

Together with these two researchers, we also understand that “the role of the YMCA was much more significant than scholars had thought”³⁶.

In final remark, during the political actions which took place in South America in the 1920s, the IOC lacked a perception of a

“sport geography”, as figured by Coubertin in his early intellectual conceptions. And considering the aforementioned MacAloon’s advice, such a perception still lacks today – when the world is becoming a single place with multiple cultures.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 127.

OLYMPIAN INFLUENCES

By Don Anthony

In March 1894 Pierre de Coubertin wrote to his friend, Charles Waldstein:

“The enclosed programme... has been widely circulated in England and America. It is likely to be a success... item no. 8 on the Agenda... reflects our ambitions for the future”.

Items 1 to 7 were concerned with money and its abuse in sport; item no. 8 was the proposal to renovate the Olympic Games.

The letter goes on:

“Having interested in the matter such as Jules Simon, Gladstone, Harris, etc... will you mention others who might take initiatives...”

For English – speakers the role of Jules Simon is nicely chronicled by John J. MacAloon in his book *This Great Symbol*. But who were Gladstone and Harris – and “the others”?

Herbert Gladstone was the Member of Parliament (M.P.) for Leeds; the youngest son of W.E. Gladstone, Prime Minister of England in his time. W.E. was noted for his scholarship – as well as his liberal politics. In his home library of some 10,000 volumes, he had one table for work and another for leisure – his ‘Homer Table’.

William Penny Brookes includes a letter from W.E. Gladstone in his collection; this gave

him moral support in his crusade for sport and physical education. Herbert Gladstone was reputed to “share his father’s views”.

Herbert, putting himself where his mouth was, became President of the National Physical Recreation Society [NPRS], which was formed in 1885. The NPRS followed the National Olympian Association [NOA], which expires two years earlier, as a British national sports body; it even borrowed the same motto – “Civium vires Civitatis vis”.

Furthermore, Dr. Brookes was coopted on to the Executive of the NPRS in 1886, thus cementing the Wenlock – NOA – NPRS continuum.

The NPRS attracted the support of such as the following:

- The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIIth, as Patron; he to be a Honorary Member of Pierre de Coubertin’s Sorbonne Congress in 1894.
- As its President, Herbert Gladstone, throughout most of its life.

As Vice-Presidents:

- The Earl of Meath, who managed the first Bill through Parliament in the 1890’s, calling for compulsory physical education in schools. Meath was also given Honorary Membership in the Wenloch Olympian Society in 1891, at the same time as Pierre de Coubertin and Lord Charles Beresford.

- Beresford was President of the Wenloch Olympic Games in 1888 and 1889. He was a close friend of the Prince of Wales until a quarrel concerning a lady.

Treasurer of the NPRS was Lord Kinnaird¹, President of the YMCA, President of the Football Association, most powerful figure in the Church of Scotland, and Director of Barclays Bank. At University – Cambridge – he was a close friend of Balfour – later to be Prime Minister – and also another British Honorary Member of the 1894 Sorbonne Olympic congress.

Other Vice-Presidents, from time to time, of the NPRS were Balfour again, and the Duke of Westminster. Edmund Warre's name was also there. Warre was headmaster of Eton and probably influenced Lord Ampthill, a pupil at Eton and, with Herbert, a British member of the first International Olympic Committee.

In 1884, Warre wrote on "Ancient Athletics". Here he described "the great gathering at Olympia" – the glory, the fame, the arts, praise from Pindar. He described also the degeneration of "Greek gymnastics": the athlete "became that which the name implies, a mere competitor for prizes, and was often brutal and coarse, as well as stupid"! For the Romans the main quest was health. What was missing in both systems, he concluded, were "the social games" – the "proper pastimes of youth in merrie England".

Another longstanding Vice-President of the NPRS was Lord Harris. Born in 1851 of a titled family, Harris became, in sport, "the most influential and devoted figure in the universal development of cricket – with the notable exception of W.G. Grace". Although a prominent player for Kent and England Harris, it was said, was known for his "formidable personality and administrative ability".

He was Governor of Bombay from 1890 to 1895, and for the next six years First Lord in

Waiting to Queen Victoria. He said of cricket: "It is not only a game but a school of the greatest social importance". He would have known Colonel Onslow who was sometime Secretary of the NPRS and also a cricketer for Kent.

Currently, Jean Durry, the French Olympic historian, discovered papers in Lausanne, in which the name of Harris appears. Writing to Dr. Guth on August 9th, 1900, Coubertin lists Lord Harris in his names on the IOC. Why, – and what happened – is now the subject of further research.

Herbert Gladstone² presided over all these representatives of the great and good. His Society [NPRS] had member clubs throughout the United Kingdom – from Aberdeen and Dundee to Newport in Wales, and from Dublin and Belfast to Liverpool and London. The German Gymnastic Society of course.

These 'gymnastic clubs' were multisport, and usually multiactivity in nature with fibrant musical and social accompaniments.

The NPRS was "established for the promotion of physical recreation amongst the working classes". This was a concept dear to the heart of both Brookes and Coubertin. The organization rested on the voluntary principle regarding instruction. It was recognised that 'only a fraction' of the general population engaged in exercise. The most led unhealthy lives; the nation was degenerating. In March 1888 Gladstone wrote in "National Physical Recreation", as follows:

"The competition for the National Challenge Shield are now taking place. All those who witnessed last year at Olympia [the London building!] the sight of 2000 gymnasts from all parts of the country... anticipate that the interest of the 12000 members of the NPRS will be keener than ever this year".

He concluded this article with a plea for more

¹ Not much is known about Kinnaird's views on sport, but research is now underway to prepare a paper for the 2003 British Olympic Association – National Olympic Academy – which will be held in Edinburgh in March 2003.

² When Coubertin writes that he consulted "Harris, Gladstone, and others", I take him to mean Herbert Gladstone M.P. – son of the famous Prime minister "W.E. Gladstone". As stated above Herbert was President of the N.P.R.S. with Harris as his Vice-President (one of many). Herbert was also still prominent in 1904 as one of the group which hosted the IOC for its London Session in that year. Of course, it could have been W.E. Gladstone.

teachers – for the member clubs. He said:

“They will go down into the slums and get hold of the young men and lads, and show them a better and healthier method of spending their evenings than loafing about the streets and gin shops... And a special appeal may fairly be made on behalf of the very poorest and least fortunate members of the community, to those who have never known the lack of live-giving and inspiring physical exercise”.

The report on the IOC’s “First Outing” – the session in London in 1904 – shows that many of these names featured in the London Welcoming Committee.

In addition to the IOC triumverate – Howard Vincent, Courcy de Laffan, and Charles Herbert – the following are listed: Gladstone, Kinnaird, and Count Darnley [President of the MCC cricket], Lees-Knowles [ex President of Cambridge University Athletics Club] and two of England’s famous ‘all-rounders’ – W.G. Grace and C.B. Fry.

Grace took part, and won, the 440 yard hurdles at the old Crystal Palace in 1866 (First National Olympic Games) – as well as playing cricket at the Oval on the same day.

Fry would most likely have won the long jump at Athens in 1896 – had he known that the Games were taking place (he was world champion at that time!).

The IOC members were reported to have ‘assisted in a cricket match’ at Lords. This must have been South Africa versus Middlesex, according to Lords Museum curator, Stephen Green.

They were invited to the headquarters of the toxophilite society. There were dinners at the House of Commons and the Sports Club (where Astley had hosted Coubertin in early 1894), and at the Fishmongers Hall where Vincent was a key player.

The visit to Windsor included a lunch hosted by Kinnaird at the “White Hart” restaurant, and tea with Headmaster Warre – probably at Eton. Among other invitations was a boating trip – sadly declined – by W.F. Grenfell, Member of Parliament – later Lord

Desborough, IOC member, and organizer of the 1908 Olympic Games in London.

Another Olympian ‘influencer’ must have been Hodgson Pratt, who represented the international peace by arbitration movement – as Honorary Member of the IOC Congress in 1894. Pratt apologised for his absence and remarked that he supported an idea which was close to his, made some two years earlier – for international games for students to include sports and poetry.

In *Revue Olympique*, 1902, Coubertin welcomed the ‘Comité Britannique’. This was composed he said of:

- the members of the IOC; Courcy de Laffan, Howard Vincent and Charles Herbert;
- Lord Darnley;
- Lord Kinnaird;
- Herbert Gladstone;
- Sir Lees-Knowles.

Although the British Olympic Association will celebrate its formal constitution – centenary in 2005 – there was much water under the bridge before then.

We can only guess at those who “influenced Coubertin” directly but it is clear that his love affair with the British must have helped him immensely in his quest to develop a leit motif, a real global sense of purpose for the Olympic Movement.

Some of us might agree that there is a true need for another Olympic Congress with seven items dealing with money and its abuse in sport —and an eighth item calling for yet another renovation of the Olympic idea... “to strengthen and enoble sport”

In 1888 Coubertin visited London to pay his respects at the grave of Thomas Arnold. During this visit he requested an interview with W.E. Gladstone and was invited to Parliament. Two questions were posed:

- Is it true that sports born in England are appropriate only for Anglo Saxons?
- Would I [Coubertin] be wrong if I recognised in the reforms of Arnold, the principal credit for the British renaissance?

In reply to the first question Gladstone said: “No, sport is not a particularly Anglo Saxon



characteristic. Perhaps it could assume various shades depending on the country. Take wrestling for example: it is so courteous in the Orient, so brutal in Greek culture, yet everything marking its distinct nature – freedom within rules that are accepted from the beginning, friendly rivalry, explosiveness, and the expression of self in joy and in the effort – everything applies to all people, throughout all time and in all countries.”

Gladstone needed a night of reflection to answer the second and asked Coubertin to return the next day. The formal reply was: “Your point of view is brand new – but it is correct.” Coubertin was satisfied.

W.E. Gladstone also wrote to Brookes giving him encouragement. And Herbert had Brookes coopted on to the Executive of the NPRS soon after its birth in 1886.

There is a further nice coincidence [synchronicity?] to please Olympian historians. In November 1893, W.E. Gladstone was awarded an Honorary Doctorate at St. Andrews University Scotland. There were nine other candidates for such an award. One was Demetrius Vikelas – to become 1st President of the IOC one year later. Vikelas was praised for his translations into Greek of the best Shakespeare plays and for writing the first book on Scotland in Greek – with strong mentions of the national Scottish poet Robbie Burns.

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FACTS AND FIGURES

OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES 1988-2002

By Wolf Lyberg

There can be no doubt that the Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City were “the best ever”, to use the often quoted remarks by former IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, even if the current IOC President, Jacques Rogge was a bit milder in his comments.

For us, Olympic historians, dealing with statistics, it was evident that the new partner¹ for the results, the firm Schlumberg-Sema, did an outstanding job – much better than those that we were used to.

The interesting question for most of us in statistics was whether or not the Salt Lake City Organizing Committee [SLOC] was going

to publish a new record on paying spectators. From the start it was evident that these 2002 Olympic Winter Games would be an enormous success when it came to measuring the attending crowds on the various sites. But would that be sufficient to pass the earlier record of the Olympic Winter Games in Calgary in 1988?

Since the figures arrived late, I started to doubt my own assumptions. But finally, late May the final figures came to me via the Marketing Department of the IOC (!) and the impressive record was a fact: 94.99 percent of all tickets sold!

In itself it is probably not quite correct to

¹ It seems appropriate to explain a bit more about this firm. In 1998, the firm SEMA signed a contract with the IOC to replace IBM as its IT contractor. SEMA was bought up by Schlumberg Ltd. in 2001, and now is one of the TOP sponsors, also working for the Organizing Committees in Athens 2004, Turin 2006, and Beijing 2008. Schlumberg is an old company formed in 1919, when two brothers tried to win oil in an electromagnetic way. The company now has approximately 30,000 cooperators in 65 countries. The main offices are in New York City and Paris. In Salt Lake City some 3,000 people from this firm worked in the IT business.