



ISOH – THE EARLY DAYS

By Ian Buchanan, President ISOH 1991-2000

The fifth of December is a day that for many and varied reasons deserves a place in history.

For example: the first *Phi Beta Kapa* scholastic fraternity was founded at the Collage of William and Mary, Virginia (1776); Mozart died (1791); Walt Disney was born (1901); Prohibition ended in the U.S.A. (1933); British and French forces evacuated the Suez Canal (1956) and on that day in 1991 the *International Society of Olympic Historians [ISOH]* was founded.

In his President's Message elsewhere in this issue Bill Mallon recalls the inaugural meeting which he rightly describes as informal. In fact, it was even more informal than Bill remembers. The 'group' outside the hotel was made up of just three people: Mallon, Widlund and Buchanan, and I was informed by Bill and Ture that I was to be the first President of ISOH. No point in arguing for there wasn't another soul in sight on this damp December night in West London. To say that I became President by acclamation rather overstates the case!

Acting as Secretary-General and Journal Editor, Mallon ran ISOH virtually single-handed during its early years, but the demands on Bill's time became overwhelming and the cost of producing the Journal was prohibitive.

It was decided to approach the IOC for funding, and after Wolf Lyberg had prepared the way, Bill Mallon and myself flew to Lausanne in July 1993 to join Wolf Lyberg for a meeting with Juan Antonio Samaranch, IOC President.

We were cordially received and funds were made available, which ensured the continuing publication of the Journal and some part-time help was engaged to assist Bill with his formidable workload.

What was undoubtedly a major crisis in the life of ISOH had been overcome and, on reflection, it is difficult to see how ISOH would have survived in its present form without financial assistance from the IOC.

This is all in the past and I trust that those who hold an ISOH office in the future will find it as fulfilling and enjoyable as I did.