

The First Ever English Olimpick Games by Celia Haddon.
Hodder and Stoughton 2005.

As the spelling of the word Olimpick (sic) suggests, this quirky and entertaining little book is an historical piece, describing in detail the games put on in the Cotswolds in the 17th century by the lawyer and Games impresario Robert Dover.

Celia Haddon's research is, as always, meticulous, and she takes the reader through the various sports played at the Games, some of a seriously violent nature, as well as the social and practical side of the Games as an event.

Each of the chapters is prefaced by a contemporary poem – of diverse quality! – and the text is interspersed with woodcuts from the period.

This should be required reading in the run up to the 2012 extravaganza!

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh