

MEMORIA OLYMPICA

THE OLYMPIC STUDIES CENTRE

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Located within the *Olympic Museum*, which houses exhibitions and conferences and is one of the world's largest centres of information on the Olympic Movement and Olympic Games, the *Olympic Studies Centre* (OSC) was created to preserve the Olympic memory and promote research, teaching and publications connected with Olympism. The Museum and OSC have been situated in the Olympic Park in Lausanne, Switzerland, since 1993 and have already received more than 1.7 million visitors.

Seven different sections are open to the public; thirty members of staff work at the OSC, whose common database (SIM) facilitates access to the available information.

1. Historical Archives

The historical archives provide access to more than 850 linear metres of written documents dated from 1894 to 1984, which can

be consulted by researchers in accordance with the *Rules of Access*. These Rules are based on European and international archive regulations and have been recently lightened. General files can now be viewed after only twenty years instead of thirty years.

These unique Olympic memoirs include the correspondence of the eight IOC Presidents, including papers hand-written by the founder, Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN, documents relating to the organisation of the Olympic Games and minutes of Executive Board meetings and IOC Session.

2. Library

The library is the legal Olympic depository for *Official Reports* and IOC publications. It contains over 180,000 monograph titles and 250 current periodicals, including candidature files, official reports on the Olympic Games and all kinds of publications connected with the Olympic Family, medicine and science.

The library may be used free of charge by people of all ages. The online collective catalogue, RERO, is linked to the university network of French-speaking Switzerland and offers an inter-library loan service.

3. Documentation

Over 1,000 theme-based files on the history of the Olympic Movement, the IOC, the Olympic Games and sport in general may be consulted (more than 300 requests are received each month). The section also has a unique database, known as JORES, detailing all Olympic Games participants and results.

4. Photographic service

More than 440,000 photographic documents, some of them exclusive, are included in the collection, which covers the Olympic Games since Athens 1896 as well as IOC activities and memorabilia. The service receives 900 consultation and reproduction requests per year. It has set up a specialised restoration and preservation programme which is the only to ensure long-term preservation of the Olympic photographic legacy.

5. Images & Sound

Over 17,500 hours of film on the Olympic Games, the Olympic Movement and sport in general may be viewed and copied. The automated video library offers visitors access to 430 video cassettes from the IOC archives, covering the Olympic Games and other sports events. A programme to restore the oldest tapes has been launched. Reflection is now being given to the idea of migrating to a new optical medium.

6. Education

This section aims to cater for children of all ages who visit the Museum (30,000 per year). To this end, it provides information packs, organises special activities relating to the Museum exhibitions, forums and

workshops on current Olympic-related topics and distributes sets of teaching materials. The *Pysos Club* provides activities for children aged from 8 to 14.

7. External relations

This section promotes the activities of the *Olympic Studies Centre* and encourages and supports research and academic activities connected to Olympism. It strengthens the links between the Olympic Movement and the international academic community. It also organises a grant programme for different levels of study and collaboration projects with other Olympic studies centres, universities, *National Olympic Committees* and *National Olympic Academies*. The last symposium was held at the *Olympic Museum* in November 2002 and obtained great success. It dealt with the important theme of "*The Legacy of the Olympic Games*".

Conclusion

The archives of the IOC *Olympic Study Centre* are vitally important for the history of the Olympic Movement. Continued excellence in preserving Olympic legacy via historical archives, image and photographic collections and ephemera (kept by the Museology department) are therefore the main aims of the departments, run by professionals. The ever-growing volume of documents is stored in ideal conditions in the specially adapted area below the Museum ground level. *Rules of Access* assure an open and fair access to knowledge. Serving the IOC itself and, more broadly, the scientific and sporting community, the OSC therefore hopes to provide constantly updated access to the treasures of the Olympic memory.

Part of this information may be obtained from the website www.museum.olympic.org