

The Olympic Museum and Study Centre Venture

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Members of the Olympic family will have learnt, through the "Olympic Review", of the solemn opening, on 23rd June 1982, of a temporary Olympic museum which has been installed at 18, avenue Ruchonnet, in the very heart of Lausanne. Three months later came the opening of the library and study centre, which are housed on the first floor of the same building.

From the beginning, the museum and library have enjoyed of contributions from the archives of the IOC in the form of objects and documents, and obviously our collections will be added to very quickly through purchases and donations. In fact, we are sure that in many countries, in the archives of the NOC and in private showcases, there are other treasures and precious documents which should find a home in the Olympic museum and library. Moreover, the President of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, has had a special diploma produced, which will be handed over, with his signature, to each generous donor.

We now have several months of activity behind us – so what has been happening since the day the Syndic of Lausanne and the President of the IOC cut the ceremonial ribbon which barred the door, and what is happening now at the beginning of 1983?

The museum covers an area of about 200 sq. metres. This rather limited space allows only a brief portrayal of Olympic history, so it cannot really be called a museum at the moment, but rather a thematic exhibition which illustrates the Olympic epic by use of enlarged photographs and written commentaries. In addition, since the opening we have installed about twenty showcases in which the greatest possible number of items, grouped together by "Olympiad", are displayed as "family souvenirs".

For example, one showcase contains some of the gifts received by the current President, during his many visits abroad. Another shows the original Olympic Cup and the various Olympic Orders, as well as the trophy offered

in 1912 by the Czar of Russia to the King of Sweden, and made by the great Russian artist Fabergé. Documents relating to the life and work of Pierre de Coubertin figure prominently, of course, together with some of the furniture from the office which he used at Mon-Repos. The museum is supplemented by a small room with a slideshow presentation which provides an excellent illustration of the Olympic movement and is very popular with visitors. So far, these visitors have numbered about 3,000, including many foreigners. Sports clubs, scout troops, and school groups come more and more often, thus establishing a link between young Swiss people and our movement.

The visitors are in turn welcomed by young sportsmen and women from the Lausanne region, so offering them an opportunity for some part-time work outside their training and bringing a note of spontaneity to this Olympic sanctuary – which might otherwise be rather solemn!

The installation of the library and the study centre is now being completed. First of all, the voluminous documentation taken from the IOC archives had to be sorted out in order to make it accessible to the public. In particular, a list had to be drawn up which, until all the information can be transferred to a computer, must serve as the main working document for any library. We are also seeking to develop contacts with similar institutions. This is why we hope to bring together at Lausanne all those in charge of museums, libraries and study centres devoted to Olympism and to sport which have been, or are being set up almost everywhere in the world. In the months to come, the Olympic study centre hopes to publish the first original studies to be carried out under its auspices.

However, as the President of the IOC has said many times, this whole activity has a longer term objective, hence the use of the term "temporary". In fact, we consider the work currently being carried out as experimental; it serves as a testing ground for a big project

which it is hoped will be put underway over the next four years: the creation of an Olympic Centre on the magnificent site acquired' in August 1982 by the IOC in conjunction with the Town of Lausanne. Situated on the quay at Ouchy, in front of Lake Lemman, with a splendid view of Savoy and the Alps, this property comprises an area of about 12,500

Mr. Pedro Ramirez Vazquez, an architect of international renown, and member of the IOC, and his Lausanne colleague, Jean-Pierre Cahen, are at this moment putting the finishing touches to plans for this project. A scale model of which, in its initial form, was displayed at the IOC Session held in Rome in May 1982. The architects are aiming to produce a first class



sq. metres and includes a residence to house the IOC presidency and related services. The intention is to construct three new buildings, one to house the IOC directorate and related services, one for the Olympic museum and the third as an auditorium with a seating capacity of about 250, which we hope to open in August 1986. On the occasion of the IOC Session which it is planned will be held there to allocate the Games of 1992. I say "it is planned" quite deliberately because many great obstacles must still be overcome before work can begin.

scheme which will take account both of the requirements of the IOC, and of the need to protect the site and the surroundings. The latter will play an important part, of course, if the building is to be granted planning permission by the Lausanne authorities with at least the tacit agreement of the local people, who are naturally very concerned to preserve this famous environment. The people of Lausanne would also benefit by a new public park of about 5,000 sq. metres on that part of the ground reserved for the Town of Lausanne,

which is to be laid out as an Olympic Park with sculptures commissioned by the IOC from artists of many countries.

Since they were first presented at Rome, the plans have undergone many changes. In order to make way for the auditorium, the library and study centre will be transferred to the Chateau de Vidy, the present headquarters of the IOC, which the municipality of Lausanne has been kind enough to leave at our disposal. The building of the auditorium will also enable groups of IFs and NOCs to avail themselves of meeting rooms, thus making the Ouchy complex not only the headquarters of the IOC but also truly the centre of the Olympic Movement.

The IOC has set up two working groups to advise and consult on this work and keep in direct touch with all the different interests in Lausanne; one consultative group for the construction itself, the other for the museum. We are happy to have been able to ensure the collaboration of the International Council of Museums, which has its headquarters at Paris, and whose Secretary General, Mr. Luis Monreal, will be a member of the team which we have put together. These working groups have already held their first meetings and the Olympic Centre project will take on a definitive form before the end of 1983, if everything goes according to plan.

In the meantime, let us make the best of what we have got! Do send us everything you feel worthy of display in the Olympic museum and do not forget to come and see us, even at our temporary address, if you are coming to Lausanne! From now on we can offer you a warm welcome at the Museum on the avenue Ruchonnet and we will continue to keep you up to date with the progress of what I have dubbed at the head of this piece "The Olympic Museum and Study Centre Venture".

R. G.

