



Letters to the Editor

The Editor received the following letter from Ove Karlsson from Stockholm, Sweden:

Dear Editor,

A few corrections to information in earlier issues of our *Journal*:

Vol. 7, No. 5 (this should actually be numbered No. 3!; September 1999), Front cover, p. 1 and p. 12 Lord Killanin was born in 1914, rpt 1914, and not in 1915.

Vol. 9, No. 1, P. 38 (Obituaries): Zátopez died on November 21, rpt 21.

With the very best wishes,
Ove Karlsson (SWE)

From Dr. Theo Stevens, dated March 27th, 2001.
Subject: ORAL PROJECT.

Dear Editor,

In Spring 1999, Mr. David Wallechinsky announced in this *Journal* that the ISOH was embarking on a project to create an "oral history" of the Olympic Games, based on interviews with athletes and other participants. Olympic historians were invited to participate in the project and a questionnaire with nearly fifty questions was added. Teaching sports history at the University of Amsterdam, the invitation appealed very much to me and I succeeded to interest a number of my students. Mr. Tony Bijkerk and Mr. Ruud Paauw helped to pave the way and we assured ourselves of the kind cooperation of the Dutch National Olympic Committee (NOC*NSF), which supported us in many ways.

In this first report, I would like to give an impression of the progress of our efforts, which began Winter 1999 with a critical discussion of the original questionnaire. In the end some seventy questions were selected that originates around three main points of interest: the socio-cultural backgrounds of the athletes, the way they experienced their participation and how their further lives had been influenced by the Games, Students who had a special interest in this oral history project received instruction in trivial

things as handling the recorder, but also behavioral advice, since the athletes from before World War II are eighty-five years old and more. Special attention during the preparations was given to national and international history from the year 1896 onwards, since we did not wish to treat the subject in isolation. How to understand the Berlin Games of 1936 - to give an obvious example - without a profound knowledge of prewar European history?

During the last year some twenty athletes - the oldest of whom is 99 years old! - have been interviewed, their answers to the questionnaire registered, the voices recorded and their sport-life histories described in about fifteen hundred words. We now wish to include some more athletes of the Games of 1928, 1932 and 1936 in our files. After finishing this part of the project time seems ripe to evaluate the results, and I would be happy to inform you in due time about the results. It would also be a great thing to hear from interested colleagues from all over the world, whether they feel attracted to Mr. Wallechinsky's invitation. If so, an international seminar will be wonderful to look out for!

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Theo Stevens
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Dear Mr. Bijkerk,

Thank you for your reply It certainly does look as if the IOC has accidentally left Cinquanta out of their reports of their elections in "Olympic Highlights".

I knew that whatever had been published in the *Journal* from the Olympic Highlights would accurately reflect them, so my query was not intended as any criticism of the editors of the *Journal*. I still wonder, however, what was in No. 39 of the OH! We know from ISU sources as well as the media at the time that Cinquanta was elected to the IOC Executive Board on September 22, 2000. In the interest of historical accuracy and completeness, I would therefore still recommend that such fact be reported in the *Journal*, especially since it is the first time since Viktor Balck in 1894 that an ISU representative has reached that level in the IOC.

Sincerely yours,
Ben Wright