

Olympic Memories

Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections marks history of the Olympic Games

Over One hundred years ago, the first modern Summer Games were held in Athens, the home of the ancient Olympics. Today an exhibition at the Cadbury Research Library, *Olympic Memories*, commemorates the first London Olympics and other Olympic Games throughout the 20th century.

Special Collections

Part of the [Archive Awareness Campaign](#), the exhibition explores the first London Olympic Games of 1908, the 1936 Berlin Olympics in Nazi Germany and the capital's postwar 'austerity Games' in 1948. The display draws on original photographs and collections from extensive Sports and Athletics Collections held at the University of Birmingham.

Sports Collections

Highlights from the collections include the heartrending story of Italian marathon runner Dorando Pietri. Petri finished first in the 1908 marathon but was disqualified for receiving assistance from the umpires as he crossed the line. The judges' decision not to award Pietri the gold medal prompted public outcry, catapulting the runner to international celebrity.

Berlin Olympics

The exhibition also traces the controversial Berlin Olympics. In 1936, the United States nearly boycotted the games in protest against Nazi policies however the team competed with the Black athlete, Jesse Owens, achieving glittering success by winning four gold medals. Former University of Birmingham student and athlete Audrey Court (nee Brown) also competed, winning silver in the 4 x 100 metre relay.

Sarah Kilroy, Senior Conservator, Cadbury Research Library Special

Collections commented: *“The exhibition is a fascinating glimpse into the remarkable culture of the Olympics including all the wonderful and bizarre events – and the conflicts behind the scenes. There is also a whole host of material to see such as memorabilia from Audrey Court’s personal collection which gives an insight into her experiences as an Olympic competitor; as well as the designs for flags and medals used as part of Birmingham’s bid to host the 1992 Olympic Games. We’re incredibly excited at the opportunity to show what we’re doing for the cultural Olympiad”.*

Explore the collection

Visitors can view an extended version of the exhibition containing unseen material about the history of the Olympic Games on Cadbury’s Research Library Flickr page www.flickr.com/photos/cadburyresearchlibrary/.

Further details about the University of Birmingham’s events for the Cultural Olympiad, to support the London 2012 Olympic Games are available at www.birmingham.ac.uk/olympics.

About Cadbury Research Library

- The library of the University of Birmingham was founded in 1880 as the library of the Mason Science College, which was the University’s predecessor. The **Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections** developed during the 1950s with the gift of the papers of Joseph and Austen Chamberlain, followed later by those of Neville Chamberlain and Lord Avon. Collections primarily focus on religious and political archives, together with papers of women, literary papers, public administration and items of local interest. Archival collections include the papers of the Church Missionary Society; Young Men’s Christian Association; Youth Hostels Association; Save the Children Fund; British Organ Archive; Noel Coward’s papers; as well as the institutional archives of the University of Birmingham itself. These holdings are supplemented by a substantial number of early printed books, including some fine incunabula. Book collections include literary, theological, historical, scientific and medical texts as well as a fine set of children’s books and material relating to eighteenth century philosophy, history and travel.
- The Cadbury Research Library is located in the Muirhead Tower on the Edgbaston campus and is well served by public transport. Further details about location, opening hours, registration requirements and reprographics services can be found here: <http://www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml>

About Archive Awareness Campaign

- The Archive Awareness Campaign (AAC) is spearheaded by the Archives & Records Association (ARA) www.archives.org.uk and funded by The National Archives nationalarchives.gov.uk.
- AAC www.archiveawareness.com is an ongoing celebration of archive treasures across the UK and Ireland. It provides a means for local archives to promote their services through open days, exhibitions, tours, workshops, competitions, performances and many more to help the public discover a piece of their own history.