

# MEMBERS FORUM

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

On February 21st, 2000, the editor received a long, rather indignant message from ISOH member Fauria i Garcia in Barcelona, Spain in which Mr. Garcia pointed at the article he published in CITIUS, ALTIUS, FORTIUS, volume 3, number 3, Autumn 1995. In this article he informed the readers about his views on the controversial date of the formation of the Spanish Olympic Committee.

Indignant, because in the article by Mr. Conrado Durántez in the January 2000 issue of the Journal of Olympic History, nothing whatsoever is mentioned about his article and this earlier date of the possible foundation of the Spanish Olympic Committee.

However, the editor thinks both authors could be right in their assessments, and that both Spanish Olympic Committees really existed.

There is one important difference: the committee Mr. Garcia mentioned probably did not last, and probably must have been disbanded, or at least must have led a silent life, after the Intercalary Olympic Games of Athens in 1906, while the Spanish Olympic

### **Note from the Secretary-General of the ISOH and Editor:**

In the last issue of the Journal of Olympic History, information was supplied about my change of address. Unfortunately, this was changed again.

In January 2000, the municipal authorities sent out another message telling me my address had been changed once again.

The address of the Secretary-General of the ISOH, and Editor of the Journal of Olympic History has now finally been fixed at:

Anthony Th. Bijkerk,  
Secretary-General of the ISOH,  
Vogelrijd 16,  
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Please mail your letters only to the address mentioned above!

Committee Mr. Durántez wrote about, which was founded in 1912, was the one instigated by Pierre de Coubertin himself. It was also the Committee which must have organized the participation of Spanish athletes in the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp.

However, please let us not forget the main point of these discussions: the date that even today still counts as most the important one, is the date the Spanish Olympic Committee was recognized by the International Olympic Committee, and that recognition took place in the year 1924.

In the early days of the last century, many countries had the same kind of experiences; where often temporary committees organized participation of their countrymen in the Olympic Games, and then after the teams returned home, were disbanded.

For instance, in the Netherlands in 1900 we had several committees working to get their candidates to participate in the Paris Sports events, which were to be called Olympic much later.

In 1908, under the presidency of IOC-member Baron Fritz van Tuijll van Serooskerken, a national Olympic committee organized a large team of Dutch sportsmen to participate in the London Olympic Games, but after the team returned home, that National Olympic Committee was disbanded.

The same story happened for the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912.

After the return from Stockholm Baron Fritz van Tuijll van Serooskerken called a meeting of all national Sports Associations. In this meeting, which took place in Amsterdam on September 11th, 1912, the Netherlands Olympic Committee was officially founded.

This is just to show that many similar situations must have occurred in those early days of the last century, and that most likely, Mr. Garcia's Spanish (Catalan) Olympic Committee was specifically founded for the purpose of sending a couple of Spanish (Catalan) participants to Athens, in 1906, to take part in the Intercalary Olympic Games.

Anyway, even if it continued to exist after the 1906 Olympics, under the presidency of the Marquis de Cabrinana del Monte, it must have done little or nothing for publicity and must have had a very silent existence.

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## The launch of the book “A Proper Spectacle”

**I**SOH members, Anita Tedder and Stephanie Daniels new book *A Proper Spectacle* was launched on Sunday March 19th at Bedford Athletic Stadium - and what a wonderful time was had by all. Seven of the women featured in the book made the journey to attend. From the Berlin Olympics of 1936, Dorothy Tyler (nee Odam) high jumper silver medalist, Audrey Court (nee Brown) sprinter and relay silver medalist, Brenda Halligan (nee Crowe) member of the British gymnastics team all shared stories about Hitler and their amazing time together. Canadian high jump bronze medalist from 1932, Eva Spinks (nee Dawes) enthralled everyone with her stories about Babe Didrikson and we all discussed ‘Did Babe dive or didn’t she?’

There was not a dry eye in the house when team mates and silver medalists in the relay from the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928, Joyce Badcock (nee Cooper) and Sarah ‘Cissie’ Hunt (nee Stewart) met for the first time in 70 years. (See Stephanie Daniels’ story ‘Swimming to the very end’, in Volume 7, number 2, Spring 1999).

The only living competitor from the Women’s World Games of 1926 and sprinter in the 100 metres at the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928, Maud Norklit (nee Sundberg) travelled from Sweden to attend the event. With her blue leather jacket slung jauntily over one shoulder, her feather earrings and her rather cool shades Maud was a wonderful advertisement for the long walks in the Swedish forests, jazz dance and music that Maud says ‘Keep the body fresh and the soul in harmony.’

British Honorary Member to the IOC and Olympic fencer Dame Mary Glen Haig MBE, honoured the women by her attendance.

Lunch was held at Anita and Stephanie’s village restaurant ‘The Knife and Cleaver’ where 30 sat down to talk, eat and drink. The group then went on to Bedford Athletic Stadium where over 100 people, including former Olympians, were gathered to hear radio and TV journalist Jenni Mills introduce the women to the crowd with great style and panache. The Deputy Mayor welcomed the women to Bedford and the authors said a few words about their experience of writing the book. There were some hard bits - acknowledging the families of women who had died (some of whom were with us) was not easy.

Stephanie Daniels read some of the messages that they had received - one in particular stood out from Domnitsa Caranidou (Greek athlete from 1936) who said that she was so pleased with the book and that she saw *Al Proper Spectal*’ as “Our book”, inferring that the book belonged to all Olympic women.

The afternoon culminated with the

presentation of violets by 12 year old gymnast Clare McGregor to Dame Mary with Brenda Halligan cutting a Centenary Cake. It was very special - but, as with the Olympic women’s experience, not a single local newspaper or regional television showed up despite press releases and phone calls. Fortunately, those good supporters of women’s sport, Channel 4’s ‘Transworld Sport’ did cover the event - and they say it will be shown during April.

**O**n behalf of the ISOH, we wish to congratulate Anita and Stephanie on the launch of *A Proper Spectacle* which is a wonderful celebration of the 100 year anniversary of women’s participation at the Olympic Games.

**Note:** See Ian Buchanan’s Book Review of *A Proper Spectacle* - page 66 this issue.



Seven Olympic pioneers. From left to right: Dame Mary Glen Haig (ISOH member!); Dorothy Tyler (nee Odam), Maud Norklit (nee Sundberg) Joyce Badcock (nee Cooper); Sarah Hunt (nee Stewart), Audrey Court (nee Brown), Eva Spinks (nee Dawes).