

«Collecter le patrimoine sportif»

Conférence en ligne - 30 septembre 2025

Conferencia ICMAH-ICOM

Dr Justine Reilly, Sporting Heritage Director

Dr Justine Reilly, Director of Sporting Heritage, opened the conference by setting the scene for an inspiring discussion on the cultural and social value of sporting heritage. She introduced the work of her organization, founded around fifteen years ago in the UK, which is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and celebrating sporting collections in all their forms. These include both tangible elements — such as objects, archives, photographs, and films — and intangible aspects, including oral histories, traditions, and community memories that connect generations.

Dr Reilly highlighted the ongoing challenge of raising awareness about the significance of sports heritage within the broader heritage and museum sectors. She emphasized that, too often, sports-related materials are overlooked or held outside formal institutions, despite their vital role in reflecting social, cultural, and economic history. According to her, without sport, national heritage narratives remain incomplete, as sport runs through every layer of human experience.

She went on to present Sporting Heritage's key initiatives, including the Community Grants Programme, which has supported over a hundred grassroots projects; the Sporting Heritage Awards, celebrating inspirational work across the UK; and the National Sporting Heritage Day, held annually on September 30th, to promote the recognition of sports as an integral part of cultural heritage.

Through these programmes, Dr Reilly advocates for an inclusive and collaborative approach, encouraging partnerships between museums, clubs, schools, and private collectors. She concluded by reaffirming that sport is not only about competition — it is a shared cultural language, a tool for education and mental well-being, and a bridge that connects communities, making heritage more vibrant, diverse, and accessible for all.



Isabella Kielmińska, Museum of Sports and Tourism in Warsaw

Isabella Kluminska, from the Museum of Sports and Tourism in Warsaw, presented her institution's extensive and diverse collections, one of the largest in Poland. The museum was founded in 1952 following the Ministry of Sport's initiatives, and its origins trace back to the collection of dispersed sports objects and archival documents after World War II, alongside early efforts by the Central Institute of Physical Education in the late 1930s. Initially modest and housed in a single room, the museum moved in 1966 to the Skra Warsaw Stadium and later in 2004 to the Olympic Centre in Warsaw, where it remains today.

The museum covers dozens of sports disciplines, illustrating the evolution of equipment, sportswear, and organizational practices, as well as notable achievements of Polish athletes. It also preserves objects related to tourism history, including travel trunks, luggage, and accessories from the 19th and early 20th centuries, showcasing historical travel practices and innovations.

Highlights include an impressive collection of Olympic medals, diplomas, and torches, including the torch from the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The sports equipment collection is extensive, ranging from 19th-century velocipedes and racing bicycles of Polish production to skis and gear used by Olympic champions, bobsleighs, historic weights and dumbbells, speedway motorcycles, and children's sleds.

The museum also houses an important artistic and iconographic collection, including paintings, prints, sculptures, textiles, posters, and artistic medals, often created by renowned Polish artists. Its sports and Olympic uniforms document the history of Polish athletic excellence.

Today, the museum preserves over 92,000 objects, offering a comprehensive overview of Poland's sports and tourism heritage. Isabella Kluminska emphasized the historical, cultural, and educational significance of the collections, highlighting their role in preserving Poland's sporting memory and encouraging visitors to explore these unique treasures.



Jed Smith, Australian Sports Museum

Jed Smith, from the Australian Sports Museum in Melbourne, presented both his museum and the Sports Museum Network, an informal network connecting sports museum professionals across Australia and New Zealand. He began by acknowledging the Wurundjeri Woiburung people, traditional custodians of Melbourne, highlighting the importance of local culture and heritage. Melbourne, a city renowned for its sporting culture, hosts major international events such as the Australian Open and the Grand Prix, and considers itself the sporting heart of Australia.

The museum has a dual mission: to promote the social significance of sport as a lens to understand Australian society and identity, and to enhance the visitor experience at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, where it is located. Jed explained that the museum uses sport as a prism to understand Australia's history, culture, and values. The museum holds over 100,000 objects spanning nearly 100 sports disciplines, with audiovisual collections, interactive exhibits, and historical equipment, offering visitors an engaging, educational, and immersive experience.

The Sports Museum Network was created to break the isolation of professionals working in dispersed institutions and now includes 120 individual members across more than 5,500 kilometers. The network encourages communication, knowledge sharing, and collaboration through annual meetings, fortnightly virtual gatherings, a private Facebook group, and a comprehensive membership directory. Members share advice, experiences, and best practices, whether they are from large museums, small institutions, or local sports clubs.

Jed highlighted concrete network activities, including visits to museums under construction, discussions with athletes, and exposure to lesser-known sports collections. He emphasized the network's role in connecting professionals, fostering innovation, and enhancing community engagement. His presentation demonstrated how a sports museum can be educational, interactive, and locally embedded, while simultaneously building a supportive professional community crucial for preserving and promoting Australia's sporting heritage.



Koray Saglam, Besiktas Club Museum, Istanbul

Koray Saglam from the Besiktas Club Museum in Istanbul shared the rich history and collections of one of Turkey's most iconic sports clubs. Besiktas, founded over 122 years ago, is not only one of Turkey's "big three" football clubs but also a multi-sport institution, active in up to 15 different sports, including athletics, basketball, boxing, and disability sports. Football remains the most prominent, yet the club has a long tradition of developing athletes across many disciplines.

The museum was first established in 2001 as a small hall of fame and officially registered by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2007, making it Turkey's first registered sports museum. Initially covering 250 m², it focused on permanent exhibitions showcasing the club's achievements. In 2017, it was renovated and reopened as a modern, visitor-focused museum, emphasizing accessibility for children and people with disabilities, along with digital interactive exhibits. Today, it spans two floors. The ground floor hosts temporary exhibitions, while the second floor contains the main permanent collection, organized both thematically and chronologically.

The museum holds 781 registered items, including medals, cups, plaques, jerseys, flags, and personal memorabilia of players. Acquisition is mainly through donations, carefully documented using museum registration standards. Items are stored in climate-controlled areas, with a conservation workshop for preventive care and restoration. Visitors enjoy a highly interactive experience, including a decibel room and mapping area, making the club's history engaging for fans, students, and researchers. The museum preserves Besiktas' heritage while providing a modern, educational, and entertaining environment.

