

FESTIVAL OF SYMBOLS AT MIRVILLE



To greet the flame, nearly one and a half thousand guests had come at the invitation of the host, Mr Geoffroy de Navacelle, president of the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee : Mr Philippe Chatrier, IOC member in France, Mr Raymond Cafner, IOC Administrateur Délégué, represented the IOC and its president. Messrs Jean-Claude Killy and Michel Barnier, co-presidents of the Albertville COJO, as well, of course, as Mr Nelson Paillou, NOC President, together with the President of the French National Assembly, Mr Laurent Fabius; Mrs Frédérique Bredin, French Minister of Youth and Sports ; Mr Cousquer, director of La Poste ; Mr Bondoux, chairman of the Olympic medallists association, accompanied by a sizeable delegation.

Greeted by the "Ode to Joy", the Olympic torch, carried by a young man from Mirville, took up its place on the wall of the château, and its flame served to light a new torch which departed fifteen minutes later to the strains of the Olympic hymn. In

After the Arc de Triomphe in Paris...

THE FLAME HONOURS PIERRE DE COUBERTIN

Coming from Olympia, the Flame of the XVI Winter Games, after landing at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, went up the Champs-Élysées to great acclaim to begin its long journey across France before its arrival in Albertville for the Opening Ceremony on 8th February 1992. In Haute-Normandie, it stopped at the Château de Mirville, between Le Havre and Rouen, in tribute to Pierre de Coubertin, who spent part of his youth there. The French postal service, put in charge of the route by the COJO, had arranged a ceremony on 28th December.



the Flame goes on to the grounds of the Château de Mirville.

the silence that followed rose the recorded voice of Pierre de Coubertin was listened to in solemn silence.

As a symbol of the link between Pierre de Coubertin and his family in Mirville, a scallop shell in copper was unveiled by Messrs Geoffroy de Navacelle and Gaultier d'Auriac, mayor of the commune of Saint-Rémy-les-Chevreuse where the chateau, the home of the family, whose coat of arms bears nine similar scallop shells, is located. Covered in gold leaf, this scallop shell, made by a master craftsman at the Coubertin Foundation which is established in the chateau, had, several days before, also taken part in a relay along the two hundred kilometres separating the two villages.

In a large marquee set up in front of the chateau, an exhibition designed by Mr Jean Durry, Director of the National Sports Museum, gave an instructive view of the foundation of the Olympic Movement and of the role of Pierre de Coubertin.

The ceremony ended with a Rachmaninov prelude, interpreted by the brilliant pianist Micheline Ostermeyer, who, after winning the Geneva International Competition, went on to win, at the 1948 Games, a gold medal in the shot put, another in the discus and a bronze in the high jump. A good symbol of the link between sport and art which Pierre de Coubertin would have appreciated.

Mrs Frédérique Bredin, French Minister of Youth and Sports, welcomes the Flame to Mirville, along with other important guests : Messrs Nelson Paillou, Geoffroy de Navacelle, Raymond Gafner, Jean-Claude Killy, Laurent Fabius, Michel Barnier, Philippe Chatrier and Yves Cousquer.

