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Leisure activities and sporting competitions for British First World War wounded veterans

Sophie Sibson

Senior Lecturer, Department of Language and Civilization, Catholic University of South West Brittany, Arradon, France

Abstract

In the society to which British World War One wounded soldiers came back to, sport had always played a role in the definition of a man's identity. It was a symbol of virility associated to the British athletic man.

During the war, the concept of masculinity, the strong man defending his family and nation, was used to encourage men to join the army force. This notion of masculinity continued in the 1920s. The sporting accomplishments that followed the military victory of 1918 were part of the British institutions' pride.

Regarding leisure activities, sport gained momentum and attracted more participants and spectators hence the economic prosperity. Football became a sport which attracted people in mass. Wembley stadium opened in 1923 and welcomed the same year 100,000 supporters at the Football Association Cup Final amongst whom was Georges V. Just like football, boxing, cricket and athletics were popular sports. Golf and tennis were considered as middle class sports. Bets on horse racing, boxing, greyhound races and football matches were more and more popular.

Even though some efforts were made regarding the presence of wounded veterans in different sports, one can think that the possibility for these men to actively participate in a physical activity and thus acquire the status of a man could have been hindered by their handicap.

Keywords: disabled veterans, sport, masculinity, public space

Résumé

Le sport avait toujours eu un rôle important dans la définition de l'identité masculine au sein de la société dans laquelle retournèrent les soldats blessés britanniques de la Grande Guerre. Le sport était un symbole de virilité associé à l'athlète masculin britannique.

Pendant la guerre, le concept de masculinité: l'homme fort protégeant sa famille et sa nation, était utilisé pour encourager les hommes à rejoindre les forces armées. Cette notion de masculinité continua à être présente dans les années 1920. Les accomplissements sportifs qui suivirent la victoire de 1918 faisaient partie de la fierté des institutions britanniques.

En ce qui concerne les activités de loisirs, le sport gagna en popularité et attira plus de participants et de spectateurs. Le football devint un sport qui attira les foules en masse. Le stade de Wembley ouvrit en 1923 et accueillit la même année 100000 supporters dont Georges V à la *Football Association Cup*. Tout comme le football, la boxe, le cricket et l'athlétisme étaient des sports populaires. Le golf et le tennis étaient considérés comme des sports pour la classe moyenne. Des paris sur les courses de chevaux, les combats de boxe, les courses de lévriers et les matchs de football devinrent de plus en plus populaires.

Bien qu'il y ait eu des efforts de fait concernant la présence de vétérans blessés au sein de différents sports, il peut être envisager que la possibilité pour ces hommes de participer activement à une activité physique et donc d'acquérir le statut d'homme ait pu être entravée par leur handicap.

Keywords: vétérans handicapés, sport, masculinité, espace public

Introduction

One of the aspects that brought an atmosphere of liberty and good health to the 1920s was the increase of interest in sports and leisure. Sport shaped gender, social class, local communities and a nation's identity. (Shepherd 2010: 81)

Sport had been part of a soldier's life while in service. It promoted discipline, helped to maintain physical health and reinforced team building while keeping a masculine competitiveness. (Anderson 2011: 55) After the war, sport for the middle-class and the aristocracy boomed. (Shepherd 2010: 82) In the growing suburbs of London, tennis clubs became an important part of the social scene while golf allowed to mix entertainment and business. (Shepherd 2010: 82) At the beginning of the 20th century, municipalities were much involved in the development of leisure. (Jones 1987: 167) They invested in all kind of sports like football, golf, and lawn tennis. Most of the big cities had a variety of sporting facilities. Liverpool, for example, was one of the towns which witnessed this development: between 1921 and 1930, the number of football pitches went from 154 to 172, tennis courts from 172 to 400 and golf courses from 1 to 5. (Jones 1987: 167) Sport also offered entertainment, and for some, the opportunity to bet. It was during the 1920s that the British national sport, football, played at the time in streets and gardens, became a sport which attracted huge crowds. Ana Carden-Coyne also underlines that after the war, bodybuilding was popular, muscles became the markers of men's rehabilitation and social reintegration. (Carden-Coyne 2005: 207-208) This showed that "the fragmented male subject had been restored from pieces to whole." (Carden-Coyne 2005: 207-208)

As of the participation of wounded veterans in different sports, logic suppositions can be drawn. Most of them also being relevant for able bodied men. Julie Anderson points out reasons that pushed wounded soldiers to practice a physical activity: sport having been part of their life prior to the war, continuing its practice was something natural. Sport was a mean to escape from boredom, and it was also a way of restoring masculinity and to show that their capacities were not altered. (Anderson 2001: 77-78) Through sport, veterans could also socialize with other people, in particular with women who came as spectators. However, some men were reluctant to practice a sport. In September 1922, the public can read in a press article: "Although there is reliable evidence forthcoming every day that it is possible for limbless men almost completely to overcome the disability when they have the will to try, there are all too many who are their own bad friends." (TNA: PRO PIN 38/474) One can imagine that this recalcitrance was caused by the fear of being confronted to the public's eye, a lack of self-confidence due to a loss of masculinity. Ana Carden-Coyne affirms that the spectacle that offered the war wounded satisfied a curiosity that could at the same time be an entertainment. (Carden-Coyne 2009: 93)

According to doctors at the time, sport had an enormous ideological and practical power. (Mason 2005: 7) Therapies linked to body exercise had proven to be benefic, encouraging the development of new forces and therefore helping veterans to retrieve, as far as possible, a "normal" life. Doctors, like the majority of the elite, thought that a physical activity would prevent the veteran's moral and mental decline since these men would have to bring to light

their virility. (Mason: 2007: 7) Sport had an important place in the definition of masculinity. A physical activity could allow the handicapped veterans to regain a social position and to restore their masculinity. The saying of Sir Arthur Pearson, founder of St Dunstan's, quoted in an article from the *Bystander* published in 1924 clearly underlines this idea:

There is an extraordinary pleasure, too, in overcoming a handicap, in being, if you like, a little bit of a marvel to yourself and to others. A sense of conquering difficulties, a sense of self-reliance, a feeling that though you may be blind, or deaf, or badly crippled in some other way, you are still holding a place in the normal life of the community; all this means a great deal. (The Bystander, June 11, 1922)

The introduction of facilities enabling the practice of different activities

In the immediate euphoria of the after-war, the possibilities to integrate the totality of war handicapped men in the life of the nation seemed to be very limited. In a manual for amputees handed out by the Disabled Society, one could read: "It is an established fact that with proper artificial limbs and a little training in use there are practically no limits to what a man can achieve in all departments of life, whether in business or in sport." (Howson 1921: xiii)

The manual encouraged maimed veterans to enjoy a large variety of leisure from driving a car, to riding horses, playing cricket and football. The aim of the manual was to force the reader to see these men as unchanged and not dispirited by their amputation. It also encouraged amputees to forget about the loss of one or several limbs. In order to find qualitative sources for this manual, the Disabled Society sent forms to amputee soldiers. The society published notices in newspapers in order to gather amputee soldiers' experiences. For example, on October 23rd 1920, the *Western Daily Press* published an article from the Disabled Society (*Western Daily Press*, October 23, 1920) informing of its intention to issue a manual. The article asked amputees to send in some aspects on which they would need clarification, information, tips that could be useful to other amputees, suggestions on the best suited jobs for men having lost an arm or a leg or both.

Some newspapers such as the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* in 1921 (*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, December 22, 1921) and the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* in January 1922 (*Gloucestershire Chronicle*, January 7, 1922) advertised the manual. They both boasted the quantity and quality of the information one could find in the manual. On February 1922, the *Diss Express* put forward the manual in a long article (*Diss Express*, February 17, 1922). It underlined all the achievements that had been made regarding wounded veterans in particular those mentioned in the manual. The very positive preface of John Galsworthy is quoted in the article: "The pluck of our limbless is so extraordinary that one hesitates to write of it for fear of 'slopping' over". The article then described the manual. It is said that when randomly reading through the pages one can find several positive examples of amputees who have gone back to a normal life. The article added: "It is truly said in the Preface that the 'articles written by men who have lost limbs themselves continually impress one with the fact that, given the will-power, the possibilities for the limbless are very great". The ideology of voluntarism is here very strong. The power of will over the body is clearly expressed and is put forward as being the key element in the success of handicapped men.

The manual's photos and texts highlight the fact that these men went back to their pre-war occupations, work and life. The photos were sent by veterans in order to be published in the manual of the Disabled Society. These photos were there to convince the disbelievers that amputees were capable of resuming physical activities like cricket which defined them not only

as real men but as Englishmen. Explanations were often added to the photos and offered different ways of modifying ones prosthesis and multiple devices in order to facilitate ones daily life like driving cars or riding bicycles.

Figure 1: An amputee veteran climbing a horse



FIG. 1. MOUNTING FROM THE OFF SIDE.

(Howson 1921: 127)

Figure 2: Mr Keith Jopp, a veteran who lost his left arm and left eye, driving a car.





(Howson 1921: 26)

The readers of this manual could find several publicities putting forward different prosthesis, wheelchairs, and also advertised items allowing invalids to take on a sporting activity. Below is an example of such an ad:

Figure 3: At the top of the page a publicity for saddles and bridles for amputees. At the bottom of the page: an ad for a specific handle for firearms for sportsmen who lost an arm.

Telegrams: STEGGALL, LONDON. Telephone: MAYFAIR 3038.

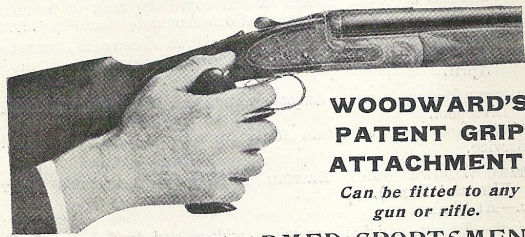
 **WHIPPY, STEGGALL & Co.**
LIMITED,
30, NORTH AUDLEY STREET, W. I. 

By appointment to H.M. THE KING. By appointment to H.M. QUEEN ALEXANDRA. H.M. THE KING OF SPAIN. H.M. THE KING OF ITALY. By appointment to H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

HUNTING, RACING AND POLO SADDLERS,
Make a speciality of:

A Saddle for riding with Artificial limb as used with much success. The Patent "Corvic" Bridle for riding with one arm, enabling rider to control two bits with single rein.

PRICES AND DETAILS ON APPLICATION.



**WOODWARD'S
PATENT GRIP
ATTACHMENT.**
*Can be fitted to any
gun or rifle.*

ONE-ARMED SPORTSMEN.

JAMES WOODWARD & SONS,
Established 1800,
Gun and Rifle Makers.

64, St. JAMES'S STREET, PALL MALL, LONDON, S.W.

Telegraphic Address: MUSKET, ST. JAMES, LONDON. Telephone: REGENT 880.

(Howson 1921: to the right of page 198)

In the *Yorkshire Evening Post* of May 17th 1928, one can find the description of a disabled man driving his car: "One of this man's legs is amputated at the thigh, and the other below the knee, but so expert is he in the control of his artificial legs that he daily drives his car, not with specially fitted controls, but by means of the ordinary clutch, brake, and accelerator pedals as fitted in a standard model." (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, May 17, 1928). The article boasts the wonders of prosthesis. Therefore, when reading this, the citizen could think that these men have totally adapted to their handicap and have gone back to a normal life. Nothing lets us think that some of them are still marginalized, except the end of the article where it is specified in

one sentence that: “Some of them are also self-conscious. They do not go out much socially...” (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, May 17, 1928).

Moreover, in a short video recording (IWM MGH 3878) from Roehampton hospital, the public can see two men walking next to each other. A question comes up on the screen: “Which man has an artificial limb?” then the answer appears: “As a matter of fact both have.”. Indeed, on the video both men seem to be walking without any difficulty. The public can see men wearing prosthesis, smiling, playing football, making baskets in workshops, riding bikes. Different sentences appear on the screen such as: “An artificial arm allows this man to again enjoy his favourite pastime.”, “The limbs are so perfectly fitted that a bicycle can be ridden with ease.”, and “Happy as a sandboy with his new leg.” The film is determined to show happy veterans.

Sporting competition: a way to regain a part of masculinity?

Sport and the competition that can sometimes be associated to it was and still is a way for men to affirm their masculinity. In a post-war community where the values of a men were judged on his physic, it seemed probably crucial for handicapped veterans to show their competitiveness in order to regain their masculinity.

Facilities were put into place in order to give these men the opportunity to take on a sporting activity. Efforts were also made to organize sporting events for the war wounded. During and after the Great War, different institutions and societies were created in order to guarantee a disabled soldier’s welfare. The Disabled Drivers Motor Club was created in 1922 and frequently organized rallies and competitions. (Brittain 2014: 43) The Society of One-Armed Golfers was created in 1932 and organized a tournament between Scotland and England in 1934. (Brittain 2014: 43) St Dunstan’s, Queen Mary at Roehampton and The Star and Garter Home for Disabled Ex-Servicemen all used sport as a help in the social rehabilitation of soldiers. Rowing was very popular: thus, in 1918, St Dunstan’s residents owned 48 boats used for training and competitions. (Silver 2018: 176)

Figure 4: Photos of St Dunstan's regatta for blinded soldiers and sailors.



(Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 29th May 29, 1920)

The above newspaper published in 1920 photos of St Dunstan's regatta. These photos show society that the men's handicap hasn't altered their interest and capacity to take part in sporting competitions. Other sporting competitions included; running, athletics, tug-of-war, shot put, rope climbing and cycling.

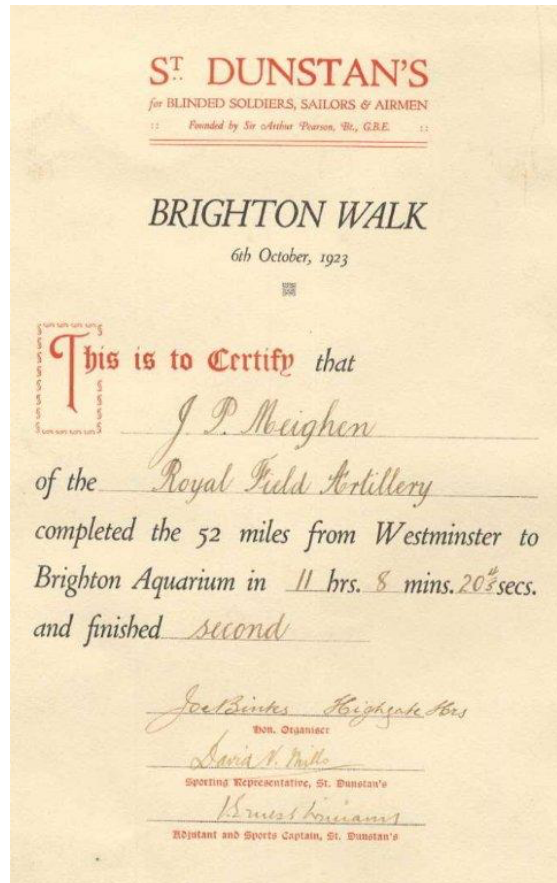
Alan M. Nicholls, a blind veteran who lost both his hands, testifies of his sporting experience in an article from the *Bognor Regis Observer* (*Bognor Regis Observer*, July 13, 1921) : "I cycle (tandem) long distances, my last achievement being from London to Cheltenham and back in 16 ½ hours. My next long ride will be on the 19th July from London to Leeds." This veteran, member of St Dunstan's, is the only man of this association having survived the Great War after losing both his hands and sight. He used prosthesis in order to cycle in tandem. When riding again after being wounded, Nicholls states: "It was rather wonderful to discover that I could cycle again."

In 1922, *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* published an article on the Brighton walk of blinded men:

Whatever views one may take as to the desirability or otherwise of holding athletic competitions for the afflicted, whether the misfortune be loss of sight or limb, there is no denying the fact that the performances which the blinded ex-soldiers from St Dunstan's accomplished, over the 51 ¾ mile of road between Westminster Bridge and the Brighton aquarium, last Saturday, were remarkably good...(Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, October 28, 1922)

As of May 19th 2021, the Blind Veterans UK website recalls that during the same race in 1923, the blinded veteran James Pardo Meighan finished the walk second in 11 hours, 8 minutes and 20 seconds.

Figure 5: Certificate given to the veteran who came second of the walk London-Brighton in 1923.



(Silver 2018: 176)

This extreme will of wanting to succeed could have probably been a way for these men to compensate a loss of masculinity.

During the 1920s, football became a sport that attracted a lot of spectators. (Shepherd 2010: 83) In 1921, the Football Association declared that football was an inappropriate sport for women and prohibited women's football on football league pitches. (Shepherd 2010: 84) Therefore, this sport had an even greater link with masculinity.

St Dunstan's residents also played football. As of May 19th 2021, the Blind Veterans UK website quotes that at the time they played the same way as shootouts with an eye-sighted goal keeper who clapped in his hands to indicate his position. St Dunstan's team had the support of Arsenal football club who organized a charity match against Aston Villa in order to raise funds for the blinded of St Dunstan's. In November 1920, the goal keeper of Arsenal, Ernest Williamson, played with the veterans from St Dunstan's. Twice, in December 1920 and February 1921, both teams met. Arsenal players played blindfolded, they won 4-0 and 5-3. The support of one of the wealthiest teams depicts a shared desire to publicly acknowledge the wounded veteran.

Figure 6: As of May 19th 2021, the Blind Veterans UK website publishes this photo of Sir Ian Fraser and Ernest Williamson presenting the trophies to veterans.



<http://100objects.blindveterans.org.uk/blind-football/>

Unlike the residents of St Dunstan's, those of the Star and Garter suffered from several handicaps. On November 11th 1920, they formed their own sports club, the Star and Garter Sports Club and thus participated in tennis, bowls, croquet and cricket matches as well as in different wheelchair races. (Silver 2018: 176) It seems as though some handicaps were better accepted than others. Blind men seem to have been the group of handicapped the best integrated in the public sphere, their wounds weren't too shocking for spectators.

On a video recording (British Pathé 1919) of a swimming competition in 1919 for handicapped veterans one can see amputees performing several swimming disciplines (races and diving). Through the video, the public can see men, who despite their handicap, seem to be enjoying this sport. The competition is supervised by able bodied judges who make sure the whole event is taken very seriously.

Sport was not only an activity to keep disabled veterans busy but it was also considered as a way of boosting the public's moral. (Guyatt 2001: 317) Thus, at Roehampton hospital, different races for amputee veterans were organized. One can wonder if these sporting practices were not a way of showing the public the medical feats but also war scars. The veterans were then part of an exhibition that the public could cheerfully contemplate. This idea is mentioned in an article of September 14th 1922 (TNA : PRO PIN 38/474), recounting a sporting event for amputees at Grangethorpe hospital: "The sports are not arranged primarily as an exhibition, but in the belief that they will furnish data for carrying the present methods to an even further point of success." Some members of the public watched these sporting activities to see human beings who, according to them had become deformed, and to attend a display of medical feats. Veterans participated in these events in order to raise funds for facilities but also to reassure the public on the fact that they were physically capable and that they had kept their masculinity. At the Queen Mary's Convalescent Auxiliary Hospital, postcards representing amputees taking part in races were sold to the public. The disabled veterans appeared as manly being able to participate in an intense sporting competition. (Carden-Coyne 2009: 163-163)

Figure 7: An amputee taking part in a race at Roehampton Hospital early 1920s.



(Guyatt 2001: 317)

Several post-war articles relate the facility with which disabled veterans practiced physical activities. In September 1919 and October 1919, the *Pavilion Blues* writes about swimming competitions for maimed veterans. In one of the articles it is written that each participant had either lost a leg or an arm, or both his legs (*The Pavilion Blues*, September 1919).

Figure 8: Veterans preparing for the start of the race.



Likewise, in February 1920, the public can read in the *Daily Mail* an article entitled: “Cricket on One leg: Officers’ Agility”. (TNA : PRO PIN 38/431)

Remarkable feats of agility were performed by an officer wearing a new type of artificial leg... Without any aid the officer strolled quite naturally across a slippery floor, walked along a plank, climbed a ladder, danced, jumped, and when on a beam balanced himself on one leg... ‘I shoot, play cricket, dance, and fish’ said an officer with the new leg. ‘In fact I am very nearly back to normal.’

In September 1922, an article of the *Daily Dispatch* recounts a sporting events organized at Grangethorpe hospital. (TNA / PRO PIN 38/474) The article begins as followed:

Limbless men demonstrated...how it is possible for a man who has the great handicap of a missing limb to participate in the sports of full-limbed men. They also proved the efficiency of orthopaedics in making maimed men active members of society... The spirit of sportsmanship prevailed, each man doing his best to beat his opponents.

In November 1922, on a sporting page the *Bystander* publishes the photo of an amputee playing golf.

Figure 9: Page 51 of the Bystander of November 8th 1922

The Bystander, November 8, 1922 387

Mainly About Oxford

WITH AN OLD CAMBRIDGE BLUE AS A MAKEWEIGHT



Photograph *Sport and General*
CAPTAIN HOPE CRISP

A distinguished Cambridge Lawn Tennis Blue before he lost his right leg at Hill 60 in 1915, competes in the Lawn Tennis Golf Cup Competition at Rushampton. He still plays lawn tennis with the aid of an artificial limb, but prefers at golf to rely on his wonderful power of balance. He is seen driving from the 15th tee



Photograph *Sport and General*
A SHOT AT GOAL BY OXFORD WITH STICK REVERSED

In the match between Oxford and Southgate at Southgate. Had their shooting been better Oxford would quite possibly have led at half-time instead of being one down, but afterwards their defence collapsed and they were beaten 9-1. While this was happening the "Rugger" fifteen were being equally severely trounced at Leicester



Photograph *L.S.*
TEVIS HUHN

Winning the 120 yards hurdles at the Oxford University Seniors' Sports. He also won the long jump and the 220 yards low hurdles. He comes from Princeton University, U.S.A.



Photograph *L.S.A.* *Photograph* *L.S.*
THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY LACROSSE TEAM

Who beat Catford, one of the leading Metropolitan Clubs, recently by 8 goals to 6. The game of lacrosse, always regarded as a bit of an interloper at the 'Varsities, is making steady headway at Oxford, and when her teams can prove, as they soon may be able to do, that they can hold their own in any company, the game will enjoy a boom

Image © Illustrated London News Group. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

(The Bystander, November 8, 1922)

The photo of Captain Hope Crisp (upper left) amputated of his right leg appears amongst three other photos showing able bodied men practicing different sporting activities. It is stated that this man still plays lawn tennis thanks to an artificial leg but that he prefers to use his very good balance to play golf.

The same newspaper dedicates in June 1924 a whole page to the practice of golfing with an artificial leg (*The Bystander*, June 11, 1924). The article is written by a veteran who had a leg amputation and now boasting the real pleasure he has when playing golf.

Figure 10: Page 78 of the Bystander on June 11th 1924.

Golf On An Artificial Leg

By CAPTAIN H. H. C. BAIRD, D.S.O.

IT was the late Sir Arthur Pearson who wrote :

There is an extraordinary pleasure, too, in overcoming a handicap—in being, if you like, a little bit of a marvel to yourself and to others. A sense of conquering difficulties, a sense of self-reliance, a feeling that though you may be blind, or deaf, or badly crippled in some other way, you are still holding a place in the normal life of the community; all this means a great deal.

Golf, perhaps more than any other pastime, gives to the legless man all of that to which Sir Arthur refers. And for this welcome fact a pat on the back must be given to both the public and the Ministry of Pensions for making provision for legless pensioners, of whom there are no less than 30,000, to be supplied with light metal limbs in place of the heavy, cumbersome and obsolete wooden legs supplied during the War.

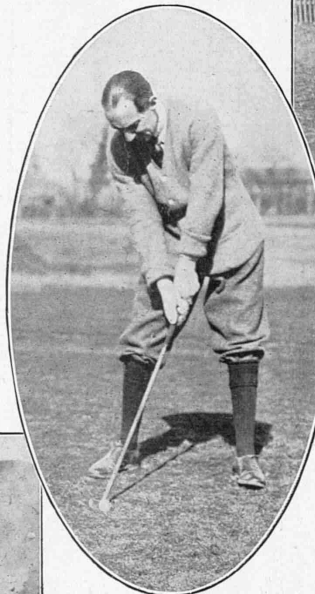
To the writer, it seems altogether wrong to see a legless man playing on one leg only and using crutches. To parade one's disability is never a pleasant thing to have to do at any time, and in golf there is certainly, no necessity for it; also, if ladies' high heels are taboo on the greens, how much more so must be the ends of one's crutches!

But at one time it was this or

nothing. Golf on a wooden artificial leg, weighing 8 lbs. or more, and trussed up with abominable body harness, was a sorry business; whereas to-day, with a light metal leg as well-balanced as a Purdey gun, with a bucket ventilated throughout its entire surface, and with one's body relieved of harness, all the many pleasures of the game are at the disposal of the legless man, however long and stiff the course, and



The drive, with the weight of the body on the good leg



Addressing the ball for an iron shot. Most of the weight is thrown on the left (artificial) leg

whatever the climatic conditions—and here I include all above-knee amputations with a stump of approximately six inches and more.

As to how many of the 17,000 above-knee amputation cases play golf I cannot, of course, say; probably nothing like as many as might, and it is for these, or those in touch with them, that this article is specially written, so that they may know that the loss of a leg is next to no handicap to one's efficiency at the game; that they can play their two rounds a day with comparative ease, and without getting unduly tired; and that they can hold their position on the course equally with the able-bodied.

Some legless men in their letters to me have asked me to give them some hints on how to play the game. To this there can only be one reply, namely, to make a careful study of the recognized principles of play, the application of which are an absolute necessity whatever one's disability. In any recognized book on the game, in any golfing school, or through the coaching of a professional or a friend with the gift of teaching, these principles are to be found; and once ingrained into the mind, the one-legged player, whether he has lost the right or left leg, will, with patience and practice, soon discover for himself how best they can be applied. It is in the achievement of this and afterwards that the full meaning of the late Sir Arthur Pearson's words will come home to him.

Yes, there is no denying that golf is a very great game, but its true greatness was never appreciated by the writer until it enabled him completely to surmount his disability. Cricket, tennis, boxing and almost all other recreations are, thanks to the introduction of the light metal limb, admittedly all within reach of the legless man; but only partially. In golf there is a full and welcome return to one's normal life again, and what that means can only be appreciated by those who have experienced it—in other words the writer has never enjoyed golf so much as he now does on his artificial leg, and that is saying a very great deal.



Photographs

Fish—Moore

Well out! The horizontal position of the artificial leg is made possible by a double-swivel pelvic band

Image © Illustrated London News Group. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

(The Bystander, June 11, 1924).

Through this article, the author underlines the fact that the amputation of a leg does not alter in any way one's capacity to play golf. He adds that these men can hold their position just as well as an able-bodied competitor. The Yorkshire Evening Post, also published an article on May

17th 1928 on the feats accomplished by soldiers wearing (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, May 17, 1928). The public can read: "Most marvellous of all is to see the one-armed men playing cricket...There are many numbers of men with artificial legs playing golf and tennis." A veteran, a tennis player, comments: "My artificial leg is as much second nature to me now as my false teeth." It is then written that this man runs as freely as an ordinary man.

Most of the time, articles mentioned the capacity of men to overcome their handicap through sport. Their feats in certain physical activities were put forward. Suzannah Biernoff describes the perception of amputees as "idyllic and idealized", their prosthesis and their body often appeared in the press. (Biernoff 2017: 60) The following front page is an example of this:

Figure 11: Front page of the Bath Chronicle published in March 5th 1921.

Guaranteed the Largest Sale of Any weekly newspaper in the City of Bath.

Take your—
G. W. R.
TICKETS in advance
AT
BELL'S TRAVEL BUREAU
7, New Bond Street, Bath,
and so save yourself time and
inconvenience at the moment
of departure.
NO BOOKING FEES CHARGED
NOTE.—EASTER HOLIDAY EXCURSION
arrangements to be announced later.

Registered for
Transmission in the
United Kingdom.

Bath Chronicle.

With which is Incorporated the "BATH WEEKLY ARGUS."

Vol. 166. No. 8333. SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1921. Price—TWO PENCE.

France, our Ally, is now offering
us, at a MODERATE price,
GOLDEN GUINEA
The Finest Sparkling
Muscatel Procurable.
GOLDEN GUINEA
is superior to many of
the most vintage
Champagnes and
obtainable at a far less
cost
From all leading Wine
Merchants.

FOOTBALL ON CRUTCHES:
Bath Pensioners' Match at Lambridge.



An interesting game of football was played upon the City's enclosure at Lambridge, on Thursday afternoon. The teams were drawn from the Pensioners' Hospital, at Combe Park, and represented the ear, nose and throat patients of Ward 5 on the one hand, and limbless patients on the other. The latter appeared on crutches under the name of the "Woodpeckers," whilst their opponents, known to the spectators as the "Sparrows," were handicapped by having their hands tied behind them. Photo "Bath Weekly Chronicle."

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Lowest Prices for Cash or Deferred Payments.
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Conclusion

Despite a disablement still stigmatized, war wounded veterans appeared in the public sphere practicing different sporting activities. In convalescent homes, sport was emphasized. As mentioned before, different sporting tournaments between disabled veterans were organized in the post-war years. In August 1924, the first international games for death people were organized in Paris. Games that entered sport history as the first international games for disabled adults. As of May 19th 2021, the Deaflympics notes on its website that nine countries participated in the 1924 games, amongst them Great-Britain and France regrouping a total of 148 athletes. The event was a success and was reconducted every 4 years by the International Comity of Silent Sports (*Libération* (online), November 17, 2018). However, it was only after the Second World War that sport for disabled people was largely introduced in order to help wounded veterans and civilians in their social rehabilitation. In 1944, on the demand of the British government, Dr Ludwog Guttman opened a center dedicated to wounds of the spine at Stoke Mandeville hospital in Great-Britain. With time, sport, considered some time as a mean of rehabilitation, became a leisure and then a competition. On July 29th 1948, the opening day of the London Olympic games, Dr Guttman organized the first competition for athletes in wheelchairs entitled the Stoke Mandeville Games, an important step in the history of Paralympics. As of May 19th 2021, the Paralympic website notes that these games regrouped 16 veterans (men and women) who took part in archery. In 1952, the Dutch joined the movement and the Stoke Mandeville Games were created. In 1960, these games became known as the Paralympic games. These first games took place in Rome and gathered 400 athletes of 43 different countries. More recently, in 2014, Prince Harry inaugurated the Invictus Games¹ in London, boasting the power of sport as a source of recovery, support for rehabilitation, and generator of greater public understanding towards war disabled. Fred Mason underlines that the First World War and the work that was done for the huge number of war wounded represented an important period in the development of sport for the disabled. (Mason 2005: 9)

Notes

¹ Mutlisport competition for war wounded.

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