'rights'. No rider to the contract was attached so he was under orders 24 hours a day, all season. Yes, these finer details of the old reserve clause must give succour to owners like "the Boss", George Steinbrenner. ("The boss of kiss my ass Mississippi", a Mets fan once pointed out to me.) An excerpt states that "the party of the second part will yield a cheerful and prompt obedience to all the directions of the party of the first part and will hold himself subject to its orders at all times during the entire term of his employment aforesaid" Lucky for the players that the cellular telephone wasn't in play those days.

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THIS SABR'D ISLE *by Martin Hoerchner*

Baseball is eternal. Baseball is also immediate. For instance, I am writing this at 12.20 a.m., British Summer Time, early in the morning of Sunday September 28. I am listening to Internet Radio, to the flagship station of the San Francisco Giants, and they have just won the National League West.

Memories come flooding back this night. Like the last day of the 1993 season, when the Giants lost their division title on the last day of the season after winning 103 games. I was listening on a weak signal from Armed Forces Radio. Will 1997 exorcise the demons of 1993? My mother died the month after that last game, and I don't think I've gotten over either loss. I hope she knows what happened tonight.

Or the night I attended another pennant-clincher, in 1979 in Anaheim. I had just moved to Los Angeles and was rooting for the Angels as a second team, because I had to have *some* local team. And they were having a great year. They had a final season-ending series with their arch-rivals, the Royals, whom they were beating decisively. I was on the second deck, and when that rhythmic stomping and excitement went on and on, the whole deck vibrated so that I feared for the structural stability. After the game they opened up the gates so I got to walk on the field and look up at the seats. I'll never forget the pandemonium as I made my way through the car lot. I'll never forget the excitement of the voices coming from the radio, announcers and callers alike. I'll never forget the pure and simple joy.

Or the last time I was at Candlestick. I was in California to clear out the house I was raised in. My wife and I were with a long-time friend and a long-term Giants fan. He had just met a woman, and he delighted in telling me she was also a Giants fan. They are going to be married this week,

during the baseball postseason. It was September last season, when the Giants were mired in the cellar, without even a chance to clinch second-worst. The atmosphere reminded me of when Roy Hobbs first shows up at War Memorial Park. I think the attendance was about 8,000, and I've never seen a park so empty. We had seats four rows behind the dugout. It was like watching a minor-league game, only it had Barry Bonds as a ringer. I've never seen a crowd so sparse and dispirited. My friend, and I don't think there's a major leaguer named Steve Lund, said "I just have to look forward to the 49ers".

Memories, like time, seem sometimes to turn around events in baseball. This way baseball turns into part of your personal history. In moments of triumph like this, it all becomes very clear.

Victory is especially sweet because all the analysts placed us last. If the doctors ever tell me I only have a few weeks to live, I'll show them the predictions for the 1997 season, and they'll understand I'll live to a ripe old age.

I have a friend from university (UCLA) who's been my friend throughout the years. He was from the L.A. area, and he bled Dodger blue, though I wouldn't call him a rabid fan. More like a rabid Giant hater. Anyway, a job opportunity takes him to San Francisco, and he falls under the city's spell - a lot of people do. So last year a player is brought up to the Giants from Phoenix, and does well, and does even better this year - he becomes one of the team's stalwarts, after taking over Matt Williams' position. And he's got the same name as my friend. So his namesake, the old Giant-killer, starts rooting for the home team. And now, if I get to see my team in the World Series this year, I'll be privileged to sit next to Bill Mueller. Only this one pronounces his name correctly. He told me he

sometimes gets phone calls for the Giants player, and I told him it would be a great line for pulling birds, although I probably didn't use the British colloquialism with him.

As an aside, why are fans always referred to as "rabid"? Why not "febrile"? Is rabies the only disease a team fanatic can have? Does it have something to do with foaming at the mouth?

So we come again to another postseason season, and thoughts wax philosophical. I hope your team did well this year, and didn't bomb out too badly. With two exceptions, in which case I hope your team crashed and burned, with horrific flames. Anyway, I can be magnanimous now, because at time of writing we haven't entered the postseason. And we won't know the final results until (at latest) October 26, a few days before Halloween. Hey, that's a thought. There's a team in each league that wears Halloween colours, and is a San Francisco - Baltimore World Series such a long shot?

I enjoyed last year's World Series. I always enjoy seeing the Braves scuppered. I especially appreciated the Sky Sports coverage, which saw fit to interrupt the last game of the World Series with an hour of Australian superbikes. When I found out this was happening, the day before, my jaw dropped open and my mind ceased to function. Anyway, I taped the game and watched it the next day, so I didn't have to file my nails and make endless cups of tea at 3 am when those damn bikes were roaring around and around the track. I get up bright and early the next morning, not knowing the results. Before I watched the videotape, I flick on the teletext to get the morning news. Now on ITV, page 301 is the main headlines. But on BBC, 301 is the sports headlines. Needless to say, I thought I was on ITV, but I was actually on BBC.

The Nineteenth Century Debate - Spalding vs. Chadwick

by Martin Hoerchner

In the last Examiner I wrote an article called "A History of Baseball Prehistory". I feel now that the issue is a bit more polarised than had originally occurred to me. In the 19th century, if you were interested in the origins of the game of baseball, you either had to believe Henry Chadwick, or you had to believe Albert Spalding.

Soon after baseball began in the U.S. as an organised sport, the first baseball writer commented on the origins of baseball. He was Henry Chadwick, and he was born in England. He emigrated when he was 13 years old, so he remembered his childhood games. In 1856, when he was 19 years old, he wholeheartedly embraced the new American game of baseball.

Chadwick also recognised similarities between baseball and a sport he played as a schoolboy, namely *rounders*. In Britain, rounders is a game played mainly by children, boy and girls, with a bat like a policeman's night stick and a ball more the size of a tennis ball than a baseball. But it also has bases (actually posts, like in the *Pretty Little Pocket Book*), and batters hit the ball and then run the bases. Because baseball resembles rounders, Chadwick immediately drew the conclusion that baseball was descended from rounders. Chadwick was soon the most popular and respected baseball writer of the nineteenth century. So in his writings he often mentioned "the ancient history of baseball", and he promulgated extensively the baseball-from-rounders theory.

I'm not sure what research Chadwick really did, aside from noting the similarities between rounders and baseball. He quoted from Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, from 1801. This book mentions *base*, but neither *baseball* or *rounders*.

I can't help thinking about another analogy. There is a British sport called netball. It is played by schoolgirls, i.e. from 12-16 years old. It is very similar to the U.S. sport of basketball, with these exceptions: the ball is smaller, there is no dribbling, only passing, there is no backboard, the net is lower and smaller. It is obviously a more basic game than basketball.

Well, Britain has more history than America, and netball is a more primitive game than basketball, and netball is a girls' game and US basketball is an adult professional sport, so US basketball is descended from UK netball, right? Well, not really. Netball is derived from basketball. Basketball was an invented sport whose origins can be traced specifically to Dr. James Naismith, a Canadian working at the YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts. He invented basketball in 1891 in response to the need for a game involving more skill than strength, and one that could be played indoors in a small space. The first game was played with a soccer ball and two peach baskets. If only the beginnings of baseball could be traced so exactly! But baseball wasn't invented; it developed. Slowly and over decades, if not centuries.

Chadwick immediately saw the similarities between rounders and baseball, just like he would have seen the similarities between netball and basketball. He assumed that the American game was descended from the British game because of those similarities. But he was never able to prove it.

This of course did not sit well with the American press and public; evidently Chadwick never let the matter lie dormant. The American backlash was strong, led by Albert Spalding (the first baseball magnate) at first, and later supported by other lights such as

John Montgomery Ward. Ward sounds a bit silly when he writes that baseball "just grewed". But is it really that far off the mark?

The 19th century debate about the origins of baseball boiled down to Chadwick vs. Spalding. A.G. Spalding had the final say for thirty years. He got A.G. Mills, the President of the National League, to chair a commission to support his viewpoint, and the "Mills Commission Report" was accepted as gospel until Robert W. Henderson.

While Henderson's scholarship is nearly immaculate, his conclusions sometime require a leap of faith. He is extremely successful in debunking the Mills Report, the Doubleday story. It was fairly easy to do, because the evidence is so flimsy, but no one had ever thought of it before. It seems to me that, once he knocked down Spalding, all Henderson had left was Chadwick. He was caught in the 19th century debate instead of starting his own. He must have figured that because Spalding was so far wrong, Chadwick must be right. When Henderson discredited Spalding, he basically adopted the Chadwick's "baseball as rounders" story. He also felt the need to put Alexander Cartwright in Abner Doubleday's place as baseball's founder, even though he admits it is arbitrary.

Henderson will always be remembered for debunking Spalding, but he muddied the waters by swallowing Chadwick hook, line, and sinker. Chadwick had a lot of insight and information, but I've never seen how he supported his "baseball from rounders" theory. He may have noted similarities, but does that mean one is descended from the other? Henderson found the *Pretty Little Pocket Book* picture, and also the almost exact match between the English *Boy's Own Book* (1829) description of rounders and the American *Book of Sports* (1837) description of baseball. The leap of faith consists of

Al Spalding Was Right

Excerpts from correspondence from Larry Gerlach concerning the origins and ancestry of baseball:

I have been working for several years on a piece on the American origins of baseball. My working title is something like: "Al Spalding Was Right: The American Origins of Baseball." In an earlier, pre-sport history professional life, my research, writing, and teaching was in the area of American colonial history - i.e., the British North American colonies from Nova Scotia to Georgia. While I have not read every document from the period, I have read a considerable amount - especially from Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. I have found not a single, solitary reference to rounders.

Indeed, the same holds true up to the point of the Knickerbockers club. My sense is that to argue that baseball evolved from rounders is to argue nothing

meaningful. What intrigues me is why U.S. scholars have insisted on baseball, the erstwhile "national pastime," evolving from an English game when in every other aspect of cultural life (e.g. dictionaries, art, literature) pains were taken to disassociate American life from English antecedents (often nonsensically). I'll be discussing that and more. I wrote a review essay a couple of years ago, summer 1994 I think, in the *Journal of Sport History* about baseball books published from 1983 to 1993. One of the conclusions is that baseball historians are sloppy - that is, they a) readily repeat "facts" without question or verification and thus perpetuate errors, and b) academic scholars do not usually display the same kind of adherence to scholarly canon when doing baseball history as when doing research in other historical subfields.

I have done some research into the life and times of Abner

Graves. He is a fairly shadowy character. Have found no connection between Graves and baseball that would account for him writing to Spalding about Doubleday. Why did he do it? He seems not to have been a baseball enthusiast during the latter three decades of his life in Denver. In any event, there was a young boy named Abner Doubleday living in Cooperstown late 1830s-1840s. Tom Heitz, the former librarian at the National Baseball Library, has long been intrigued by the possibility that Graves confused *that* youngster with the general. But no matter as the young lad didn't invent baseball in any event.

Yes, the need to have Founding Fathers runs deep in the American psyche as is the compulsion to identify "firsts." The group of men who hammered out the distinctive and enduring rules of the game in the 1850s just won't do.

- Larry Gerlach, President, SABR

Researching the Origins: Where to Start

Fred Ivor-Campbell, Chair of SABR's Nineteenth Century Committee, offers guidelines for researching the origins of baseball:

Prompted by Martin Hoerchner's request for research on this side of the Atlantic into baseball's origins and influences, I've come up with some guidelines that might prove useful.

First, since there is a clear and direct line of descent from the Knickerbocker rules of 1845 to baseball today, what we need to focus on is what influenced the original Knickerbockers as they developed their game in their informal play in the early 1840s and as they formulated their rules during the summer of 1845.

Second, one place to begin this search is the 1845 Knickerbocker rules themselves. What do they tell us about the game the pre-Knickerbockers were playing when they rounded up extra members to form themselves into a club? How did their game differ from other bat-and-ball games

with which they were familiar? I'm finding that we can learn a lot from a careful reading of these first written rules. (Example: Base stealing was common in pre-Knickerbocker play, and balks were typically committed not in trying to trap runners leading off their base, but in trying to catch base stealers running toward the next base. Example: Practices with which the pre-Knickerbockers were familiar from other bat-and-ball games, but which they were deliberately eliminating from their game, included overhand pitching—"throwing"—and putting out runners by hitting them with thrown balls. Example: to the Knickerbocker founders, the concept of foul territory was not new or unfamiliar, though their placing it outside the lines created by the home-first home-third angle may have been a Knickerbocker innovation.)

Third: when we have developed as full an understanding as possible of the game the pre-

Knickerbockers were playing and the practices they were adopting or rejecting from other games, we can begin looking for evidence of those other games in the New York area, and in areas where the Knickerbocker founders grew up, and in publications the Knickerbockers would have had access to that described bat-and-ball (and other) games. (I'm intrigued by John Thorn's brilliant suggestion that we look at Parchesi, by the thought that baseball may well have been influenced by games other than bat-and-ball games.)

Short of finding detailed written discussion of their game's origins by the earliest Knickerbockers themselves, we are unlikely to settle forever the question of baseball's origins and influences, but with the sharp thinkers and diligent researchers currently at work on the the problem, I think we will soon find ourselves as close to final answers as it is possible to come. - Fred Ivor-Campbell

The Winterbone Memoirs

1. How did you get into baseball?

Our newly-elected Secretary, Graham Winterbone, offers insight into the reasons an Englishman born and bred would develop into a fanatic follower of America's National Pastime:

As an English fan of American baseball, how many times have I been asked the question "how did you get into baseball?", or "why do you like baseball?". Ten times? One hundred times? A thousand?

Anyway, having experience in defending myself over the last few years, it got me thinking about really answering their questions, for them and myself. Why do I love baseball so much?

In 1989 my wife and I went to stay with her aunt and uncle near Toronto. Cecil, the uncle, was originally from Trinidad and also had lived in England. Since living in Canada, he had left his cricketing roots and started to watch and love baseball. Over the course of our two-week stay we watched many Blue Jays games on TV, but we couldn't actually be there because they were all sold out. Why didn't I follow Cecil's advice and go to a tout?

When I learned more about the game, one of the first facts that astounded me was that the teams played virtually every day for six months. Our soccer players complain about forty or so games in nine months! Then the postseason - the World Series is not just one game but seven. Cecil said it was a bit like playing seven Cup Finals.

The TV taught me about the players, and particularly their chewing and scratching habits which seemed reached a height when they were at bat. I thought it was part of the rules that you had to adjust your crotch and spit copiously before batting. But I also left Toronto with an inkling of how the game was played, as well as the hope of a Blue Jays pennant. As well as a hangover.

So when I got home I discovered that baseball was actually

covered on UK TV, with the tardy but very welcome coverage on late night ITV. I saw my first World Series that autumn, and rooted for Oakland as they swept San Francisco. I had always been impressed with Canseco and McGwire's power, Henderson's speed and Dave Stewart's stares. Then I started buying whatever baseball things I could find: a Blue Jays cap, a World Series video, and "The Baseball Book", which I found in the bargain bin.

Our next two visits to North America were to Florida. In those days it was baseball-free, but it was always on TV. More books, cards, caps, shirts, etc. were purchased to feed my ever growing addiction. Since then I have thirsted, not only for the day to day scores and news, but for information on the history of the sport. The English media coverage was inadequate, but has been improving ever since.

The first Major League game I actually attended was Baltimore at California in 1992. I immediately felt completely at home, and this helped convince me that my instincts were correct. I knew that baseball would become a life-long passion.

There are several factors that drew me to the game. I had been a big cricket fan and followed Test Cricket avidly. But now I can't say when I last watched even an hour of a game. It is easiest to explain baseball to the British in comparison with cricket.

First of all, the sheer athleticism of players such as Roberto Alomar, the power of Albert Belle and the speed of Devon White can be matched by almost no cricketers, apart from some West Indians and Ian Botham perhaps. Baseball excels in sheer athleticism.

Second: In cricket the first inning, even of a five day game, can decide the course of the game. How often is this true in baseball? With nine innings instead of two, there is much more scope for lead

changes and final dramatic finishes. The fact that baseball teams usually play each other three or so days in a row mirrors the three day game in cricket. But in approximately nine hours of baseball, you get three results. In cricket, you might not get one. In baseball you get a positive (or negative) result, and then get have another chance tomorrow. The lack of a time limit in baseball leads to fascinating possibilities. Can a baseball game ever go on forever?

Third: The history of the game fascinates me. Most English are surprised to learn how old the organised and professional game of baseball is. It certainly not just a new version of rounders! And baseball writing is among the best of all sports writing. Biographies of the great players fascinate me most.

Last of all: The pitcher vs. batter duel is the ultimate confrontation in sport. In no other team sport does the result depend more on a one-to-one situation. Consider the rookie pitcher facing the veteran slugger, the dominant closer protecting a one run lead in the bottom of the ninth, or the veteran pitcher nearing a no hitter tires in the ninth - there are so many possibilities, so many stories to tell. Our own Bobby Thomson's story comes to mind on how just one pitcher versus batter confrontation can be remembered for generations.

Baseball coverage over here has improved greatly with the Channel 5 coverage. I have remained a Blue Jays fan, and was thrilled when they won back-to-back World Series titles. Seeing how the mighty have fallen, I have recently learnt the cyclical nature of the game. Over the last few years I have been lucky enough to attend several games in Oakland, San Diego, San Francisco and Denver.

And that's how I got into baseball.

The Winterbone Memoirs

2. The Ryan Express - Next Stop Oakland

Graham Winterbone travels 7000 miles to watch Nolan Ryan pitch. Well, that's not exactly the way it went...

It was July 29th 1993 and I happened to catch an item in the local paper. "Nolan Ryan has come off the disabled list and will pitch at Oakland tomorrow". Not very exciting reading this in Britain. But I was in Merced, in central California, and just a few hours drive from Oakland. I had the chance to see a legend in action in his final season. I couldn't pass it up.

My wife Sherry was quickly persuaded and we were soon heading north on the freeway towards Oakland. I bought tickets at the park, after making sure that Nolan Ryan was really pitching. We still had plenty of time before game time so we headed into San Francisco and found a hotel room. Later in the day we took the BART train back to the Oakland Coliseum for the early evening game. Bay Area Rapid Transit monorail trains are sometimes underground, sometimes above ground. There is a station connected to the Coliseum by an elevated walkway; it is an ideal way to travel to a game.

It was a fine warm evening, with a game time temperature of 76 degrees. A spectacular sunset was developing over San Francisco bay, not that many people noticed. Nolan Ryan was in town for the very last time and 42,325 people gathered to pay homage to the legend. The atmosphere was something special. The possibility of yet another no hitter to add to his record was on everybody's mind. The Oakland public showed their sporting nature in their reception for Ryan, which was extremely warm. Even when I held up the beer queue for what seemed like hours while my passport was checked for my age (I was 31 at the time), the banter from behind was good natured - not what you would expect at Wembley, for instance.

Our seats were up in the vertigo-inducing third deck, but they were almost directly behind home plate. Overall it was a good vantage point to concentrate on the pitcher. I sat next to Huistra, a Cuban emigré who had brought his grandson with him to savour this special occasion. He expressed deep surprise that an Englishman was not only a baseball fan but had actually even heard of Nolan Ryan.

As soon as Nolan Ryan got to work it was obvious why he was still so successful. He throws really hard. It is difficult to define the sound his fastball makes when it hits the catchers glove, Geno Petralli's on this occasion. I could run through a whole list of onomatopoeic words without quite getting the right resonance. It is perhaps sufficient to note that my wife commented on the loudness. She also noticed the difference between the speed of his pitches those of other pitchers whom we had seen that trip. The whole crowd was riveted to the performance of one man and warmly applauded the completion of each inning.

The leadoff hitter for Texas, Gary Redus, scored a run in the first inning on a single by Juan Gonzalez. Nolan Ryan was pitching strongly but allowing walks rather than hits. However all thoughts of another no hitter evaporated in the fourth inning and Oakland scored the tying run. There was no more scoring and Nolan Ryan still looked strong until the bottom of the seventh. He loaded the bases with none out, and to the huge disappointment of the crowd he was lifted in favour of Craig Lefferts. The reliever gave up one hit and two walks to allow all three inherited runners to score while only getting one out. Surely Nolan Ryan couldn't have done any worse!

Nolan Ryan left the Oakland Coliseum field for the final time to a standing ovation, and he replied

by tipping his cap to the crowd. It was a disappointing end to his game, and with no more scoring by either side Nolan Ryan took the 4-1 loss. Since his no hitter on June 11 1990 in Oakland, he had been winless in 6 starts versus the A's. After the game the crowd started to drift away wondering what may have been if Nolan Ryan had been given the chance to pitch out of his own jam.

We stayed to the end of the game, and with the help of BART we were in Jack London's, a downtown San Francisco sports bar before midnight. The following day we found that Nolan Ryan fever had spread across the bay and the sport shops had all kinds of souvenirs available. We both settled for T-shirts, one detailing *The Ryan Express Last Stops* and the other outlined his major records. Both shirts are now part of my baseball collection.

This was not a vintage year by any means, and Nolan Ryan finished with a 5-5 record with a 4.88 ERA. He pitched 66 innings, with injuries forcing him to miss many starts. His final start ever, in the Kingdome on September 22, 1993, was maybe one start too many as he left the game in the first inning with an elbow injury (the Advil was insufficient for once!) and with no outs, having already given up a grand slam. This made him the all time leader in grand slams allowed with 10.

With all of Nolan Ryan's achievements and records, he will most certainly gain his Hall of Fame place when first eligible in 1999. His power pitching and the sheer immensity of his numbers first attracted me to him and his work ethic and old fashioned values kept me interested. In the modern era of six inning "quality starts" there never will be another like him. It was a privilege to be able to see Nolan Ryan pitch, even if he was not in his prime. But I'll never forget seeing him.

19th Century Baseball Tours Visit England

by Patrick Morley

The first serious attempt to interest the English in baseball came in 1874. By that time the game in the United States had become organised on a serious business footing and it was obviously felt that expanding baseball abroad would open up new markets. Britain was the obvious target: the game had originated there in some form; the two countries were closely linked by a common language and by a shared heritage; and the British Empire was a potentially vast market waiting to be exploited.

Here is how the illustrated magazine *The Graphic* reported on that first tour in its issue of August 15, 1874 under the heading "The American Baseball Players":

"The game of base-ball which during the last ten years has grown so rapidly in favour on the other side of the Atlantic, that it is now regarded by our American cousins as their national pastime, appears to an English spectator very much like the simple game of rounders with which he was familiar in his youth. The gentlemen who have come over to teach us the game belong to two of the crack clubs of the United States, the Philadelphia Athletic and the Boston Red Stockings, the latter being the champion club of America and the former, ex-champions."

The *Graphic* then goes on to give a resumé of how the game was then played, noting that "the pitcher...must pitch or bowl high or low according to the desire of his opponent and always underhand."

The report goes on: "The innings are got over with great rapidity, three or four players being put out in perhaps as many minutes. There is scope for much agility, and as no gloves are worn the 'catcher' requires to be tolerably hard handed as well as extremely alert. The usual game is nine innings a side but in the first contest at Liverpool the playing was so close that at the end of the

eighteen innings the scores stood alike and a final bout had to be played to decide the game, which was won by the Philadelphians by three runs, the finish being very exciting."

The paper goes on to report that the game took place at the Liverpool Cricket Ground at Edge Hill "and there was a good attendance of spectators." It adds that the Americans also played at Manchester and in London "and they intend staying with us for some time, playing matches in various parts of the United Kingdom."

That visit to Liverpool was part of a series of exhibition games played on the cricket grounds throughout the country by arrangement with the Marleybone Cricket Club. But whatever hopes the organisers of the tour may have had of getting the English to take up the game were clearly not fulfilled.

Fourteen years later, another baseball tour was organised, and A.G. Spalding, a baseball star in his own right and later head of the major sporting goods firm which bears his name, was the promoter and tour manager. This time it was a world tour and games were played in the Sandwich Islands (as Hawaii was then called), Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Italy and France. The players reached England in March 1889, and this is how the *Illustrated London News* reported the games played in London:

"The visit to England of two fine teams of good performers in this favourite American pastime has attracted much notice...The opening match between Chicago and the All American teams was played on Tuesday March 12 at Kennington Oval...Soon after the play began, the Prince of Wales arrived and the game being stopped by the players, congregating together, cheered his Royal Highness very heartily. They display wonderful agility in running from one base to the other, whilst they are brilliant catchers and return the ball with extraordinary smartness."

The paper noted that the slip-

pery state of the ground hindered the players but Chicago eventually proved successful winning 7-4. The next match was at Lord's where this time the All Americans won 7-6. They were also victorious in the third London game, played at the Crystal Palace, the score being 5-3.

The Prince of Wales was asked by a newspaper reporter what he thought of the game he attended. He asked for the reporter's notebook (where is that treasure now, one wonders) and in it he wrote the following "The Prince of Wales has witnessed the game of Base Ball with great interest and though he considers it an excellent game he considers cricket as superior."

So too it seems did most of the other English spectators. One of them was no less a cricketing legend than Dr. W.G. Grace himself, who met the teams and no doubt compared the two summer sports with them. Sadly, there is no record of his views on baseball.

For the record, the *Illustrated London News* recorded the names of the touring sides, some of them familiar to anyone with a nodding acquaintance of 19th century baseball:

From Chicago, Messrs A.C. Anson, T.P. Daly, M. Baldwin, J. Ryan, F.N. Pfeffer, T. Burns, M. Sullivan, J.K. Tener and R. Pettitt. The All Americans, drawn from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Washington, Detroit, and Indianapolis: Messrs J.M. Ward, W. Earle, T. Healey, F.H. Carroll, J. Manning, G.A. Wood, J.G. Fogarty, E. Hanlon, and T.L. Brown.

A bare eighteen players, it will be noted. One wonders what happened in the event of injury, especially as they had been touring for several months. Maybe they were a tougher lot than the baseball players of today.

The Spalding world tour produced more positive results than the earlier one. In the following year, capitalising on the public interest which had been aroused, a professional English baseball league was set up.

Report of the British Baseball Historical Committee 1997

by Patrick Morley, Chairman

The major focus of the Committee's activities during the year under review has been the Derby Connection. The Midlands city of Derby is the only place in Britain whose soccer stadium bears the name The Baseball Ground. It was given that title in the 1890s when it was the home of the Derby Baseball Club, three times winners of the English Baseball Cup and vanquishers of the champion Boston Beaneaters when they toured England in 1897. Now the ground is to be closed down and SABR UK is planning to be closely involved in the ceremonies to mark the end of an era. As a result, research efforts have been concentrated on gathering material for a study paper on Derby's connections with the game and especially the links with A.G. Spalding, who played a key role in encouraging the development of baseball in Britain. Here, our SABR colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic are making an important contribution through research into the Spalding papers.

The other major piece of UK baseball research also involves connections with A.G. Spalding. Although not undertaken directly by the Committee, the research done by Bernard Day has had the active encouragement of SABR UK. It has resulted in the unearthing of detailed records and reports on the activities of the Middlesbrough Pioneers Baseball Club of the 1890s. More than that, it has also led to the identification of one of the various trophies Spalding provided to help encourage baseball in Britain and long thought to have vanished. The results of this research are still being evaluated but on the face of it, it is an exciting discovery.

One important achievement during the year was the completion of the Register of all Euro-

pean-born major league players and managers since 1871. Listing some 200 names, it was presented to the annual convention of the prestigious Association of UK Sports Historians and will be published later in the Baseball Research Journal.

Basic research continues in several other fields: baseball in the North of England which drew bigger crowds before World War II than many league soccer matches; the game in London and the South East of England between the two world wars; baseball on the Continent, especially Holland; and the so-called 'Black Hole' of British baseball, the development of the sport from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Much interesting material is being gradually assembled, some it familiar, some surprising. Even something as well-known as Jane Austen's reference to baseball in Northanger Abbey (completed 1803) raises more questions than it answers and is typical of the problems of linguistic interpretation our researchers wrestle with.

One other absorbing piece of research the Committee is undertaking is the Irish Question. Tens of thousands of Irish immigrants flooded into the United States as a result of the privations caused during the Great Famine of the 1840s. Their influence on American politics is well-known. But what of their effect on the burgeoning sport of baseball? We are exploring several interesting theories which may throw light on the way baseball developed in the 1880s and 1890s.

Finally, the Committee expresses its warmest thanks to Patrick Carroll for his work during the past two years. Pressure of other commitments has forced him to relinquish the chair and he is succeeded by Patrick Morley, founder secretary of SABR UK.

This is AFN

Patrick Morley, one of the founders of SABR UK and the Chair of the British Baseball Historical Committee, has written and published a book. Drawing upon his memories as a young baseball fan in Britain struggling to keep track of the game he loved during World War II, *This Is AFN* is the previously-untold story of the American Forces Network, the wartime broadcasting organisation the BBC fought tooth and nail to keep off the air. It had a profound effect on the listening of many thousands of Britons and for many, it was their first introduction to live Major League baseball commentaries. The full story is in *This is AFN*. Copies of the book can be obtained at £5.00 each directly from Patrick Morley, Spring Cottage, The Batch, Hill Road, Sandford, North Somerset BS19 5RH, telephone 01934 822781.

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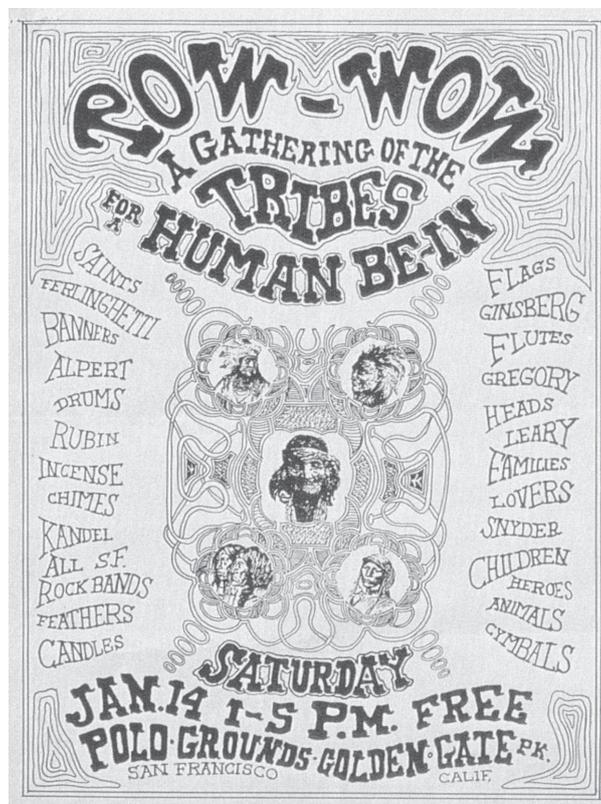
So instead of the main news, I get the sports news. US sports get little mention in UK media, with the exception of the Super Bowl and the last game of the World Series. So I saw screaming headlines "Yankees win baseball World Series". "Noooo!" I screamed. "I didn't want to know that!". My wife said "But isn't that the result you wanted?". I said "Yes, but I didn't want to know yet!". So I watch the tape and those damn superbikes don't bother me so much, because I already knew the result, and I've got fast forward. Enjoyed the game anyway, and I wouldn't have missed Wade Boggs riding that horse for anything.

So that night, it was a Sunday, I'd already had baseball withdrawal. So I switch on AFN radio to see what was on. I'm immediately greeted with that horrid tonal sequence that accompanies the tomahawk chop! "Noooo!" I screamed. My heart grew heavy, my brain grew numb. Thoughts raced through my head. They had to replay the sixth World Series game because of some technicality. Maybe like the Pine Tar game. The Yankees are going to have to do it all over again! The Braves can still win it! How did this chain of events happen?

All these thoughts occurred to me in the second or two before the announcer came on saying "You're listening to Florida Seminoles football". The Braves stole that obnoxious howl from a college football team! It took me a half hour for my heartbeat to return to normal.

I was on holiday in Austria in June, about the time of the first interleague games. We got this place high up in the Alps. So one night I dial around the radio, to see if I could pick up a local AFN

station. And it comes in loud and clear from Munich. I guess when you're that far up, you can pick up stations for miles. And the game was the Giants vs. Mariners, and they were winning the second game of the series for a sweep. It was a beautiful signal, without that howling Spanish station overriding your signal. We were on the roof of Europe, not far from the highest village in Austria. Picking up such a familiar signal in a foreign land is very comforting.



Then J.T. Snow hit a home run to take the lead, and I got so excited that I jumped up and spilled my schnapps!

One final thought about the connection between baseball and memory. I once wrote about having this dream of finding the Polo Grounds in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Like, it was just *there*, and nobody knew until I stumbled across it. Then I buy this book about the hippies, and it has a photo of a poster for the "Human Be-In: A Gathering of the Tribes", set for January 1967. It

was to be the herald of the Summer of Love. It took place in Golden Gate Park, and needing a huge open place for so many people, the Be-In naturally took place on "The Polo Grounds" of Golden Gate Park. It was on the poster. It was a weird feeling, because I had that dream long before I bought the book.

Is Jung right? Is baseball part of our collective consciousness? Somebody had to ask.

The Nineteenth Century Debate - Spalding vs. Chadwick, con't

accepting this

continued on page 10
as evidence that baseball descended from rounders.

And while Alexander Cartwright is probably baseball's first organiser, his part in the formulation of baseball's rules is questionable at best. Is there something about the psyche, or maybe the American psyche, that needs an Abner Doubleday, an Alexander Cartwright, instead of accepting that baseball "just grewed"?

I have said before that Henderson is the father of baseball prehistory. But we need to move on. If we see anything more clearly in the intervening years, is that it's not as simple as Spalding vs. Chadwick, or Doubleday vs. Cartwright. Just as we needed to break the shackles of Spalding, we need to break the shackles of Henderson. We need to look at the origins and ancestry of baseball from an unprejudiced viewpoint, search for hard facts and not draw conclusions without them.

AGM (Another Great Meeting), con't

more than 200 European-born players, and he is now re-searching the Irish influence on baseball in the late 19th century. The list is due to be published in the next *Baseball Research Journal*. Patrick Carroll was then thanked for his work as the previous Chair of this Committee.

Patrick Morley delivered his renowned rendition of "Casey at the Bat" - a classic, of which DeWolfe Hopper would have been jealous. Pat Carroll pointed out that Hopper's daughter was Hedda Hopper.

Then came the high point of the evening. Mike Ross explained that one of the original aims of the Chapter was to find the Spalding Trophy, an award given to the winner of the National League of British baseball in the 1890's. He then introduced the featured speaker Bernard Day.

high point of British baseball interest. Though he did not come from the angle of baseball research, he proceeded to unearth a number of relics of that British baseball renaissance, all connected to his grandfather and the teams he played on or played against. He first found a photo of his grandfather's team with two baseball trophies. Then Stockton Football Club gave

and District Baseball Association.

This was a local version of what we have come to know as the Holy Grail - the national Spalding Trophy. He also found various baseball medals from the era and explained in amusing anecdotal form the joys and despairs of his painstaking research. Bernard would recount how he would go eighteen months without a discovery, and then the doors would open and they would come in droves. Everyone at the meeting was inspired with his passion and persistence in his research goals, and how he brought that era alive with his stories.

Then Chris Harte, the Secretary of The Association of Sports Historians (ASH) talked about how his organisation works towards the interchange of information regarding British sports history, and encouraged SABR members to join.



John Gaustad receives recognition for his services to baseball in Britain

Barad Day told

how he started out doing family research at the request of his aunt. When he found out his grandfather, William McReddie, was a renowned footballer with the Middlesbrough Pioneers in the 1890's, it was only the beginning. He soon after found out his grandfather was also a renowned baseball player with Middlesbrough's baseball team. The decade following Spalding's round-the-world tour was a

him an old burnt and broken silver trophy to identify - people had been trying for years. Bernard cleaned and restored it. When he put the trophy and the photo together, one of those moments of discovery occurs that every researcher dreams of. It was the trophy in the photograph! Bernard immediately identified it as the Cleveland District Trophy, an award given by Albert Spalding to the Champions of the Cleveland

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memorabilia took place. Auctioneer Mike Ross raised approximately £100 for Chapter funds. The meeting ended with Tony Darkin's trivia quiz, and afterwards we had to chance to socialise and talk baseball into the evening.

An excellent time was had by all.

- Martin Hoerchner, based on Minutes by Graham Winterbone



This photograph from 1938 comes from Mike Ross's Transatlantic Baseball Review, issue of April 1991. It originally came from Les Hoole of Bradford, a veteran British baseball buff and collector of baseball memorabilia. In mid-August 1938, the English national team beat the American Olympic baseball team, three out of four matches, in what was described as a "Test Series" between the two countries. This team from Yorkshire played the same year, 1938. We'll try to bring you more information in the next issue of the Examiner.

SABR UK now on the Web

I am pleased to announce that SABR UK has recently obtained a site on the Internet. Aim your browser at www.sabr.org.uk. You'll see that it's nowhere near complete, but it's a good start, and has already received recognition from the head office. It will start to grow more as soon as I have more time after this issue of the Examiner is finished, which is now. Hopefully it will become a vehicle for letting people all over the world know who we are, especially those in Britain who would like to get in touch with us. And I'll close with a request for submissions and suggestions - I can't, and shouldn't, do this thing alone!

- *Martin Hoerchner*