

# Olympic medals

*This article is a continuation of those published in issues 29, 34, 52 and 55 of the Olympic Review, which covered the period 1896-1928.*

1932 - LOS ANGELES



As foreseen, the medal to be awarded to the winners of the Xth Olympic Games was the same as the one given during the preceding Olympiad. We know that it was designed by the Italian professor Giuseppe CASSIOLI and was chosen after a competition organised by the International Olympic Commit-

tee, to be awarded to all future winners of the Games. The only alteration made was the words engraved on the reverse side: "Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles, 1932".

The commemorative medal, as well as the official poster, was designed by Julio KILENYI, a sculptor from New York. The face represents an athlete carrying the flag of the Xth Olympiad, while on the reverse side, two women bear the emblem of the United States; one of them has a branch of olive in her hand and the other a shield with the seals of the State of California and Los Angeles. On this side is also the Californian poppy and on the margin, at the top, appear the words: "Los Angeles - California". These medals were struck in bronze.



*Harry Muir KURTZWORTH gives the final touch to the diploma of the Games of Los Angeles.*

Mr. Harry Muir KURTZWORTH, art curator of the Los Angeles Museum, designed the diploma, to be awarded to participants. Due to its numerous symbols, this work of art is certainly one of the richest in meanings. Among the figures "Athena", patroness of the Olympics, goddess of virtue, arts, victory and the home, represents the ideal of the Olympic Games; Columbia, the modern Athena, symbolising the United States of America, with the torch of the Olympiad in her hand, stands in an attitude of welcome to the youth of the world; the frieze at the top of the diploma represents various aspects of the Games as depicted in ancient Greek works of art.

#### 1936 - BERLIN





Except for the change in the number of the Olympiad and the name of the city organising the Games, the Olympic medal for 1936 was the same as for 1928 and 1932. The B.H. Mayer Company in Pforzheim minted 960 such medals and put them at the Organising Committee's disposal.



On the other hand, a competition was organised for choosing the commemorative medal. 15 invited artists took part and the design of Otto PLACZEK, a sculptor from Berlin, was chosen. There are five athletes on the face, naturally representing the five continents united within the Olympic movement; the five of them are pulling on the rope which represents the Olympic bell toll. This bell especially made for the celebration of the Olympiad and emblem of these Games, is engraved on the reverse side. 20,000 such medals were produced in bronze. Otto PLACZEK was also entrusted with the design of other medals, for instance, the one awarded to the owners of the pigeons used in the Opening Ceremony. The artist used the same design for the reverse side: the Olympic bell; but the face was different according to the beneficiaries. For the case in question, the face bears a flying pigeon.



Among the 12 drafts, the diploma designed by Ernst BOEHM, a Berlin professor, was chosen. It was quite a new idea. On white cardboard, he printed, with a golden background, the Brandenburg Gate, the Olympic bell, the name of the winner and his sport. Underneath, on a gold band, were the signatures of the Presidents of the IOC and of the Organising Committee, together with the five Olympic rings in colour.

Still on this subject, we would like to point out the good idea of the organisers, who decided to give a young oak tree to the winners, during the victory ceremony. They carried them back home and planted them, as living memories, in a place of their choice. The famous Jack BERESFORD planted his in the garden of his school in Bedford. The winners also received crowns of oak leaves to wear on their heads, which was the exact replica of the one given to the winners of chariot races in ancient Rome.

## LONDON - 1948



For the fourth time, the design of Professor Giuseppe CASSIOLI of Florence and bearing the words "XIVth Olympiad - London 1948" was used and appropriate numbers were minted to be awarded to all winners in Olympic competitions, both in individual

and team events. The reserve of a prize winning team, actually taking part in the competitions, was also entitled to a medal.

For the commemorative medal, the Organising Committee agreed to use the design of Sir Bertram MACKENNEL, which was used for the 1908 Games. The reverse bears the inscription "XIV Olympiad, London, 1948" and the five Olympic rings above a reproduction of Big Ben and St. Stephen's Tower of the Palace of Westminster. 8676 medals, minted by Messrs. John Pinches Ltd., were distributed to all those entitled to a badge, i.e. IOC, NOCs, IFs, judges, team officials, etc.

An Olympic diploma adorned with a laurel leaf crown and two palms around the name of the beneficiary and the signature of the IOC and Organising Committee's Presidents was given to all competitors placed in the first six.



## 1952 - HELSINKI



On the request of the International Olympic Committee, which, during its 1951 Session rejected a new project, the Organising Committee again used the CASSIOLI medal and the Finnish artist, Aukusti TUHKA designed the writing of "XV Olympiad - Helsinki 1952". This was done in a classical though

elegant way. Nearly 960 medals were struck in the three appropriate metals.



An open competition facilitated the choice, from among 35 works of art, of the commemorative medal, designed by the young sculptor, Kauko RÄSÄNEN. For the first time,

the sketch was quite modern and was remarkable for its simplicity. 14,000 commemorative medals were minted.



A competition was also organised for the diploma, but unable to choose any of the works presented, the judges invited the five prize winners to submit new designs. The Finnish artist ROLF CHRISTIANSEN was the author of this diploma, which was awarded to the six best in each event and sent to the respective National Olympic Committees at the end of 1952. The diplomas to be given to Danish, Swedish and Norwegian athletes were printed in Swedish while the others were printed in Finnish.

