

Juvenile Sports and Pastimes 1776

By Richard Johnson

"New Improvements on the Game of Hockey"

First contemporary use of the word hockey

First careful description of the game

First known illustration

References to hockey in the 1740s

Researched and Compiled

By

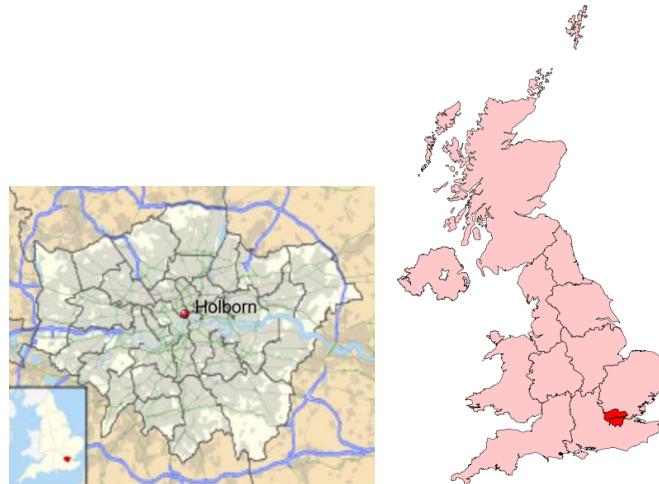
Dr. Carl Gidén

Patrick Houda

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HOLBORN, GREATER LONDON, ENGLAND



1776 - **Juvenile Sports and Pastimes, to which are prefixed, Memoirs of the Author: Including a new mode of Infant Education**, by **Richard Johnson** [1734–1793] (pseud. **Master Michel Angelo**), published by Thomas Carnan, at Number 65, in St. Paul's Church-yard, London, Second Edition 1776.

This work has the first known contemporary use of the word "hockey" - predating later records with about 25 years - and also includes the first known illustration of the game.

It is also important as it support other sources - as first hand memories - that "hockey" was played in London during the 1770s - and as the author claims he played the game at school during the 1740s, biographical notes of hockey-sticks being in use at Eton College in about 1750, does not seem impossible.

The work also gives a direct reference of Irish Hurling being the origin of Hockey - "which it resembles in almost every respect". It is notable that Hurling was regularly played in London by Irish immigrants during the 1700s - and that the author for making this conclusion must have witnessed some of those games.

Besides this the author offers the first known comparison between a hockey-stick and a shepherd's crook - some linguists believes that the French words for a shepherd's crook - "hocquet" or "hoquet" - which were both (sic) noted in this meaning for the first time in 1766 - are the origin for the term "hockey" - though the direct connection remains to be proved.

It is also worth noticing that the almost identical description of hockey in "Book of Games" by Sir Richards Philips, published in 1805 - the text shows so many similarities that Philips may have based his own story on the facts given in Johnson's work.

No copies of the first edition seem be preserved. The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature claims this was published in 1773 or 1774.

Two copies of this the second edition from 1776 still exists - one held at the Douce Collection of the Bodleian Library at Oxford - the other at Princeton University Library, Rare books and Special Collections.

A third edition by the same publisher appeared in 1780.

Richard Johnson was born in Central London as the son of James Johnson, a Coachman, and his wife Mary. He was baptized on October 4, 1734, at St. Andrews, Holborn, and seems to have grown up in this area together with his younger brother Lockington (born 1736). The family lived at Cross Street, Hutton Garden, in 1749, which was a part of St. Andrews Holborn Parish.

According to the memoirs of the author recorded in this work – he at the age of seven (ca. 1741) was sent to a Boarding School within a day's travel by chaise from London. He remained at this school for several years – probably until 1748 – and during those years practiced the games described in this book. He recalls himself as a good reader, writer and drawer, being given the name "Michel Angelo" as a compliment by his drawing-master – a name he constantly went by in the school.

In February 1749, aged fourteen, Johnson was apprenticed to the printer Stephen Gilbert of Jewin Street. Shortly afterwards Gilbert died, but Johnson stayed on as apprentice of (William?) Gilbert, his Executor, and took up his freedom 3 August 1756. Within two weeks, Johnson married Ann, the daughter of a Mr. John Jennings of Alcester. They had three children; Richard (1757), Samuel (1761), and Mary or "Polly" (1763).

Mrs. Johnson's later career is summed up in a note which her husband made in his day-book after the survey of expenditure for 1773; "Became an unhappy Lunatic, and was placed in Bethlem, November 19, 1763, from whence she was removed, as also from the Cares and Troubles of a World in which she had been undeservedly unfortunate, on die 20th. Day of February, 1773"

Besides his work as a printer, Johnson took to hack-writing a little before 1770. He succeeded, not always without difficulty, in supporting himself and his family by his pen for nearly twenty-five years. He was also illustrator, editor, complier, corrector of the press, and author of a great number of children's books. He produced some of his works under pseudonyms, and was said to be "not above copying and plagiarism". Johnson was in part responsible for a 1771 edition of Wotton's Baronetage.

According to the Gentleman's Magazine and European Magazine of 1793, Johnson died on the 25th of February in the house of a Mr. Cornhill at No. 17 Bride-Lane – Fleet Street, in the Parish of St. Bride, London, where he had been living since December 24, 1784.

His tombstone is in Hendon at the churchyard of St. Mary, located 7 miles (11 km) northwest of Central London. It is perhaps the most comprehensive public source of information on the man and his works, and bears this inscription;

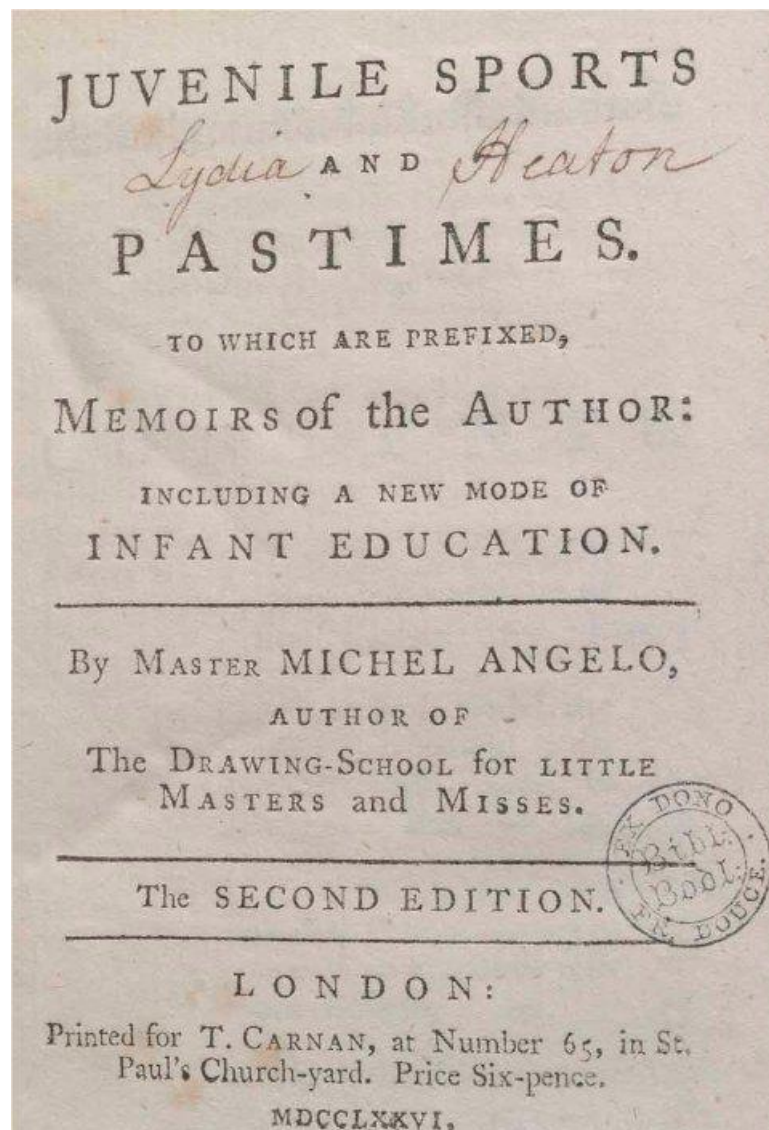
TO THE MEMORY
OF
Mr. RICHARD JOHNSON,
CITIZEN,
Who died Feb 25th, 1793,
Aged 59 years.

He possessed a good and generous Mind,
Was much beloved,
As well as being admired for,
His moral principles in Literature.

This tombstone was erected by Johnson's only surviving son, Richard, whom it also commemorates. Something must probably be allowed for filial piety in the last part of the epitaph; for as many of Johnson's works appeared anonymously, such admiration as they may have excited seems to have left professional critics unmoved.

His connection with Hendon is unclear – but it is possible that some of his ancestors were buried at the same place.

Juvenile Sports and Pastimes, illustrated with several woodcuts by the author, begins with Johnson's memoirs detailing the clever and incremental way in which his father undertook his early education, and a careful description of his years at the boarding school. The author explains that as "...it should be the study of every one, while he is at his book, to employ his time to the best advantage, so should he not suffer those leisure hours devoted to play to pass idly away. He should choose such sports as are manly, and require activity or ingenuity, so much the better". He therefore devotes the remainder of the book to refinements for such activities as making counters, choosing and using tops, wrapping a cricket bat, making bows and arrows and playing games of marbles and hockey.



CHAP. XI.

New Improvements on the Game of Hockey.

THIS is a noble and manly exercise, but is proper only for the cooler months of the year, as it requires a great share of activity. It was undoubtedly first taken from the Irish game of Hurling, which it resembles in almost every respect.

The materials for this sport are only of three sorts; the goals, the hockey, and the hockey-sticks, all which are easily to be procured, and without much expence. Before I describe these matters to my little

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the pupils, I must beg them to stop a moment, and view this picture; and I am inclined to believe they will wish it were possible for them to make one among these merry little fellows.



This sport can be pursued no where with pleasure, but in a wide spacious field, where the hockey may have its full scope. This game may be played by any even number of boys, divided into two parties. Each party must fix their goal at the greatest distance from one another the field will admit of, leaving however about ten feet space between each goal and the extremity

mity of the field. The goals need consist only of a very long piece of briar, each end being stuck in the ground, and thereby forming a kind of erect arch. The goal at the upper end of the field is called the upper goal, and the other the lower: the parties who play are likewise distinguished in the same manner.

Every one who plays must be provided with a hockey-stick. This is a matter of no small consequence, as I have known a boy give another almost any thing for one which has pleased his fancy; and I myself have parted with a minced pie upon the same occasion. I will now give you the description of a good hockey-stick. It is no matter what wood it is, so that it is tough, not liable to break, and has the desired form. It must be about a yard long, or rather in proportion to the size of the sportsman. The top of it, I mean that part of it which you hold in your hand, may be as thick as a common walking-stick; but the thicker it is at the bottom, the better. The bottom, however, must not be strait, but crooked, and that in the form of a shepherd's crook is valuable beyond

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yond everything. The use of the crook part is to disengage the hockey from your antagonists, when it is so surrounded by them that you cannot get at it to give it a full stroke toward their goal:

The kockey must be made of the largest cork-bung you can get. Cut the edges round, and then it is prepared for use.

The goals being fixed, the hockey prepared, and the parties agreed on, you then proceed to your sport in the following manner. Both parties meet as nearly as possible, in the middle between the two goals, when the hockey is tossed up, and every one tries his best to beat the hockey through the goal of his antagonist; which being once accomplished, the game is over. I have known a game last for two or three hours, though followed up with the greatest ardour and alacrity, such have been the excellent sportsmen who composed the two parties.

There is a wide difference in *merely* playing this game, and playing it *gently*. Some boys are of such an eager, warm disposition, that they care not whom they hurt, or whose skin they break, so
that

that they get at the kockey; but this is the mark of a bad player. A right sportsman is always cool, and ready to take any advantage that offers, without having recourse to unfair proceedings. When he sees the kockey is so surrounded by both parties, that he cannot get a fair stroke at it, he makes one among them with his crook, and endeavours to get it between, so that, by a sudden jerk, he may disengage it from him; while others, who are as good players as himself on the other side, will endeavour to prevent it, by beating their hockey-sticks against his, and at the same time aiming to give it such strokes as may force it their way. All this may be done without much violence, or any hurt. I have played at this game for half a day together, without giving or receiving the least cause for complaint.

According to the rules of this game, you are never to touch the kockey with your hands, from the time it is tossed up till it is got through one of the goals; and, tho' you are allowed to push either of your antagonists aside, yet it is considered not only as foul play, but as very ungentle also,

also, to strive either to throw another down, or trip up his heels. Such proceedings always produce ill-will, quarrelling, and sometimes fighting: but every young gentleman will wish to make his companion as happy as himself, since, without mutual harmony, the finest sport in the world will be rendered dull, insipid, and disgusting.
