**Chapter III**

**Sports.Education.Interesting Facts about Birmingham**

**3.1 Sports**

Birmingham has played an important role in Great Britain’s sport history.William McGregor, the director of Aston Villa and resident of Birmingham, was the founder of the Football League, the first football league in the world.He proposed to the other directors of football clubs "that ten or twelve of the most prominent clubs in England combine to arrange home-and-away fixtures each season".The tennis game was developed between 1859 and 1865 in one of the districts of the city, Edgbaston Archery and Lawn Tennis Society being the oldest tennis club in the world.

Birmingham is the home of two of country’s oldest football teams:Aston Villa and Birmingham City.A great rivalry is between these two teams, the match between them is called the Second City Derby.Another team, which has the ground in the surroundings of Birmingham is West Bromwich Albion.Both these three teams currently play in the Premier League, Aston Villa having seven League trophies.Other football teams which have their grounds in the surroundings of Birmingham are Stoke City and Wolverhampton Wonderers, but, even though these two also play in the Premier League, their importance and influence in football is on a lower level.

Warwick County Cricket Club, six times County Championship winners, play at Edgbaston Cricket Club.On this venue Brian Lara beat the record of the highest score by a batsman in first-class cricket with 501 not out for Warwickshire in 1994.

AEGON Classic is, along with Wimbledon and Eastbourne, one of the three UK tournaments on the WTA tour.The matches take place annually at the Edgbaston Priory Club**.**

Birmingham is also known for its importance on other sports such as athletics, rugby, hockey, volleyball, golf, boxing, swimming, ice skating, motor racing and others.

**3.2 Education**

The city council is the largest education authority in England, being responsible for 25 nursery schools, 328 primary schools, 77 secondary schools and 29 special schools.Most of Birmingham’s state schools are community schools, but there are also voluntary aided schools within the state system.The most prestigious independent school is king Edward’s School, the seven schools in the King Edward the VI Foundation being known nationally for setting high academic standards.

Three universities can be found in Birmigham: the University of Birmingham, Aston University and Birmingham City University.In a top 200 universities made by Times Higher Education, the University of Birmingham is seen as the 145th choice in the world.The others two don’t appear on this top.Birmigham is also the home of two university colleges (Newman University College and University College Birmigham).The Birmingham Conservatoire and Birmingham School of Acting, both part of the Birmingham City University, offer higher education in specific art subjects.The world’s tallest free-standing clock tower, the Joseph Chamberlain Memorial Clock Tower is located in the court of the University of Birmingham.

Birmingham Metropolitan College is one of the largest further education colleges in the country.It was formed after a merger between smaller colleges.Other colleges are Joseph Chamberlain College and Solihull, which was awarded Beacon Status and an overall OFSTED grade 1.

Seven schools are to become academies in Birmingham, in an attempt to improve the learning experience.ARK Academies and Edutrust invested 4 million pounds and will run two academies each.Richardsons Capital LLP will run other academy and other two academies are in waiting of sponsors.

**3.1 Interesting facts**

* Birmingham is famous all over the world for being the greenest city in Europe.6 million trees, more parks than any in other city in Europe, a record-breaking 14 consecutive gold medals from the Chelsea Flower Show and National Britain in Bloom awards attest its repute.
* Council street cleaners regularly sweep 1300 miles of road and empty 4000 litter bins, making from Birmingham officially the cleanest large city in the United Kingdom.
* Birmingham’s Central Library is the city’s busiest building, Europe’s largest public library and lends 8 million books each year.
* There are 30 other Birminghams around the world and even one crater on the moon with this name.
* Celluloid was invented in 1862 by Alexander Parkes.The first plastic was known as Parkensine.
* The first of the famous Odeon chain of cinemas first opened in Perry Barr, Birmingham in 1930.
* John Wyatt invented a machine for spinning wool, the spinning jenny.
* Henry Clay invented a new form of papier mache using sheets of paper (1772).
* Joseph Priestley, a Birmingham minister (1780-91), discovered oxygen.
* The history of the founding de Birmingham family is difficult to follow as there were seven Williams in a row.
* Birmingham City Council is the biggest local authority in Europe, and employs twice as many people as the European commission.
* The Jewellery Quarter is the largest concentration of dedicated jewelers in Europe. Half of all jewelry made in the UK comes from Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.