Museum

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Museums and sports : Olympic and other dimensions

museum

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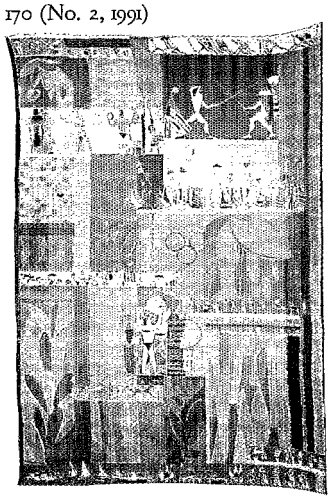
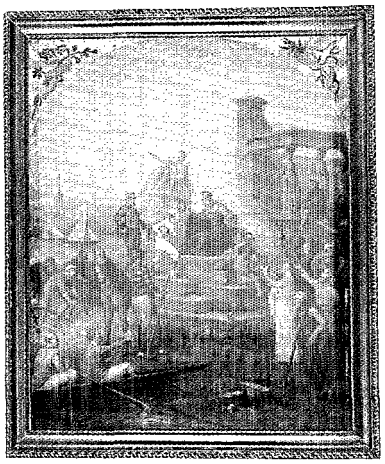


***Sport* – woven by Anna Kaszteluk and Adela Szwaja.**
Museum of Sports and Tourism, Warsaw



Thanks to Geoffroy de Navacelle, who pointed us to *Allegory to Sports – 1896* by Charles de Coubertin, father of the founder of the modern Olympic Games.
Olympic Museum, Lausanne

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Quotable quotes

'Why an inordinate interest in animals and athletes? They a subjects for art and exemplar are they not? – minding their business. Pangolins, hornbills pitchers and catchers do not or prolong the conversation; make us self-conscious; look best when caring least.'

Marianne Moo

'Come, Watson, come! The g afoot.'

Arthur Cona
The Return of Sherlock

An update on national museum periodicals

(the theme of *Museum*, No. 168)

Will readers please note that the corr address of the Association of Swiss M Secretariat, responsible for publishing *Information VMS/AMS*, listed on page now:
Baselstrasse 7,
CH–4500 SOLOTHURN,
Switzerland.

Additions to the provisional list of m periodicals are:
1. The annual *Acta Museorum Italicorum Agriculturae*, which covers agrarian an museums in Italy (ethnology, anthrop and history) is published by:
Museo Lombardo di Storia dell'Agric
Casella postale 908,
20101 MILANO, Italy.
2. *De Museus: Quaderns de Museologia i M* with editions in Catalan and English, published by:
Servei de Museus,
Direccio General del Patrimoni Cultu
Departament de Cultura,
Generalitat de Catalunya,
BARCELONA, Spain.

Finally, please note that, in Denmark *Museumsmagasinet* has become:
Danske Museer,
c/o Tove Borre,
Ørslev Kloster,
Hejlskovvej,
7840 HØKSLEV, Denmark.

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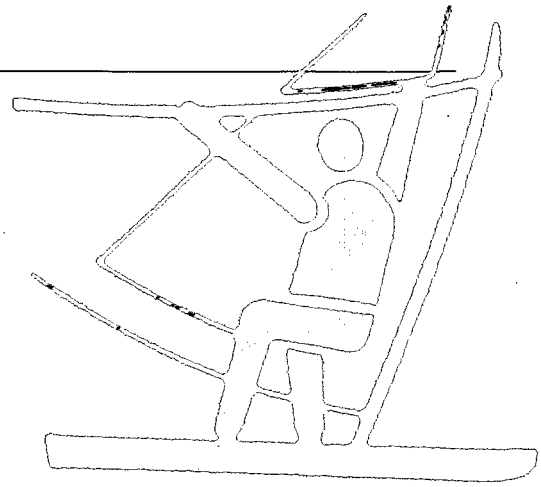
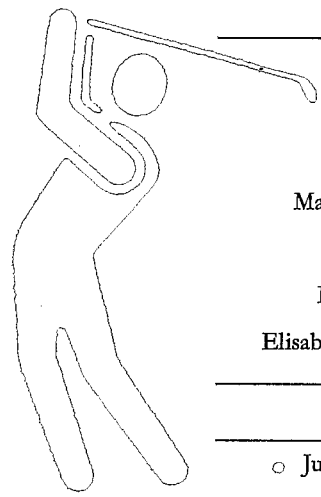
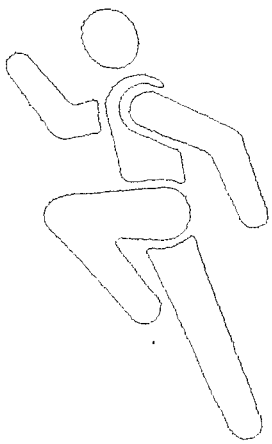


Museums and sports: Olympic and other dimensions

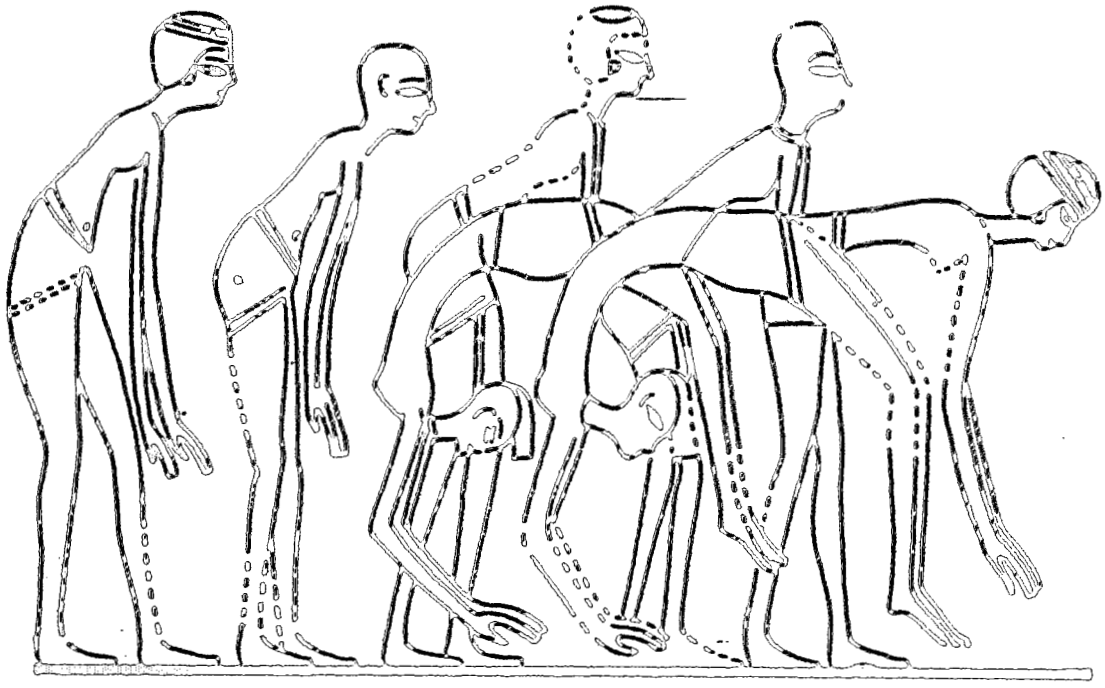




Features

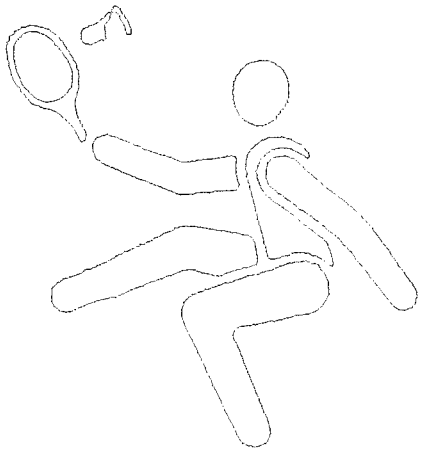
ISSN 0027–3996
Museum (Unesco, Paris), No. 170

And what's more . . .



Acrobatic dance. Fresco from a tomb of the New Empire (*c.* 1400 B.C.).

From the Editor



What price victory?

According to the French playwright Jean Giraudoux, 'Sport is the art by which man frees himself from himself.'

Freedom for what? To achieve the best of which humankind is capable, is one answer. Witness the affirmation in Unesco's International Charter of Physical Education and Sport that these activities 'should seek to promote closer communion between people and between individuals, together with disinterested emulation, solidarity and fraternity, mutual respect and understanding, and full respect for the integrity and dignity of human beings'.

Unhappily, reality does not always square with normative aspiration. Take soccer football, for instance:

23 May 1964 in Lima, an Olympic elimination match between Argentina and Peru resulted in 320 spectators killed and 1,000 injured.

17 September 1967 at Kayseri (Turkey), 40 killed and 600 injured.

25 December 1969 at Bukavu (Zaire), 27 trampled to death and 52 injured.

11 February 1974 in Cairo, 48 killed and 47 injured.

29 May 1985 at Heysel stadium, Brussels, at the Juventus versus Liverpool match, 38 killed, 454 injured.

25 May 1988 at Sichuan (China), bricks and fire-extinguishers injured 143 people.

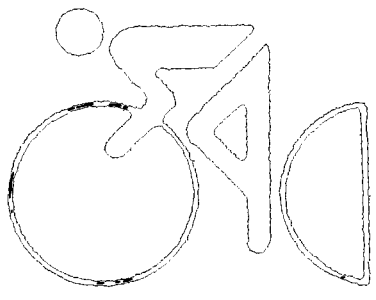
Where, on these gratuitously bloody occasions, was 'closer communion between people and . . . individuals'? Where were 'solidarity and fraternity, mutual respect and understanding, and full respect for the integrity and dignity of human beings'?

And where was 'disinterested emulation' when, in 1988, Ben Johnson set the incredible 100-metre record of 9.79 seconds – doped up to the eyes?

Things were definitely getting out of hand. The will to win at any price was tearing ethics to shreds in the sports world, whose very credibility was beginning to unravel as perhaps at no time since fair play became an accepted ground rule for athletic competitions in Greece several centuries before our era.

Happily, those responsible for policing sports internationally reacted: Johnson's drug-assisted record was invalidated in 1989.

On 20 January 1990, at Cardiff, the Welsh player Kevin Mosley was



expelled from a crucial Five Nations rubgy match – and later suspended for seven months by the Welsh Rugby Federation – after he had 'wiped his cleats' on Frenchman Marc Andrieu, who had fallen to the ground.

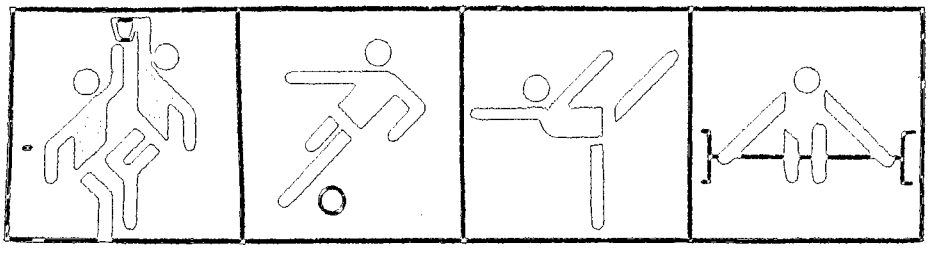
The very next day, John McEnroe was disqualified from an international tennis match in Australia when, having been reprimanded for smashing his racket in a fit of pique, he let fly a string of verbal abuse. His disqualification was made possible by a new and tighter code of tennis behaviour. The pity of it was that the crowd of some 15,000 reacted by shouting 'We want McEnroe' and . . . insulting the judge!

'Victory at any price' – *Museum* hopes that is *not* the message unwittingly transmitted by museums and exhibitions devoted to sports, and that sports halls of fame do not give in to the temptation to become halls of incitement to infamy.

Despite their essentially playful nature, sports and games are no more neutral than other museum themes.

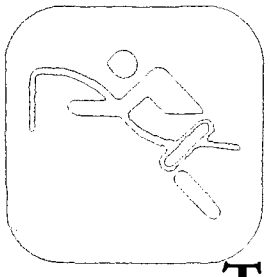
A.G.

We have pleasure in welcoming a new member to our Advisory Board: Stelio Papadopoulos (Greece).

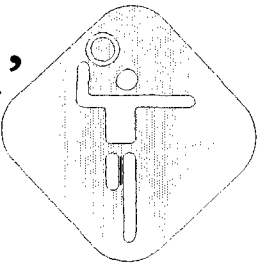


Museum – From words to deeds

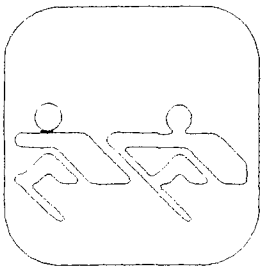
No. 165 of *Museum* was, on the occasion of International Literacy Year (1990), devoted to the theme 'Museums, Literacy and Literacy Work'. Covered in that issue, the Aube Museum of the History of Education (Troyes, France) decided to make the issue a springboard from which to organize a symposium on the theme 'The Struggle Against Functional Illiteracy at School'. Held in November 1990 at the museum, and attended by some 200 participants, the symposium was by all reports a solid success – *and* helped to boost sales of the relevant issue of *Museum*!



THE VISITOR AS 'EXPLORER'



A message to the readers of Museum *from the President of the International Olympic Committee*



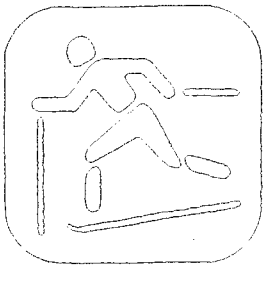
Renowned and esteemed the world over, the Olympic Games still appear all too often in the eyes of the public as no more than the supreme consecration of sporting prowess. It would be a mistake, however, to dismiss their cultural side and confine them to the realm of purely physical endeavour.

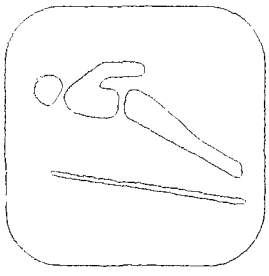
Indeed, to do so would be to forget the Olympic ideal which Baron Pierre de Coubertin sought to instil into the Games. In his accompanying note to the Official Report of the Seventh Olympiad (Paris, 1924), Coubertin dwells on the importance of the intellectual dimension of these encounters:

> The last Games, despite the fine and meritorious effort made to clothe them with art and thought, remained too much World Championships. This, of course, they must be. The athletes, come from all the corners of the earth, have a right to expect as irreproachable an organization as possible. But something else is needed besides the presence of the genius of the nations: the collaboration of the muses, the cult of beauty, all the apparel which befits the potent symbolism which the Olympic Games embodied in the past and which they must continue to represent today. . . . It is in this way that the Olympic Games will be what they must be, and only that the quadrennial celebration of the human springtime, of a regulated and rhythmed springtime whose sap dwells in the service of the Spirit.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin brought his idea to fruition; under his influence, the Olympic Games held between 1912 and 1948 were accompanied by competitions in architecture, literature, music, painting and sculpture. The winners, like the sporting champions, were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals.

Although at the time when Baron de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games sport was still, it must be admitted, the privilege of an élite, today the universality of interest and participation in sport stands in no need of proof. Pierre de Coubertin had ardently desired such a worldwide character for the Games and welcomed, after the First World War, the creation of a 'proletarian' organization to counterbalance the 'capitalist' organization, with sport being popularized among manual workers, and the development of the concept of sport as a source of spiritual fulfilment within everyone's grasp. Since then, the Olympic institution has prospered, and now reaches out on an international scale to all levels of society.



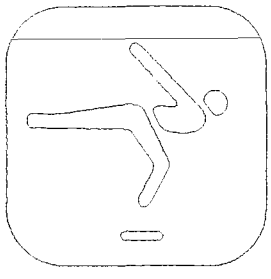


Further evidence, if such were needed, of this universal cultural phenomenon is the emergence, more or less throughout the world, of museums of sport, which are attracting an increasingly large public.

The crowds who visit these museums bear witness to the fact that this new type of museum is a response to widespread interest. But does that interest focus solely on the techniques and rules of a given sport, on lists of results, on the career of a particular athlete, on the past, the present or the future? A museum of sport should encompass all these aspects, answering all these demands and no doubt others as well.

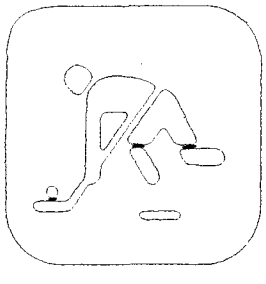
Museums in general should abandon their somewhat static traditional image as curators of things from the past. Numerous surveys show that visitors to a modern museum are no longer content passively to absorb what is set before them, or to follow a predetermined and more or less compulsory itinerary. Their concern is rather to discover for themselves, and according to a self-chosen programme, not merely what is of interest to them in the first place, but also new areas of interest, sources of surprise or enchantment, of which they knew nothing before entering the establishment.

The very term 'museum' should also be dusted off; and the designation 'visitor' should be rendered more dynamic and replaced by a word such as 'participant', or even 'explorer'. Here, we touch on the very essence of the revolution that is occurring in museum style. The main attraction lies not in the discovery itself, but in the aspect of 'entertainment', learning through play and discovering, while playing, new techniques through the senses of touch, hearing, smell and sight. For museums of sport in particular, we may add to this the experience of using simulators, or in other words discovering for ourselves the sensations associated with practising a given sport.



The combination of the 'playful' aspect with the dissemination of information is the whole art of museology. For entertainment alone is no guarantee of a museum's success. The visitor will not be satisfied with gratuitous amusement: there are all too many opportunities for that; rather, visitors want to discover new information or even hitherto unknown areas, through inquiry, individual tests or competitions that arouse curiosity or the desire to compete, inciting the visitor to return without fail.

At Olympia on 17 April 1927, at the inauguration of the monument commemorating the re-establishment of the Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin addressed the sporting youth of all the nations as follows: 'My friends and I have not laboured to restore the Olympic Games to you in order to make them a fitting object for a museum or a cinema. . . . Our object in reviving an institution twenty-five centuries old, was that you should become new adepts of the religion of sports, as our great ancestors conceived it.'



Juan Antonio Samaranch

Sports in a museum?

Jean Durry

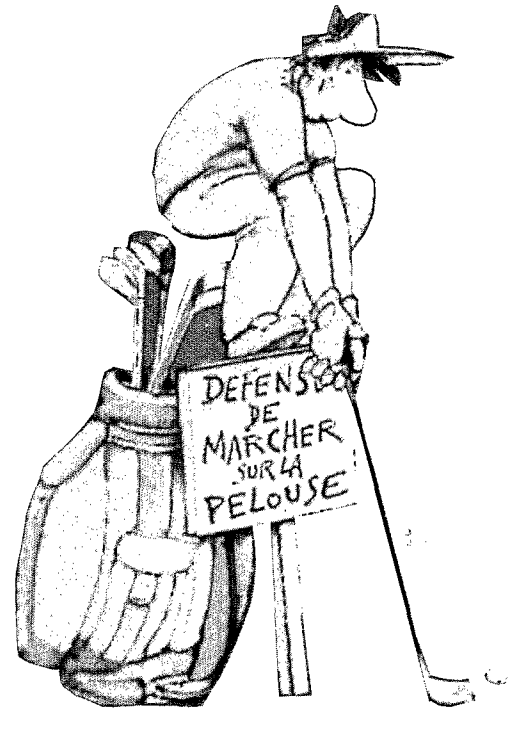
Why the question mark in the title of this article? First, because until recently sport was not a self-evident subject for museums internationally. And, secondly, because sport's growing incursion into museums around the world raises basic issues of museological policy and practice. To offer our readers a thoughtful review of some of the new issues, Museum *turned to Jean Durry, creator and Director of France's National Sports Museum, specialist in public law, amateur cyclist and a driving force in the international sports museum movement.*

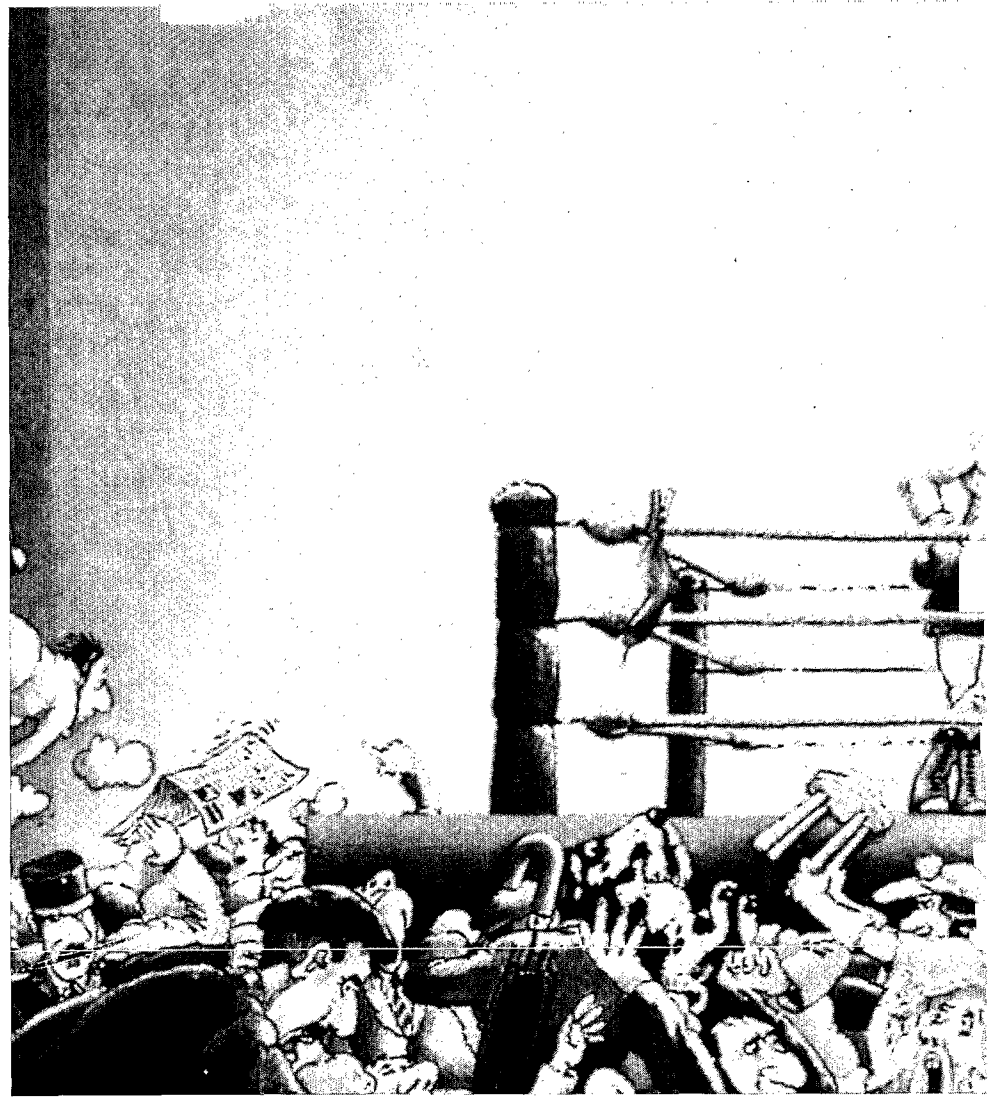
His name was Georges Henri Rivière. He was the creator of the Museum of French Popular Arts and Traditions in Paris, he conceived the ecomuseums concept, and presided over the destiny of ICOM. It is to him that I dedicate these few pages, as almost thirty years have passed since he began to support, among so many other ideas and projects throughout the world, the beginnings of a plan for a sports museum in France. That was back in 1963; the sports museum adventure was just starting, with the help of Colonel Marceau Crespin at the High Commission of Youth and Sports.

Today the international sports museums movement has taken shape. So much so that it has justified world meetings of their directors being held at fairly close intervals in Lausanne since 1985, under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee. And yet, have people really begun to take this type of institution seriously? On the eve of the twenty-first century, have we fully explored all the possibilities of capturing and presenting sport to the public, with all its implications, all its repercussions?

Basically, is it conceivable to exhibit in a museum the movement and dynamism, life and exhilaration, or the enthusiasm and happiness of sports? Moreover, sport and the practice of sport also have their dark sides, their areas of doubt and uncertainty. Is a museum merely a place for beatifying the sport phenomena and its protagonists?

These were some of the questions we had to answer in creating our museum. And creating it has been a steeplechase over an unknown distance and with an unknown number of hurdles to be cleared. At present our collections hold some 40,000 objects and documents of all sizes and all kinds. Since the Olympic Games in 1968 more than 100 major exhibitions on a wide variety of subjects, in France and throughout the world – Amsterdam, Basle, Innsbruck, Lausanne and Montreal, for example – have enabled the French National Sports Museum to publicize its methods and its approach to sport phenomena.





Humour at a sports museum. These cartoons are taken from an exhibition recently held at the French National Sports Museum, which is directed by the author. They are reproduced by courtesy of their creator, Blachon.

Beatification?

With regard both to the museographical conception and to fund-raising, the approach adopted to our museum was as broad as possible right from the outset. Sport is a means of expressing culture, champions are artists – these are two obvious truths. Do they mean that the sports museum must automatically devote itself to canonizing sport and sportsmen and women, that it must participate in a mythification that might well turn into mystification, that it must almost systematically ignore any weaknesses or problems? Should a sports museum stick to legendary victories, to building a world of its own cut off from real life?

One can understand that a team, club or federation accumulates with a certain self-satisfaction the objects that evoke its moments of glory and joy, in order to present the most flattering picture of its past and to project a magnificent view of itself by visual reminders of its victories and history. But the register and vocation of a sports museum need to be much broader.

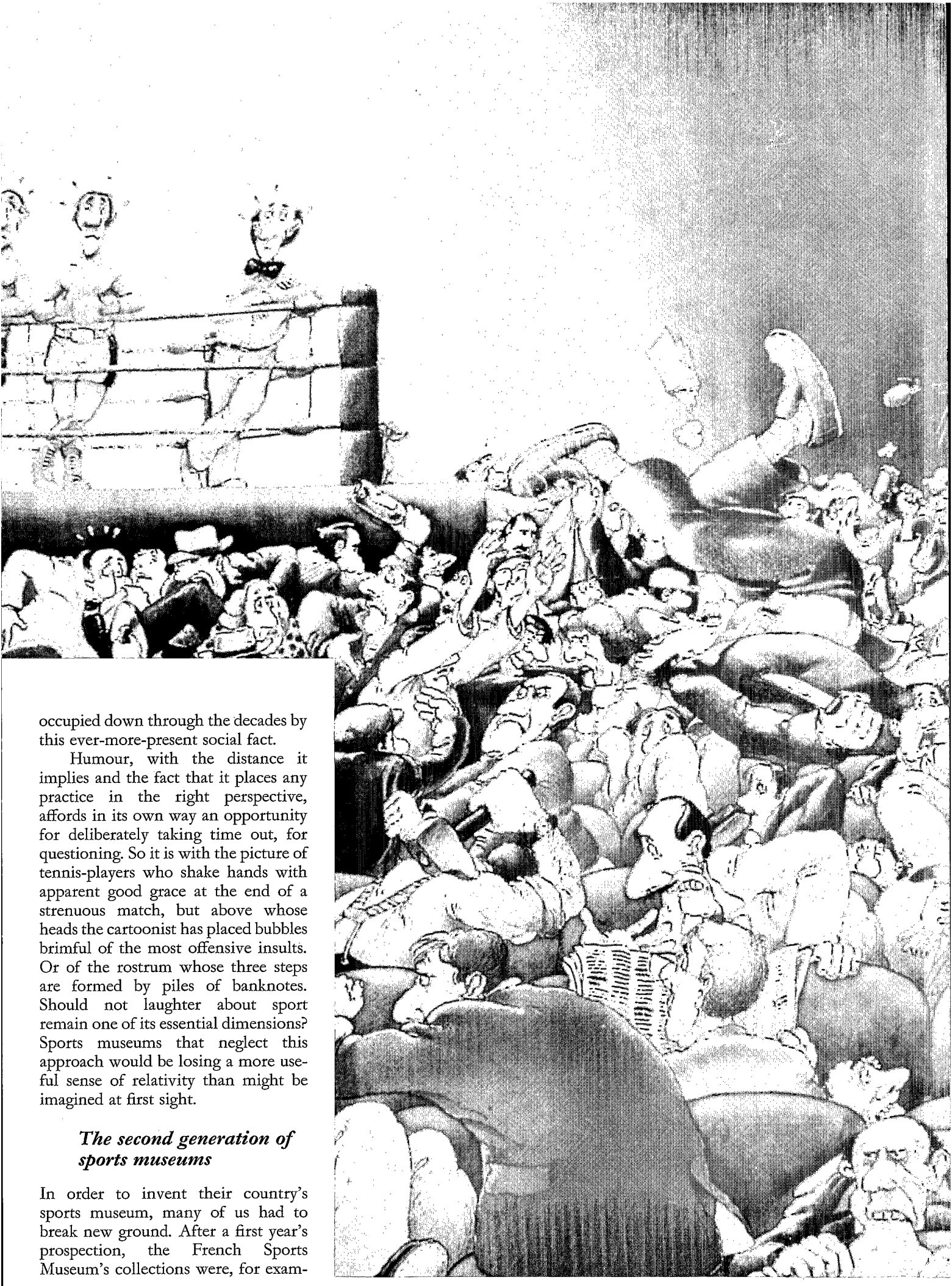
The aim should be to gather as much data and sources of information as possible on a specific sector of human activity, in this case sport. The successes and development of performances are but one aspect of things. Economic realities, and the sociological, scientific, political, material and non-material context surround and help to form the very substance of the sport competitions and participants' confrontation with the equipment and, above all, with themselves.

We know that sport, in view of its contemporary excesses, is far from offering a solely positive vision. Money, violence, the terrible temptations of dope – trying deliberately to eliminate them from representations of the sporting scene amounts to a distortion of the facts. On the other hand, honestly bringing them out into the open by no means prevents them from being presented as a warning. It is my conviction that presenting sport in a museum must be done with sympathy, but not bias, without obscuring any facet of a subject, without amputation. The desire to be exhaustive is the only guarantee of a museum's intellectual honesty and its intelligent development.

Humour!

Let me turn to a lighter theme. Honoré Daumier, a great artist of the nineteenth century, saw and understood in his immense lithographic production for the satirical press everything of the life of his age. The emergence of sporting activities did thus not escape him. Those who have paid no particular attention to this aspect of his work will be astonished to learn that almost 200 of his plates deal with skating, rowing, bathing in protected areas, rivers or the sea, nascent forms of mountaineering and the regeneration of humankind through gymnastics.

This look – both joyful and raking – opens up another direction for sports museums. From Rowlandson, who from the last few years of the eighteenth century until about 1820 depicted bare-fisted boxing in England, to present-day caricaturists, there is some very rich material, to which the directors of sports museums have every interest in paying the greatest attention. These depictions of sport, both facetious and incisive, perfectly illustrate its precariousness, the reactions of contemporaries, the place

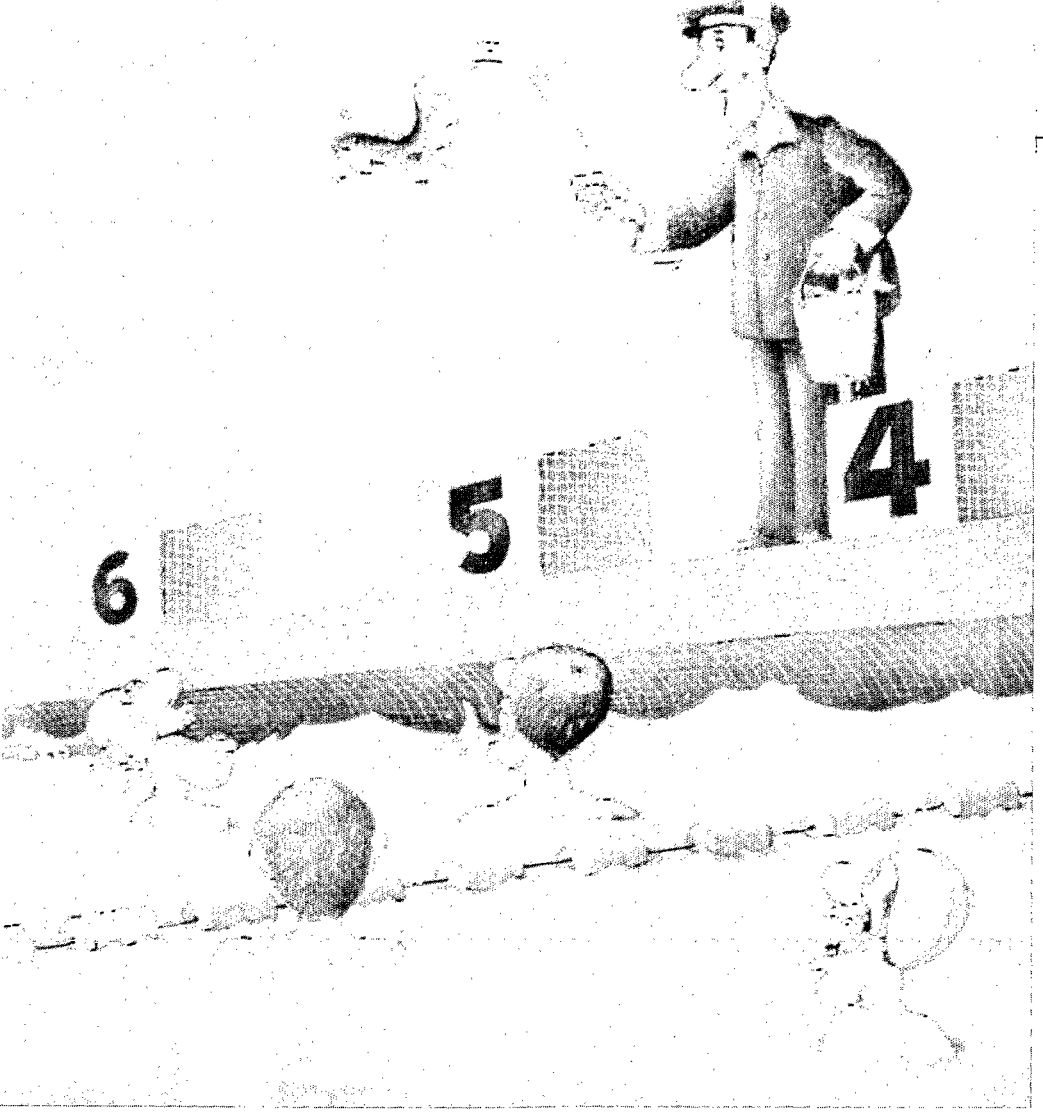


occupied down through the decades by this ever-more-present social fact.

Humour, with the distance it implies and the fact that it places any practice in the right perspective, affords in its own way an opportunity for deliberately taking time out, for questioning. So it is with the picture of tennis-players who shake hands with apparent good grace at the end of a strenuous match, but above whose heads the cartoonist has placed bubbles brimful of the most offensive insults. Or of the rostrum whose three steps are formed by piles of banknotes. Should not laughter about sport remain one of its essential dimensions? Sports museums that neglect this approach would be losing a more useful sense of relativity than might be imagined at first sight.

The second generation of sports museums

In order to invent their country's sports museum, many of us had to break new ground. After a first year's prospection, the French Sports Museum's collections were, for exam-



ple, brought together and photographed: they took up the space of a living-room carpet! However instructive the ups and downs of the recent past, they belong to the historical footnotes of this type of organization, and it would not be much use to look constantly over one's shoulder unless it were to try and extract all the juice from the origin and source of the objects and documents, all too often recorded only in the individual memory of the person who channelled them towards the museum.

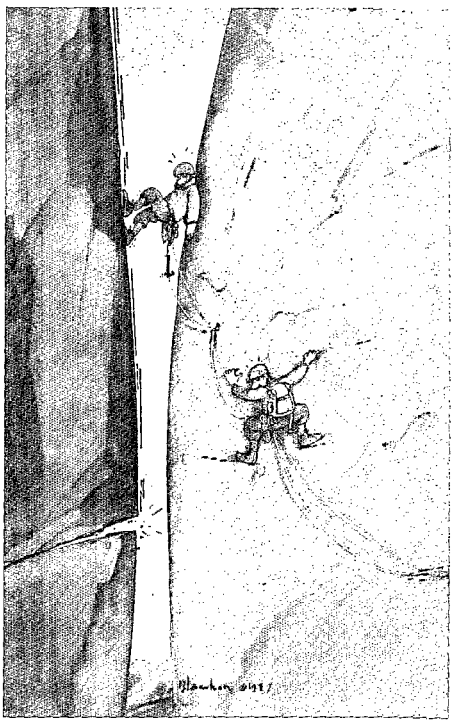
Almost everywhere there has been a surge of awareness: of the existence and importance of a sports heritage which forms an integral part of the world's cultural wealth, and of the need to preserve this heritage in order better to understand the road travelled, thereby illuminating both the present and the future.

But that does not suffice. Just as it is not enough to tell a nice story. The items collected must now come to constitute the coherent basis for in-depth research, with the help of the scientific tools of researchers in all disciplines. Such sports research does indeed appear to be one of the fundamental benefits of the museum as a database in every sense of the term, which needs moreover to be linked by computer with other sources and networks.

The pioneers have blazed the trail. A number of them will have the good fortune to experience the next stage, that of the second generation of sports museums and their staff. On the threshold of this last decade of the twentieth century, various countries are undertaking sport museum projects of the order of 10,000 m^2, the establishment of which, whatever the difficulties remaining to be resolved, is no longer a matter of principle but of funding, location and development. New staff often need not concern themselves with the difficult gestation achieved by the first generation: having arrived with the dynamism and non-preconceived ideas which are their strength, they may transcend their seniors' achievements.

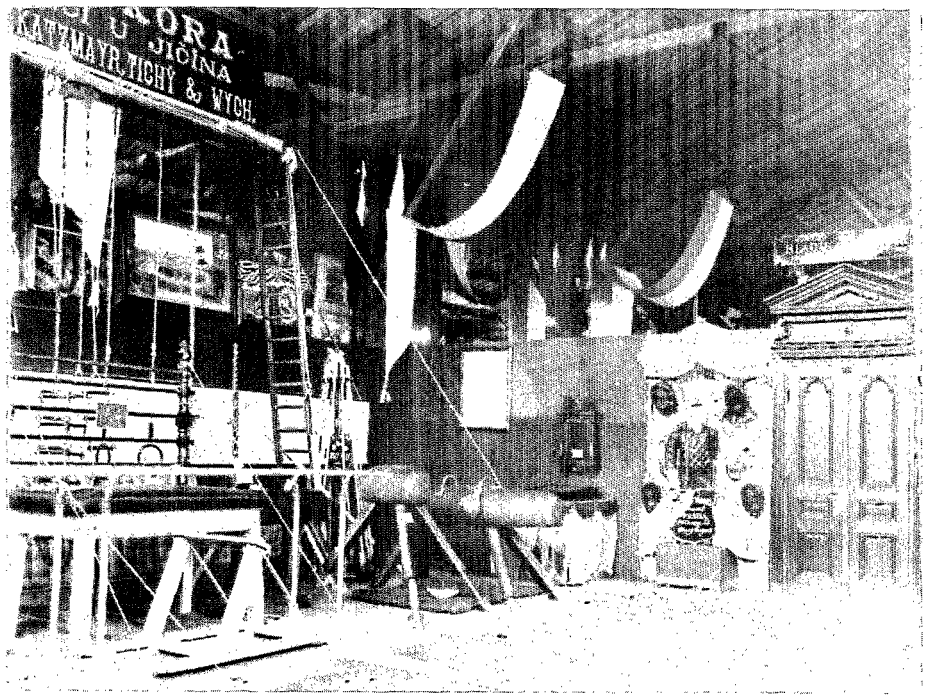
It is to be hoped, however, that the specific sports competence of the predecessors (who came from a sporting background) will not be obliterated and lost in the name of research; and that increasingly elaborate studies will not lose sight of the human reality peculiar to sport, to its ways of life, its language and its very legends. Research should, on the contrary, enable us to understand, evaluate and situate these human aspects better in relation to the general development of society.

Finally, I wonder whether the term 'museum', however noble, is not inexorably outdated, hidebound and petrified. The dynamic development and constant self-questioning of museological bodies would dispute the validity of this iconoclastic affirmation. And yet, would different names not be better suited to what the sports museum of the third millennium should be? ■



Prague: sports as history

Tomáš Grulich



Exhibition of apparatus and trophies in Prague in 1891: basis of the Museum of Physical Training and Sports.

Ask a Czech 'How are you?' and as likely as not the answer will be sportovně – *'sportingly'. This is, in a sense, an everyday way of recalling that sports and physical fitness were part and parcel of the Czechoslovak national revival in the nineteenth century and of the subsequent development of Czechoslovakia into a modern nation. Prague's Museum of Physical Training and Sports itself stems back to 1891 (five years before the first modern Olympic games were held) and is thus one of the oldest – if not the oldest – sports museums in the world. In this article its director (who trained in history and ethnology at Charles University and has written extensively on museum science) recounts the museum's origins and outlines current and planned developments.*

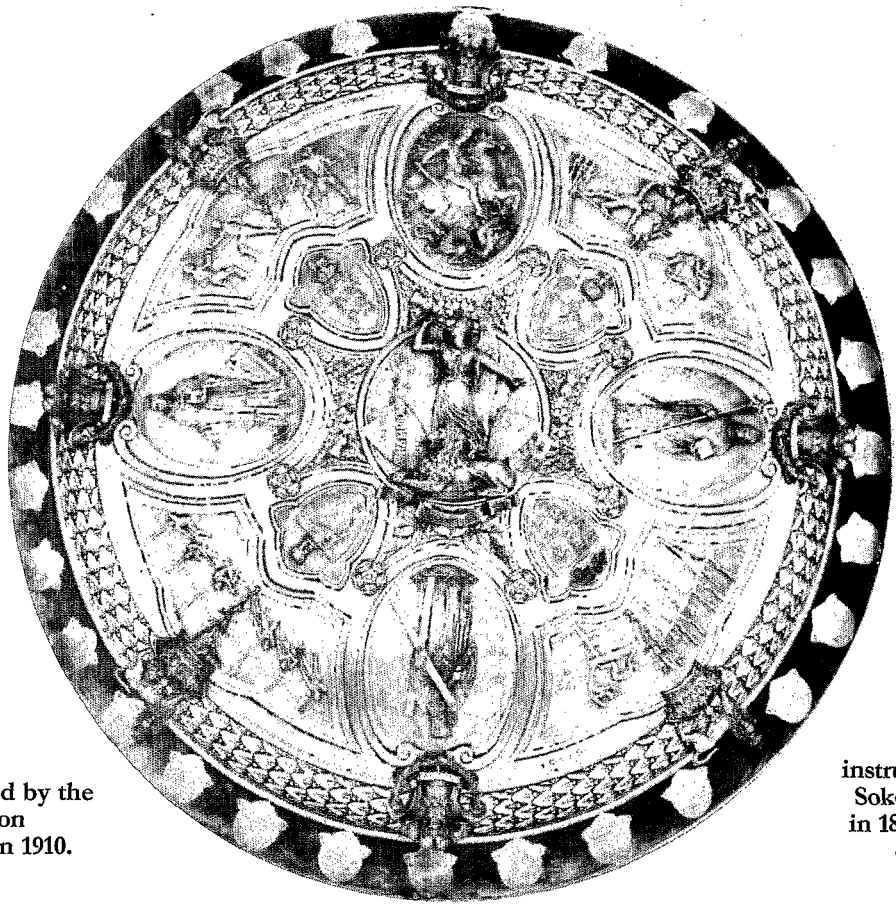
The Museum of Physical Training and Sports in Prague was founded in 1953. It emerged from the fusion of the Museum of Tyrš and Fügner, which had gathered personal documents and mementos of the two founders of the Czech physical training movement, and the Museum of the Czech Sokol (Falcon) Association, which documented the activities of the oldest, most popular and largest physical training movement in Bohemia, founded in 1862. Apart from gymnastics, which formed the basic programme of this movement, the museum showed the beginnings of athletics and fencing, not to forget outstanding trophies, objects of art, gymnastic apparatuses and further items connected with the development of the Sokol association.

Indeed, whatever other valuable pieces it may have (such as the cycling collection of racer/builder Augustin Vondrich) our museum is mainly concerned with the Sokol movement and thus, by extension, with the emergence of modern Czechoslovakia.

The Sokol physical-training association originated in Prague in 1862, at a time when many nations living within a giant supra-ethnic state were endeavouring to achieve independence, or at least equitable federative status. The strongly centralist policy of the Habsburg capital, Vienna, weakened during the 1860s, which in turn revived hopes for a more equitable organization of all its nations. The societies of Bohemia, Hungary and other regions intensified national political activity. In Prague, new Czech newspapers and reviews began appearing, and new cultural and social associations were founded. It must be said that the majority of these groupings were of an intellectual and, consequently, élitist character.

In this political and social atmosphere it was thus the more remarkable that the Sokol of Prague was also created as the first Czech physical-training organization. Its founders were outstanding personalities of Czech social, political and cultural life, headed by Jindřich Fügner, a Prague entrepreneur, initially of German nationality, who parted ways with his origins definitively after the 1848 revolution in order to devote his life to the struggle for an equitable organization of the different nations under the Austrian monarchy. He was a great connnoisseur of European democratic thought, and an admirer of the Italian revolu-

All photos by courtesy of Milos Heyduk/MPTS



Silver challenge shield from the gymnastic competition organized by the former British Physical Recreation Society won by the Sokol team in 1910.

Team of instructors of the Sokol of Prague in 1862, the year of its origin.

tionary, Garibaldi. He was seconded by a young philosopher, Miroslav Tyrš, who became not only the first instructor, but also the spiritual leader of the whole Sokol movement. Tyrš travelled all over Europe and studied physical-training systems in Germany, Sweden and particularly Switzerland, and later also in France. From all these systems Tyrš drew appropriate elements, enriched them with specific Czech features, and ultimately worked out the Czech physical-training system. Simultaneously he prepared Czech physical-training and military terminology.

Gymnastics, music, a museum

The Sokol as a movement and an ideology soon acquired a mass character. Compared with other associations, its great advantage lay in the simplicity of an idea of physical fitness that almost everyone could endorse. In this way the intellectual and cultural exclusivity of academic and intellectual associations was avoided. As a result, the Sokol soon became an important organization not only of physical training, but also in terms of its patriotic character. It became the propagator of the national idea which soon found its ways from the centre in Prague to the countryside and also to other countries with Czech and Slovak minorities.

To make known the just national claims in other countries the Sokol organized a number of successful excursions abroad. The first significant event of this type was the Sokol trip to Paris in 1889, where it participated in an international gymnastic competition to celebrate the centenary of the French Revolution. The Sokol teams not only won the team competition (the first two places) and individual competitions (the first nine places) but also gained the lasting friendship of participants from other nations.

The fundamentals of Sokol ideology were closely linked with patriotism. Therefore its activities were not limited to gymnastics, but also manifested themselves outwardly, for example in joint excursions during which several hundred Sokol members, in costume and under banners, marched from Prague, with songs and music, to the country to foster physical fitness and spread the national message. Of greatest importance were public exercises that acquired great popularity among the public. The first public exercises took place as early as the first year of the Prague Sokol, in 1862. After 1882 they took place regularly at a few years' interval and acquired the character of mass rallies. Until the last All-Sokol Rally in 1948 there were eleven such events. These All-Sokol rallies became one of the biggest mass exercises in Europe and manifested not only the physical fitness and sports skills of the participants but also the military readiness of the whole nation.

These national manifestations led, in turn, to sports and physical training exhibitions. The first took place in Prague in 1891, in the framework of the Jubilee Industrial Exhibition. These events gave birth to the idea of establishing a Sokol museum which would acquire the necessary collections to serve on occasions such as exhibitions.

A unique historical potential

Its long tradition has made it possible for our museum to build up one of the largest sports and physical training collections in the world. At present, we have over 40,000 solid objects, including medals, plaques, cups, works of art (paintings and sculptures) and apparatuses. One of the most outstanding parts of the collection are the trophies from the late nineteenth century, which cover practically all of Europe. By way of example, I may mention the gymnastic London Shield, a challenge prize of the former British Physical Recreation Society, won by the Sokol team in 1910 and acquired at a London auction after the abolition of the competition following the First World War.

of Czech and Slovak minorities and extend the territory covered by the collections as far away as to the United States and Australia. Significant among our objects is the highest prize of the so-called 'Pershing Olympiad' (Paris, 1919), which was awarded to the Czechoslovak football team. Also unique is our collection of medals, plaques and badges from the Olympic Games, comprising the oldest plaques commemorating both the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens and the first session of the International Olympic Committee in Paris, in 1894. The museum also has an extensive collection of sports and physical-training posters reaching as far back as the 1880s.

In addition to a library containing some 60,000 volumes, the museum contains an archive of written documents connected with the activities of sports and physical-training organizations as well as of outstanding sportsmen and women and sports luminaries. In this respect, the estates of the above-mentioned founders of the Czech physical training movement, Miroslav Tyrš and Jindřich Fügner, are of world significance. They contain their complete correspondence and diaries, and manuscripts of their works. Mention may also be made of the correspondence of the founders of the Czech Olympic Committee (Jiri Guth-Jarkovsky and Josef Rössler-Orovsky) with Pierre de Coubertin, which represents an important source for the history of the international Olympic movement.

Our collections include more than 1,500 historical films on sports and physical-training subjects, and covering the period from the 1930s to the present day. The archive of historical photographs numbers some 100,000, and includes a unique collection of 6,000 hand-coloured slides from the first decade of the twentieth century, covering not only Bohemia but also practically the whole of Europe. Apart from these materials the Prague Museum of Physical Training and Sports also has some 1,500 gramophone records of music linked with sports and physical training. Thanks to the work of our predecessors the collections of the museum represent a unique historical potential which, however, still awaits full use. Today's political and social changes in eastern and central Europe have meaning for the work of the museums, which may help us better realize that potential.

Thus, the Museum of Physical Training and Sports has the wonderful possibility of using its collection not only for the moral recovery of sports and physical training, but also (and through these popular social activities) to influence the whole of society. It has a unique opportunity of erecting a moral bridge between the positive aspects of the past and the hopeful present which may assist us on our way to the Europe of tomorrow.

Naturally, the museum is not capable of fulfilling this grandiose task alone. However, it possesses unique collections which it can offer to other cultural bodies and endeavours. We also have a concept of our role based on social and ethical premises which the museum has in common with the international Olympic movement. In fact, from 1990 all the museum's activities are connected with those of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee.

Two lines of development

The museum bids fair to develop along two principal lines. The first is the collection, preservation and assessment of all information concerning the history of physical training and sports, and more thorough use of our institution is now becoming a source and research centre which is used by the workers of universities with physical training and sports education programmes as well as by the whole community of historians. Thus we are gaining the status of documentation and information centre for the history of Olympic movement and sports in Czechoslovakia also used by the mass media as an historical resource bank.

The second line of development is the use of these materials and the

information drawn from them for the public at large. This concerns not only sportsmen and women but also sports fans. The presentation is aimed both at ethical education and at the satisfaction of the emotions. The aim is not only to instruct visitors, but also – and primarily – to *please* them. This is reflected in the forms of presentation. The permanent exhibition is small and great stress will be laid in the future on short-term exhibitions whose frequency will not only enable us to display a progressively greater part of the collections, but will also make it possible to react more flexibly to the needs of the public.

Apart from the traditional activities (exhibitions, lectures and publications) the museum will also operate a club in which, for example, former Czechoslovak Olympic participants will meet people interested in sports. The club will play a dual role. It will satisfy the needs of visitors, and it will enable the museum staff to ascertain the needs of society and thus to know what is required at the moment, how to orient future presentation, and possibly also to improve acquisition policy. Moreover, it will be also possible to enable former Olympic and other competitors be (and feel) useful for the public after they have terminated their active sports careers.

In conclusion I can only express the wish that the historical potential of the museum, built-up by the circumspection of our predecessors, should acquire such space as would enable us to implement fully its ideas to the benefit of the whole renascent society. ■

First prize won by the Czechoslovak football eleven at the so-called 'Pershing Olympiad', Paris, 1919.

Recalling 'Judaism of muscles'

Joseph Hoffman

The diehard prejudice that Jews are cerebral, deskbound and uninterested in physical fitness runs head-on into contrary evidence at Israel's Pierre Gildesgame Maccabi Sports Museum. Curator Dr Joseph Hoffman tells its story.

The Pierre Gildesgame Maccabi Sports Museum and Archives, located at Kfar Maccabiah, Ramat Gan, Israel, is a unique institution dedicated to Jewish sport. It was founded in 1980 by its first director-curator and current president, Arthur Hanak. Recently accepted as a fully fledged member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the museum highlights the development of the Maccabi movement and its predecessors, the Jewish gymnastic associations in late nineteenth-century Europe.

After Arthur Hanak left the post of Director-General of the Maccabi World Union, he decided to sort out the massive amount of archival material which had accumulated since the founding of that sports-promotion body in 1921. During his work on this project, which his colleagues assured him would take 'only a few weeks', he uncovered such a wealth of photographs, medallions, trophies, statuettes, posters, bibliographic material and the like, he said, 'that a museum was the only logical place to preserve it'. He added: 'The world is aware of the Jewish contribution to intellectual and spiritual life, but less well-known is our penchant for physical fitness.'

Was Jacob hit below the belt?

The present director, Rivka Rabinowitz, is guiding the museum through a new era which includes the restructuring of the interior, the rearrangement of the exhibition space and the youth educational centre, and the computerization of our archives.

The museum's namesake is Pierre Gildesgame, C.B.E. (1903–81), known as 'Mr Maccabi'. He was Chairman and later President of Maccabi World Union. As a youth, Gildesgame became an accomplished equestrian for Maccabi London, and soon became the club's chairman. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment occurred after the Second World War when he helped to revitalize the Maccabi movement in the wake of the Holocaust.

He was one of the principal architects of the Third Maccabiah games, which took place in 1950, the first after a twelve-year hiatus caused by the war. He stipulated for ensuing games that athletes need not be members of a Maccabi club in order to participate, but that the games were open to all Jewish sportsmen. He was also a co-founder of Maccabi Village at Ramat Gan, which today houses the finest sporting complex in Israel, and the museum which bears his name, for which he found the funds. He was also Chairman of the Friends of the Israel Art Museums.

Jewish sport can be documented since Hellenistic times with the erection of stadiums and hippodromes in Jerusalem, Caeserea and other centres under the enthusiastic patronage of King Herod. Some scholars also hold that reference to sport can be found in the Bible.

For example, Samuel 2: 12–17 describes a contest between soldiers while waiting for a battle to begin. Twelve men were chosen from each side. Although the exact nature of the engagement is unrecorded, biblical experts believe it to have been a form of fencing. Genesis 38: 18–25 lists a wrestling belt as one of the three personal articles of identification of Judah, and some experts suggest that the story of

Illustrations by courtesy of the author

Jacob's wrestling with the angel (Genesis 32: 24–6), in which his opponent beat Jacob by touching the hollow of his thigh, constituted a violation of the rule against hitting below the belt!

After the establishment of the first scattered Jewish gymnastic clubs in 1894, an effort was made to galvanize them into a strong central body. An impassioned plea was made for the creation of a 'Judaism of Muscles' in 1898. Jewish sport developed rapidly, first through local gymnastic clubs in Germany and Czechoslovakia, and afterwards in the consolidation of these myriad groups in the Maccabi World Union (MWU) in 1921.

From Australia to South America

Our museum's displays, situated on three floors covering 200 m^2, chronicle through much original archival material the emergence and development of organized Jewish sport the world over.

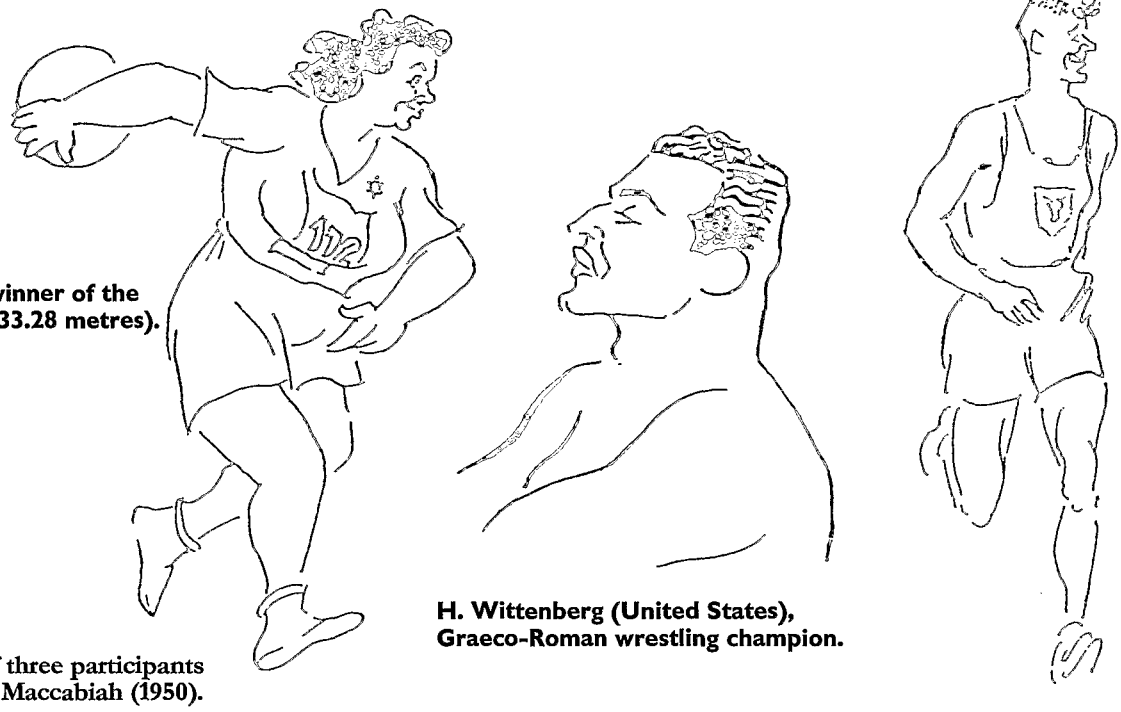
On entering, the visitor is greeted by an almost life-size photograph of the earliest documented Jewish sports club, the Israelite Gymnastic Association, which was founded in 1895 by German and Austrian Jews living in Constantinople who had been excluded from 'Aryan' athletic clubs. Arthur Hanak stresses the change in nomenclature from Constantinople's 'Israelite' label to 'Jewish' of Berlin's *Jüdische Turnschaft* (founded in 1903) as heralding a self-conscious awakening of Jewish spirit: 'Jews no longer saw themselves as remnants of a biblical people, but rather as part of the modern world, and this included the world of sport.'

This change incurred the anger of both the secular and the religious camps. The Zionist organizations contended it was 'not Jewish enough' since it did not stress the centrality of Eretz Isarael (Palestine), while the Reform movement, then deliberately assimilationist, found it 'too Jewish'. For good measure, the more traditional school of thought felt completely threatened by any society that would detract from orthodox religious studies.

Objects on display include songbooks for gymnasts, protocols for proper athletic behaviour, membership cards, badges, medallions and trophies of the various early groups. Also highlighted are letters paying tribute to the pioneering work of the Maccabi World Union by David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein. Einstein wrote in part: 'It is good that the one-sided intellectualization of the Jewish people is being countered by you.' Freud, in the last year of his life, permitted his name to be used as a patron by the Maccabi World Union. The history of the Maccabi movement is set forth in a visitor-activated audio-visual display; narration is available in Hebrew, English and Spanish.

The second floor of the museum is dedicated to the thirteenth Maccabiad (popularly called the 'Jewish Olympics'). Begun in 1932, they were held every year (except for the war years) until 1953, when they became a quadrennial event. The Maccabiads bring together the best Jewish athletes the world over to compete in an ever-widening range of sporting events. The items on exhibit include posters, trophies, medals, photographs, first-issue stamps, journalistic accounts, programmes, and more off-beat items such as cigarette lighters, cutlery and clothing with the Maccabi logo. Individual showcases are also dedicated to Jewish athletes who distinguished themselves in the world Olympic Games, such as Elias Katz, a gold medallist in the 3,000-metre team race at the 1924 Olympics in Paris, and Micky Hirschl, who won a bronze medal in

For senior citizens, links with the past.



S. Sandler (South Africa), winner of the 800 metres (1 min. 58.2 sec.).

P. Lichtblau (Israel) winner of the disc-throwing event (33.28 metres).

H. Wittenberg (United States), Graeco-Roman wrestling champion.

Cartoonist's view of three participants in the Third Maccabiah (1950).

free-style and Graeco-Roman wrestling at the 1932 Los Angeles games.

The third floor deals with the worldwide ramifications of the Maccabi movement. Space is set aside for some of the Maccabi clubs which perished in the Holocaust, such as those in Lithuania and Germany. There are also exhibits about clubs that are today thriving in far-flung corners of the globe, with special attention to the contribution of Jewish sport in Australia and South America.

Culture and fun

Our museum appeals to two widely divergent age groups. On the one hand, senior citizens flock here to find attention given to kin who participated in Jewish sporting clubs before the Second World War. These people linger before our displays of medallions and trophies, and pore over documentary material in adjacent archives. For them, the museum is an important link with the past. On the other hand, children – with parents, or in school groups and sport classes – come to see reminders of authentic Jewish heroes, the amateur athletes who distinguished themselves in the Maccabiads as well as the professional Maccabi players, chief among them the Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball squad which won the European Cup in 1977 and 1981 and finished in second place in the last two tournaments (1988 and 1989). This group appreciates the large photographs and video clips of their favorite stars in action.

A sports museum has the potential to be a very attractive cultural gathering point, because it combines culture and fun. Many people who consider themselves uncultured balk at a museum's entrance, certain that whatever is hanging on the walls will be beyond them, and that time spent in such a structure is lost. But our museum can regale them with exciting objects which re-create the past as well as give hope to the next generation of Jewish athletes. For the most part, we are dealing with objects which in themselves have no great value (except, of course for those trophies and medals fashioned from precious metals and certain memorabilia). Their worth comes from the light they shed on the Jewish contribution to physical culture. ■

The anthropological interpretation of sport: a task for museums

Massimo Canevacci

In terms of cultural anthropology, how can sport be understood and interpreted? What analytical paradigm may be used for this purpose? What, in particular, is the reason for violence associated with sport today? And what responsibilities and opportunities face museums in connection with these questions? Professor of cultural anthropology at the University of Rome La Sapienza, visiting professor at the University of São Paulo in Brazil and author of a number of books interpreting contemporary society, Massimo Canevacci explores these and related issues in this article. Logically enough, he begins with field work, part of which took place on . . . a playing field.

In 1989, I happened to be on a field trip to a Guarani reservation, near the Argentine bank of the Iguaçu river, not far from the famous falls, which must count among the world's most spectacular sights. The project was organized in collaboration with the Museum of the Indian in Rio de Janeiro and included the participation of two Xavante Indians from the Mato Grosso region of Brazil.

Guarani and Xavantes were able to communicate in a hybrid of Portuguese and Spanish, known as '*portunholo*', but not in their own respective languages. On the third day, however, their means of communication were unexpectedly extended through the medium of sport. Near the '*aldeia* ' or village, there was a makeshift sports ground, where it was decided to arrange a game of football at two in the afternoon, in blazing sunshine. It was Sunday and a number of Argentine youths from the surrounding area were visiting the reservation, making it possible to form two teams, Indians versus Argentines. Boots, shirts, socks and footballs were rapidly produced and I was given the task of referee. The Indian team included the two Xavantes, and their superior physical strength was immediately apparent, compared with the smaller, but extremely fast Guarani. The game was closely followed by a crowd of Indian spectators, of all ages, but particularly the very young. I whistled for kickoff and thus began the strangest football match I have ever experienced. It was a fast, extremely fair game; both sides fielded some excellent players, but the two Xavantes were more powerful and displayed an endless repertory of shots, dummies and passes. The hero of the day was Archimedes, the younger of the two Xavantes, who scored both goals for the Indian team, the final result being 2–1. He told me he knew Gullit, the long-haired Dutch footballer who plays for the Italian team of Milan, and that in Brazil, there had once been a regularly organized Indian football league.

Acculturation through sport and ritual

The above example clearly demonstrates the way in which sport is emerging as a new means of communication between nations, linking widely varying cultures and ethnic groups, facilitated to a great extent by the fact that it conveys a great variety of meanings. In any society, the language of sport is readily expressed in its own characteristic local terms, according to its specific rules. The importance of the phenomenon is such that museums – ethnological museums, sports museums and others – cannot afford to ignore it.

At the present time acculturation – that is to say the process by which cultural models are exported, often forcibly, from a 'central' culture to other 'peripheral' cultures – is characterized in many areas, including sport, by two opposing features: on the one hand, the keenly defended recognition of individual cultural identities in the face of growing assimilation, and on the other, the need for a mutually sup-

Museum (Unesco, Paris), No. 170 (Vol. XLIII, No. 2, 1991)

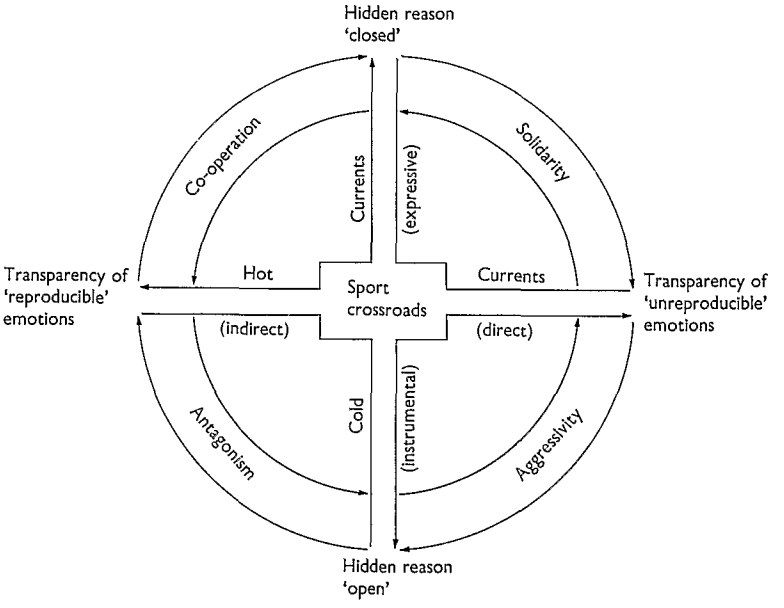
portive and *balanced exchange* between different cultures, if an increasingly open dialogue is to be maintained. In this respect, sport can serve as a vantage point from which to observe the rhythms and methods governing the preservation of identities and the staging of cultural exchanges.

Ritual and sport are closely linked.[1] There is frequent evidence in traditional ritual of competitive activity which partakes of the nature of sport; an example, again from the Xavante culture, is the tree-trunk game, where two organized teams push their tree-trunk along the ground and the team to arrive first is the winner;[2] or, in Italy, the Palio in Sienna or the Race of the Ceri (Candles) in Gubbio; or the many variations of football, from Chinese *tsu-chu*, played with a rubber ball filled with female hair, to the *tlachtli* of the Aztecs, using a solid rubber ball.

In the global village of today's world, there is a growing tendency towards the secularization of ritual, thereby undermining ancient religious associations. Cross-cultural exchanges affect the whole of society and its institutions,[3] and are capable of blending opposing elements, both sacred and profane, thereby transforming sources of conflict into sources of identification. Besides this traditional aspect of ritual, sport can also reverse the process. By transforming identification into conflict, it ends up by creating an artificial universe, a simplified metaphor for the real world, which achieves its maximum effect through this process of simplification.

Sport as a crossroads: an analytical paradigm

The complex phenomenon of sport can be viewed and described as a crossroads where a great variety of backgrounds, motivations and forms of behaviour come together and merge. Modern sport owes its complexity to its immersion in a sea of turbulent and opposing currents which can be broadly defined as follows: a hot current, which makes sport an arena of transparent emotions; and a cold current, which represents sport as an area of hidden reason. As shown in our diagram of intersecting binary opposites (Fig. 1) transparent emotions can be direct, in terms of their spontaneous development in circumstances of time and place which are 'unreproducible'; and also indirect – or experienced by means of 'technical reproducible' aids [4] – characterized by the passive and Manichean attitudes adopted by spectators from time immemorial. Symmetrically, these same opposites can be detected in the cold current of hidden rationality, which may be defined either as expressive, in that it tends to favour a close link between reason and emotion, a sort of 'physical rationality'; or alternatively, as instrumental, to the extent that everything is geared, through a frenzied spirit of competition towards achieving the best possible result in terms of prestige, power and wealth.



In this model sport is represented at the crossroads in the conflict between the transparency of emotions and hidden reason. The transparent currents of emotion spread through all the corporeal reactions of the spectator attending a sporting event. They involve and deeply affect the varied biophysical functions concerned with sight, hearing and smell, which transmit a continuing flow of perceptions throughout the entire span, in time and space, during which the body is as it were totally immersed in the outwardly expressed sensibility of the emotions. Conversely, the more 'obscure' and turbid currents of hidden reason demand of sport that it function at all times on the basis of the application of calculated reason, aimed at achieving the best possible result.

An imaginative, yet at the same time realistic, approach to sport should certainly not seek to eliminate or remove transparent emotions from their interplay with the currents of hidden rationality. It should seek instead to create states of equilibrium, even if only partial ones, between the two dimensions of reason and emotion. These dimensions can never be made to cancel each other out, nor should one attempt to make them do so; they should enrich each other by combining and multiplying their effects. It may well be possible to envisage a situation in which the cold current of hidden reason, defined as 'expressive', could mingle with, and be warmed by, the hot currents of transparent emotions. Conversely, the hot current of transparent emotions can be cooled down in the case of sudden violent outbursts which are as detrimental to one's opponents as to oneself.

The type of approach I have in mind is one which would explicitly reject any kind of social engineering on authoritarian lines in favour of a widespread educational campaign to promote rational transparent emotions which neither simulate conflicts nor canalize their expression, but produce instead a psychic and cultural 'exchange' between widely differing individuals, groups and peoples.

The 'double bind' of violence in sport

Some of my recent research centres on a cross-disciplinary approach applicable to contemporary violence in sport.[5] Reference to Bateson's 'double bind' theory,[6] applied in schizophrenic disorders, could usefully be adopted as a basis for dealing with the new form of 'deviant normality', namely the aggression which occurs in sports stadiums. Thus the argument would be that fans in sports clubs everywhere are enmeshed in the bonds of a type of communication which pulls them in two opposing directions; from this they can only escape 'pathologically', i.e. by raising the level of violence socially visible in sports stadiums, which increases slowly but surely week by week as the season progresses. It is for this very reason, namely the inherent ability of sport to transform the recognition of identity into conflict, that the passive spectator cannot bear to identify with his opposing counterpart, and therefore has recourse to an artificial image of the adversary as something diabolical. The image of the other becomes that of a group of fans of one's own age – in fact, identical to one's own image or *ego*.

It is the viscous nature of this nemesis which necessarily produces in the social body increasingly marked differences beween the *ego* and the *alter*; this leads to an increase in the level of unmotivated aggressivity and the creation of semiotic boundaries. The greater the perception of the similarity between the *ego* and the *alter*, the greater the compulsion to 'communicate' in terms of spontaneous and absurd violence. The whole field of sport confirms the post-modern social trend towards converting symbols into signs. This results in an inflated over-production of signs (described by M. Featherstone, as 'sign-flation')[7] which in turn gives rise to a continuing status-game in which, sooner or later, a vast number of identities are reproduced in a fragmentary and discriminatory manner. Thus the supporter is caught in a double-bind, by which he is attached to his own group and to all rival groups in a confused situation which is all the more inextricable because it is 'normally pathological'.

The cross-disciplinary approach, and a task for museums

Sport may be considered as an ideal vantage point from which to view humanity in general in a number of ways, ranging from the ethnological approach – which is basic to an understanding of the 'animal' heritage which sport exalts and rekindles in man, especially in the defence of one's territory and the sanction of ritualized aggression – to the comparative historical approach. The development of sport along clearly defined lines has not been limited to Western culture; it has also been enriched by a wide variety of sport-related activities from all over the world, which researchers should study and compare, having recourse to anthropology, social psychology and sociology. In this cross-disciplinary context the Olympic Games can be seen as representing a 'map' of human behaviour in which the process of global acculturation defines its currents of emotion and reason according to given signals which 'bind' spectators the world over by means of a clearly defined message. This uncomplicated 'Olympic' view, covering all the disciplines involved in sport, could well help to spread attitudes of perception and understanding in respect of new tendencies towards multi-cultural syncretism.

To conclude, I consider that museum administrators should make greater efforts to include sport within their museums as a subject for study. The Museum of the Indian mentioned above, whose director is Claudia Menezes,[8] has a special section which displays photographs of Brazilian football teams, all of whose members are Indians. An open approach to the function of museums should include the endless possibilities of 'inventing' a genuine museum of sport, which would highlight the range of signals peculiar to the world of sport. The task of such a museum would be to exhibit the various cultures of sport and to trace its multilinear development and the changes undergone up to the present day.

The interaction between violence in society and sport is gradually undermining the world of sport and society in general, so that sport is no longer a game, but has come to resemble a state of war. The educational possibilities of a new kind of museum, original also in its design – open, multi-media, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural – could play a determining role in encouraging attitudes towards sport which are more lucid, dynamic and creative. The creation of this new image of museum science is highly desirable. It would be a gift to future generations in their continuing contemplation of what was, and is, the wonderfully rich, varied and changing history of humanity. Such contemplation becomes possible both in and through sport. ■

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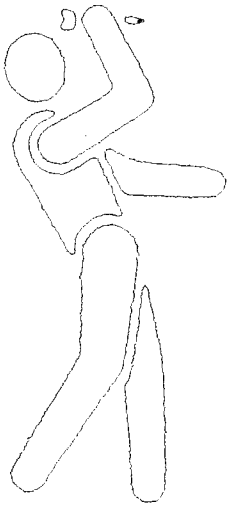


The come-back of traditional sports and games

Roland Renson

Why has there been a revival of non-Olympic sports and games? How can these best be researched? What dilemmas face museums wishing to help preserve and conserve them? And, in more general terms as regards traditional forms of play, how 'good' were the 'good old days'? These issues are addressed here by the director of Belgium's Flemish Sports Museum who is also aprofessor at the Institute of Physical Education at the Catholic University of Louvain, President of the newly established International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport and author of a number of books about human beings in movement, a discipline he likes to call 'sociocultural kinanthropology'.

In the early 1970s there was a revival of traditional forms of sports, games, dance and recreation. This coincided with the worldwide economic crisis and it has indeed been argued that the revival was a critical by-product of the crisis. During periods of socio-economic and cultural uncertainty, the past is often harked back to as a kind of salutary utopia. This 'back to the roots' movement can be seen as a kind of ecologist's reflex within modern sports and recreation. Another feature of this traditionalist revival is that it appears in the context of ethnic identification processes of cultural minorities and so-called emerging nations, where modern sports have sometimes been viewed as tainted with a colonialist and imperialist ideology.

A glance at a map of Europe shows that ancient folk games have had better chances for survival in regions least affectedby the drastic socio-cultural changes of the Reformation and early industrialization. Apparently an ethno-nationalist identity factor has thus also played a role in conserving certain traditional games in the cases of ethnic or linguistic minorities in industrialized countries. In some places, traditional games have indeed been elevated to the status of ethnonationalist symbols.

The same process is also apparent on an international scale. African nations in search of their cultural authenticity promote traditional forms of games and dances. Similar developments are observed in Asia, where the ASEAN Traditional Game and Sport Project was launched in 1979 in order to promote South Asian integration and regional identity. In North America, too, Indian tribes redefine their ethnic identity through traditional games.

A. T. Cheska has identified three distinctive processes in which traditional folk games can serve as ethnic signifiers in contemporary societies:

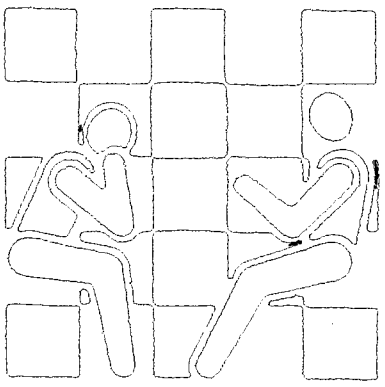
Revival of ethnic opposition to the dominant culture, for example, the Northern Games of the Canadian Inuit.

Residual survival as alternative ethnic values in a current society, for example, the traditional Tudabarai form of Buzkashi in northern Afghanistan or traditonal Sumo wrestling in Japan.

Residual revival as incorportating ethnic values within the dominant culture, for example, the Sepak Takraw game in South-East Asia, the competitive Sumo version in Japan or the team Qarajai version of Buzkashi in Afghanistan.

A definition and typology

It has also been shown how traditional games have acted as a definite cultural identity marker among Flemish immigrants in Canada. Although this minority group was not powerful enough to impose its language within the dominant culture, it did succeed in maintaining at least part of its cultural identity through certain traditional games. Particularly such games as *rolle-bolle* (bowls) 'popinjay shooting' (archery) and pigeon races have served as a vehicle for the expression and consolidation of ethnic identity among these immigrants.



Museum (Unesco, Paris), No. 170 (Vol. XLIII, No. 2, 1991)

All in all, there are good reasons to urge sports museums and other museums help preserve the enormous variety of traditional play forms that exist throughout the world. These games need protection and deserve active promotion; otherwise they risk being completely replaced by a restricted number of highly standardized forms of modern sports. This loss would be the more unfortunate since, as P. Parlebas has pointed out, modern sports tend to favour a rather unidimensional type of play interactions, whereas traditional games often offer a much richer 'vocabulary' and 'grammar' of interpersonal communication forms. Let us hope, therefore, that our traditional games will not become 'dead languages', no longer practised actively and only good enough to gather dust in an obscure corner of a sports museum!

First of all, of course, research is required. An early contemporary effort in this regard was the development from 1973 onwards of the Flemish Folk Games File (FFGF) by the Institute of Physical Education at the Catholic University of Louvain, in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. In a sense, the field research model was that of Flemish Pieter Bruegel (1525–69) who used to go to the countryside to study popular pastimes *in loco,* including sports and games.

The FFGF project yielded the following working definition: 'Folk games are traditional, local, active games of a recreational character, requiring specific skills, strategy or chance, or a combination of these three elements.'

A typology, adapted since for international research sponsored by the Council of Europe, was also constructed based on formal structural characteristics of the games. Its main categories are: ball games, bowl-and-pin games, throwing games, shooting games, fighting games, animal games, locomotion games, and acrobatics.

Results of the FFGF project included the inclusion of folk games in the Flanders Sports for All campaign (1978), the organization of a major exhibition at the Flemish Open Air Museum at Bokrijk during the International Year of the Child (1979) and the establishment at that museum of a permanent folk-game route, the creation of the Flemish Folk Games Central (1980), and the holding of a Year of Folk Games in Flanders.

Dilemmas for museums

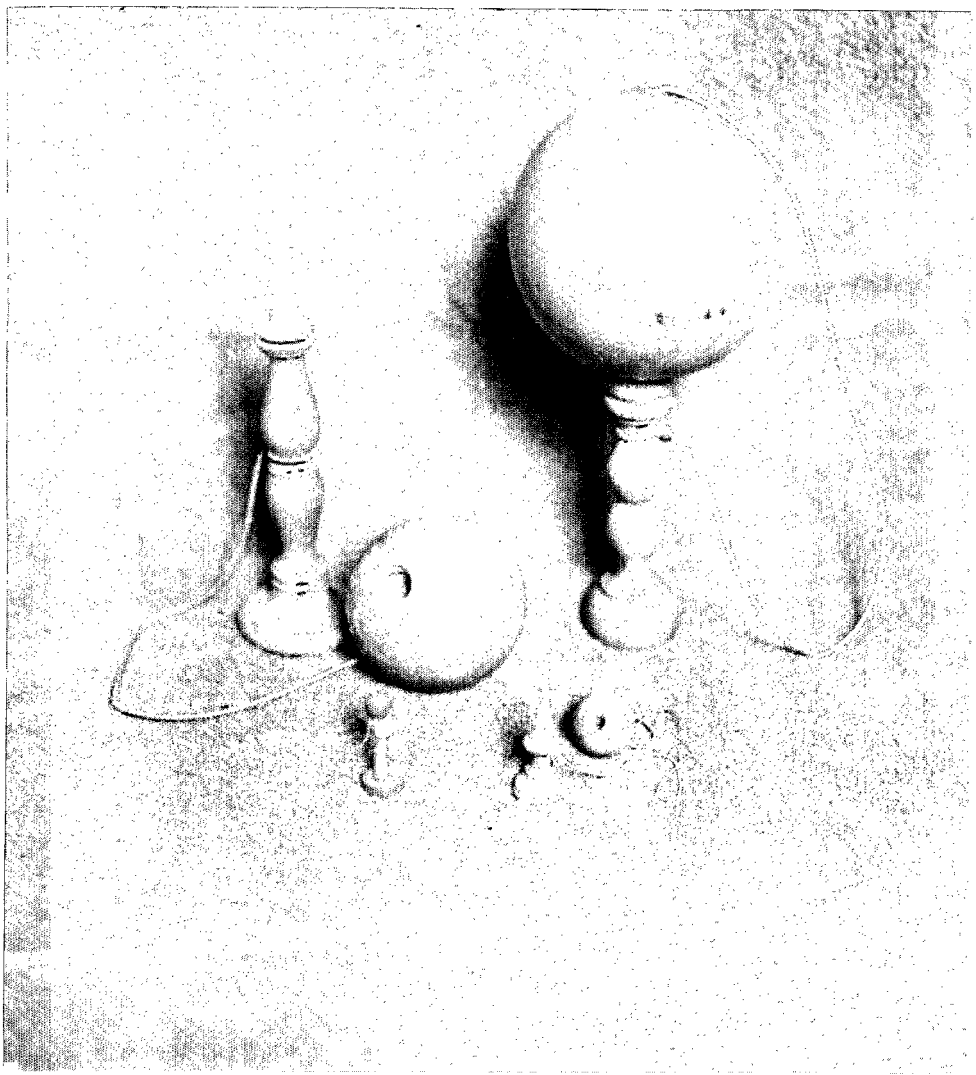
Thus research contributed to action, and these concerned by action in a museum framework face a number of dilemmas. For instance, traditional games have a deep-rooted cultural his-

The bilboquet: a widespead traditional game

The bilboquet consists of a pointed stick joined by a string to a ball which has a hole bored into it. The aim of the game is to hold the stick in one's hand and, with a sharp jerk, to lift the ball above the stick, spearing it in the hole.

The game's origin is uncertain but it may be from pre-Columbian America. It was very popular at the French Court in the sixteenth century and today may be found in many parts ofthe world, as these samples from a private collection demonstrate.

All photos by Richard Jammes



The long and the tall of French bilboquet models.

tory and, like old trees, they have to be treated with due respect. Nevertheless, old trees die and young trees need to be planted. Here two opposite views exist: the preservation view versus the conservation view.

The preservation view considers traditional games as kinds of cultural endproducts, which should only be 'watched' in their natural babitat from a distance, like observing rare specimens of a vanishing species. The conservation view is a more pragmatic approach: traditional games are not seen as anachronistic holdovers but as valuable cultural artefacts, as far as they still have a function in present-day society. Both views deserve to be taken seriously and one should strive for a healthy compromise, rather than an exclusive option. Nevertheless, diachronical historical analyses prove that games, like any other cultural trait, have constantly been affected by continuous social and cultural change. 'The good old days' were certainly old but probably no better than today!

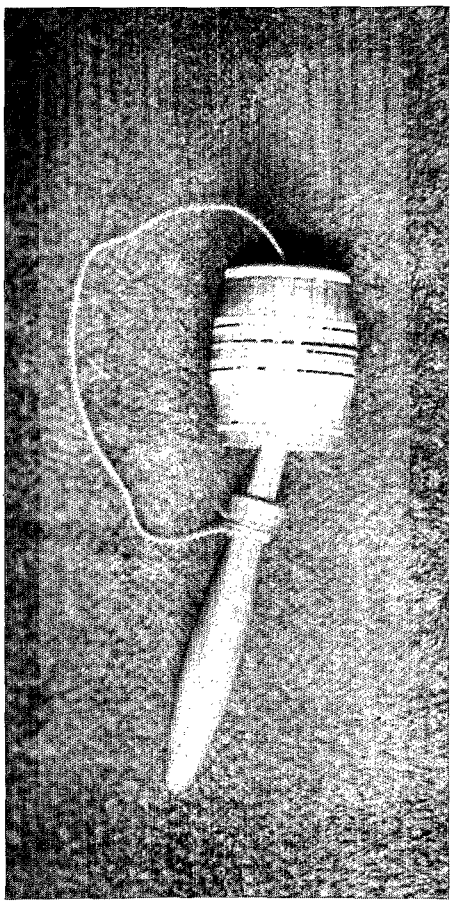
Everyone involved in studying, preserving or promoting traditional games, will face some further theoretical and moral problems, which I would like to discuss now from the perspective of a sports museum.

First, is the sports museum a reservation or a laboratory? Researchers of traditional games are frequently confronted with the question: Should we preserve antique games equipment or just leave it *in situ* at the risk of its being lost forever? Through the field work of our students we, in the FFGF project, sometimes felt that certain play objects (bowls, a skittle table, etc.) were 'too valuable to be played with'. What would happen if these objects were taken away to be put on display in a museum? Would the game vanish or could an ersatz copy safeguard it?

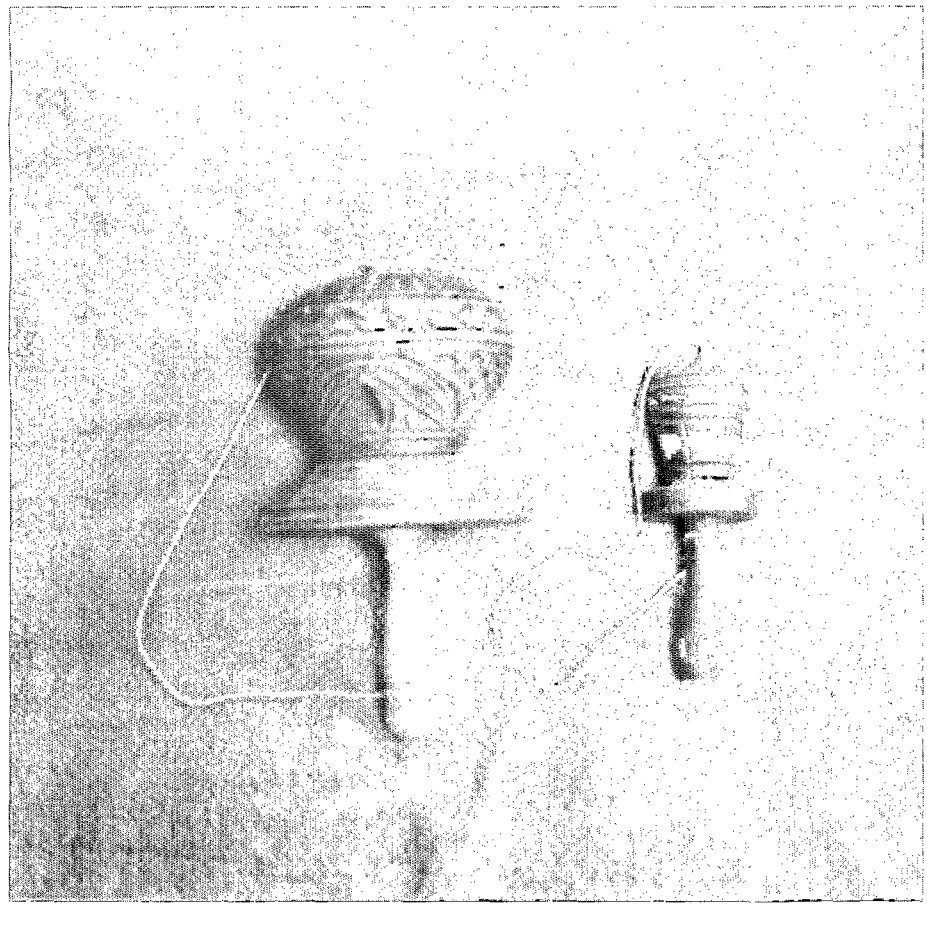
The Ulama case provides a dramatic illustration of this dilemma. During field work in the Sinaloa area of Mexico, anthropologist Ted Leyenaar discovered a living version of the centuries-old Ulama game. In this game, the players of two teams propel a heavy solid-rubber ball weighing about 3 kg with the hip. This discovery provided most interesting information on the technical and tactical aspects of the old Meso-American ballgames. The game observed by Leyenaar was correctly qualified as a remarkable 'survival'. It may also have been a 'terminal' game because the heavy rubber ball now resides in the Netherlands National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden!

In Flanders in the early 1970s, new bowls were practically unavailable. One of the first goals of the Flemish Folk Games centre was, therefore, to set up a workshop, where skilled

The *balero* from Mexico.



The *embuque* from Chile.



craftsmen would produce traditional games attributes. Moreover, a loan service was organized, spread over fifteen different regional distribution centres, where so-called 'folk-games boxes' are available. These consist of a varied package of about thirty different games and can also be purchased.

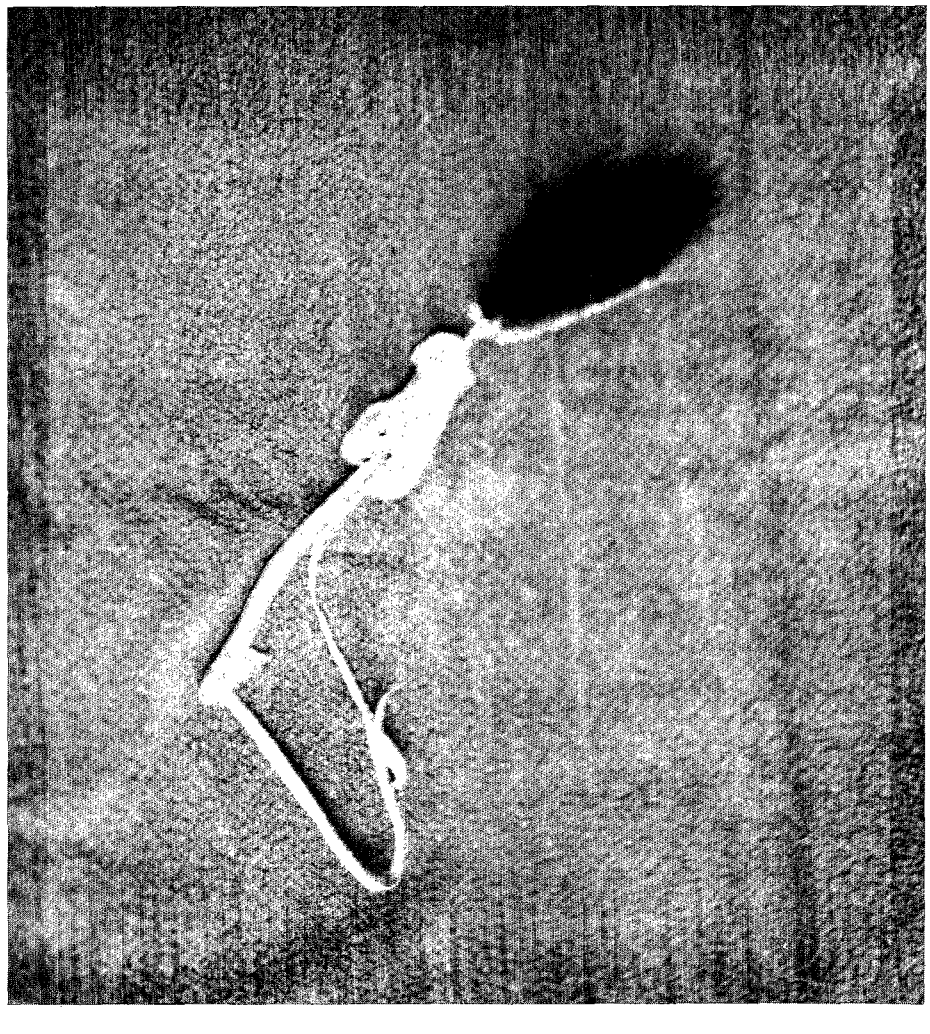
Secondly, should displays be living history or tourist attractions? 'Folklorization' is another aspect that might negatively affect the cultural status of traditional games. Again, this is a complex issue because it seems that there are cases where authentic local traditions and tourist performances can go hand in hand. Two examples are the Highland Games in Scotland or the Palio della Balestra, a crossbow contest in the Italian city of Gubbio. Both are festivals, deeply rooted in local history, but also attract a number of tourists. Nevertheless, we note a clear tendency to create more and more artificial Disney-, Wild-, Safari- or other 'worlds', where such events are re-enacted.[1]

Here, I stress the fact that traditional games are to be considered a specific text whithin a specific context. However, both these texts (the play forms) and contexts (their meaning) constantly interact and undergo changes. As a result, constant readaptations and reinterpretations are needed; otherwise games become 'relics' or sheer 'demonstrations', which are kept alive artificially.

A simple illustration is the recent adaptation of an old wall ball game played by schoolboys in Belgium. For centuries this game has been played with an old type of handball that is still used in the few existing 'real tennis' or *jeu de paume* courts in Europe. The last Belgian factory to make such 'college balls' as they were called, closed in the early 1970s and the game was rapidly

An Inuit version from Canada *(ajaqaq)*, made from bone and hide, with a fur tassel.

A Finnish version.



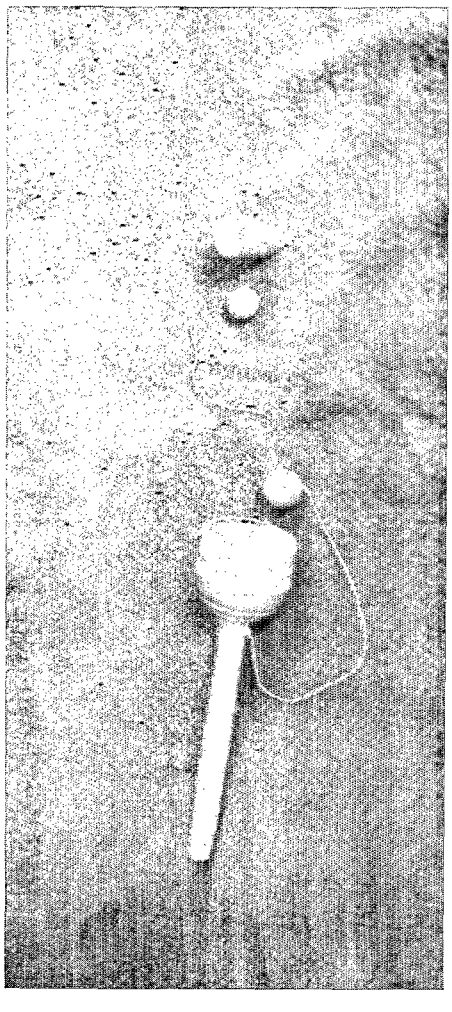
disappearing, as noted by D. De Borger. Now, however, the same wall ball game has caught on again, with the difference that normal tennis balls are used. This has of course affected the nature and the playing skills of the game, but at least the game goes on.

Missing the ball?

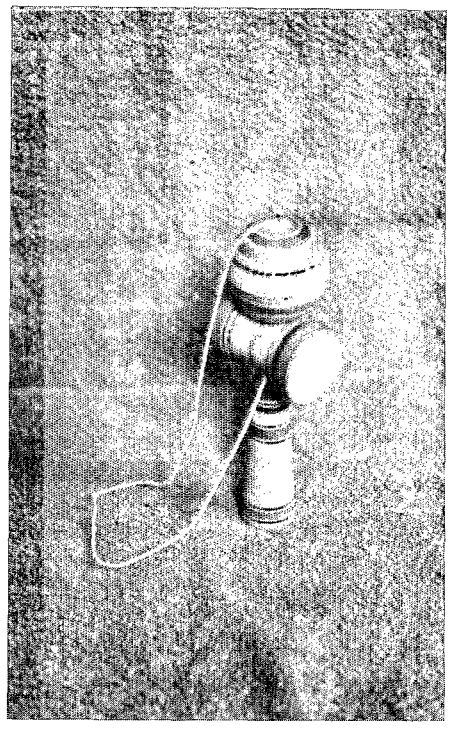
The French anthropologist Marcel Mauss pointed out as long ago as 1935 that social scientists should study more seriously the area of physical culture, an area he qualifed as 'the techniques of the body'. In my opinion sports museums are investing most of their energy in collecting and preserving sports *objects:* play equipment, trophies, medals, etc., and often neglect to document or to evoke the cultural heritage of *techniques of the body.* Moreover, traditional games are seldom not considered to be the 'minor arts' of the sports culture, partly because they often lack impressive equipment or precious material remains. Many traditional children's games, for instance, are purely movement games, not requiring any specific equipment. Are they therefore less important?

All in all, I think that sports museums miss the ball if they do not focus on all playful forms of human movement, including traditional games. Now, the best way to preserve, or better to conserve, these traditional games, is to play them. Here the task of a sports museum may be to provide adequate information and equipment (text) in an adequate setting (context). Therefore, in addition to being accommodated *in* a sports museum, traditional games ought to be promoted – reanimated as it were – *from* sports museums. And why not from certain other kinds of museums as well? ■

1. See the discussion on 'Disneyfication' in *Museum,* No. 169. – Ed.

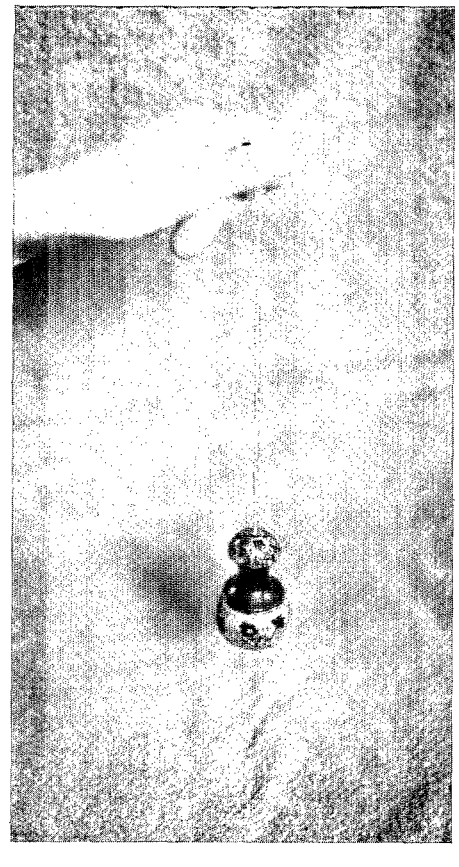


Cup-and-ball variants from Mexico (below) and, probably, England (left).



A Japanese model *(Ken dama)* including both a vertical point and lateral cups.

How it's done.



A sports museum is also a business

Maximilian Triet

In many countries today, sport is big business. Sports museums, on the other hand, are seldom notorious money-makers. And yet, even if only to survive (and whatever their cultural, educational and scientific functions may be), they must devise and implement economic strategies much like other enterprises. In this article, a historian, art historian and ethnographer draws on a decade's experience as director of the Swiss Sports Museum (Basle) to suggest and analyse different elements of framing such strategies.

Sports museums are gradually coming into fashion. Now that sport has grown to unprecedented proportions as a result of the increase in leisure time the study of its history is also receiving more and more attention. Specialized and non-specialized museums are attempting with varying degrees of success to document what has been described as 'the most important unimportant activity in the world' and present it to the public in a broader context. They are aware that it will scarcely be possible to write the history of the twentieth century without taking sport into account as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The last decade witnessed a host of public and private ventures (in Germany, France, Denmark, etc.) and also the birth of international co-operation between sports museums. An International Association of Sport Museums and Halls of Fame already exists, even if over 90 per cent of its members are from North America. At the suggestion of the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), J. A. Samaranch, a booklet promoting the establishment of national sports museums was issued,[1] and a worldwide association of sports museums was set up under the patronage of IOC. It held its historic inaugural meeting in Lausanne in June 1989.

A tentative classification of sports museums

Before going on to examine the specifically economic aspect of sports museums I would like to list several types, as the structure of a museum, when all is said and done, also determines its economic strategy. It must be said at the outset that I have left out private collections on sports history that are of little or no interest to the general public. These include collections belonging to business-minded dealers, which change hands, in their entirety or in part, for financial reasons. In such cases the economic strategy simply consists in endeavouring to make a profit from the sale of the originals themselves. However, once a private collection has reached the ideal stage at which it is donated to the public en bloc it then forms a basis for the establishment of a museum (this truism applies not only to sports museums but to all historico-cultural collections).

Sports museums can be classified in accordance with the subjects they cover and also their geographical scope. At the top of the list comes the international sports museum, the main example being the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. The second category consists of national sports museums, such as those in Helsinki, Paris, Basle and other cities. Like the Olympic Museum, they cover a number of dif-

1. See box on page 103. – Ed.

Museum (Unesco, Paris) No. 170 (Vol. XLIII No. 2, 1991)

ferent sports, but whereas the former collects and displays material on the Olympic disciplines the national museums cover the various sports practised in a given country. The next group is made up of regional sports museums, which is followed by local museums and finally club museums. The so-called 'halls of fame' are particularly widespread in the United States and Canada, at the national, regional and local levels. As regards subject-matter, a distinction may be drawn between museums covering a broad field, in other words a number of different sports, and those specializing in one or two sports – though these distinctive features should be taken as theoretical, since in reality many hybrid forms are to be found.

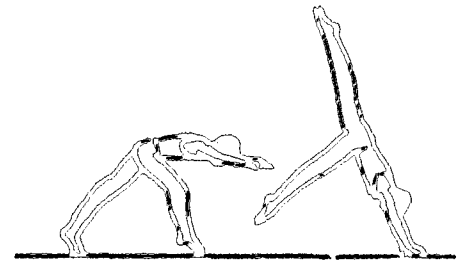
This is the more so since sport is undeniably an international phenomenon, and what is more one that results from contact between different cultures. For instance, a museum specializing in track and field athletics can scarcely avoid tracing the origins of individual disciplines back to ancient civilizations. A country's presence on the international sporting scene is at the same time a commitment to opening up its horizons on a worldwide scale. This means that no sports museum worth its salt can accept responsibility for confining itself to local, regional or national items, though it is natural that these should constitute the focal point of its collections. For example, the history of swimming strokes is incomplete if the crawl is considered a product of the twentieth century and it is forgotten that its early forms already existed at the time of the ancient Egyptian and Greek civilizations, and indeed far earlier, among many primitive peoples. The *History of Swimming and of Bathing Suit Fashions* exhibition held in our museum thus included an Ancient Egyptian sculpture of a swimmer and a cast of a hieroglyph clearly depicting the leg movement. The reader may initially be put off by this 'digression', but the international outlook of sport and consequently of a sports museum has definite repercussions on the expenditure column of its budget, for in many cases research cannot be conducted by letter: field studies are required. On the other hand, an international orientation means that the participating countries may share the costs.

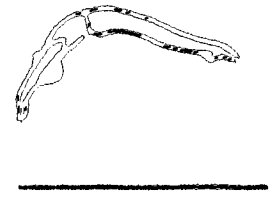
'Culture vultures' versus plebs

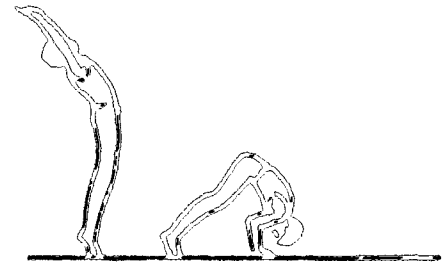
Most museums are organized along more or less similar lines. They differ only with regard to the nature of the collections and their overall aspirations. The basic condition to be met by a museum is that its collections should have a wide appeal. Whether its principal backer be a private foundation, a club, a public institution or a company is of secondary importance, so long as the backer ensures at the very least that suitable premises and sufficient operating funds are available to it. In reality, however, this rarely happens. Frequently only a building and a modest sum by way of starting capital are made available. It is mainly in the so-called Western nations that one encounters a tendency to run museums not merely as recipients of subsidies but rather as modern businesses geared to the principles of a free market economy. It is not my intention to uphold the merits of either the fully subsidized type of sports museum or that run purely as a business, as one form or the other will emerge of itself depending on the environment. I should, however, point out that so far I have not come across a single sports museum capable of paying its own way.

A museum's policy regarding its collections, and the public to which they appeal, constitute the starting-point of a commercially oriented museum-management system. It should be stressed that the title of this article fails to mention the most important task confronting a sports museum, or any museum for that matter, namely, that of educating and entertaining the public. Modern museums then, constitute a service industry that imparts knowledge, that is to say, culture in its widest sense. Museums that cover sports and games increase the public's understanding of those phenomena, and some people are even moved by such museums to take up a particular sport. As sport is a matter of topical interest, sports museums provide the ideal link between past and future.

Contemporary art, crafts, the natural sciences and many other cultural activities never attain the impressive media coverage sport commands every single day. As an economic sector of the utmost importance (the sports







equipment industry, sportswear, architecture and tourism), sport provides employment for vast numbers of people. A sports museum can therefore fall back on a multitude of economic interest groups when seeking funds to achieve its goals. A further source of support, of which other museums are largely deprived, consists of sports fans, who show lifelong allegiance to their club, region or country or to a particular type of sport. This can be a wonderful opportunity for a sports museum, but at the same time it entails considerable risks. All directors of sports museums know that they are walking a tighttrope between common or garden chauvinism – that is, merely listing achievements – and quality historico-cultural information.

It is at this point that consideration must be given to potential visitors who take a critical view of sport. Indeed, a sports museum should attempt to find the happy medium between displays that praise sport and those providing sound factual information. The main problem is that the average sports fan takes no interest whatsoever in sport as culture, and 'culture vultures' generally consider that sport is for the plebs. There are obviously many exceptions to confirm this rule, yet it remains one of the basic problems facing a sports museum. Nevertheless, when it is possible to cater at one and the same time for people who are already sports enthusiasts and for more critical members of the public, commercially viable museums are well on the way to becoming a reality.

Supply and demand

Let us not forget down-to-earth business dealings, as opposed to ideals, take first place in any commercial enterprise. As a rule a museum is a combination of a publicly useful educational institution and a money-making body. Every sports museum should have idealistic backing, its own group of sponsors, a sound foundation, and so on, to guarantee its basic funding. Yet these sponsors have demands of their own: they want a museum with a wide appeal that will come up to their expectations.

We have now reached the crux of the matter: it is the visitor or user of a museum who determines its economic strategy, and this applies also to sports museums. The largest source of income of popular museums is the entrance fees. If there are few visitors, however, there is little profit to be made from admission charges: it has been calculated that when there are fewer than 20,000 to 30,000 visitors a year the administrative costs incurred can exceed the takings. Constrained by lack of space and the fact that it is badly situated, the Swiss Sports Museum has reacted by deliberately refraining from imposing an admission charge. Indeed, the number of visitors is of fundamental importance, not only on account of the direct income they bring in but also in the search for new sponsors. It is obvious that an enterprise, whether it be a bank or a manufacturer of sports equipment or high-energy foods, would prefer to invest in an undertaking that can be guaranteed to have the greatest possible impact. A paucity of visitors may sometimes be accounted for by the lack of appeal of the exhibitions and interactive programmes. In the Swiss Sports Museum we lack space, and therefore organize large travelling exhibitions that tour Switzerland and also go abroad. Such exhibitions require a great deal of work, but they none the less attract hundreds of thousands of visitors, and their wide-ranging impact encourages sponsors to put up funds.

Cultural sponsoring – and this should not be confused with the sponsoring of sport – is not primarily a charitable activity but a publicity strategy based on the law of the market economy. All sponsors want something tangible in return for their investment, and a very sure touch is required not only for selecting sponsors but also for dealing with them. The full-scale commercialization of museums for the benefit of the private sector would be to a certain extent counter-productive, because such a move would antagonize not only the public bodies that as a rule help finance the normal running of museums but also the 'culture vultures'. To return to the visitor, the much-lauded museum shop can also be a highly attractive proposition for a sports museum. There is scarcely any limit to the range of goods it could sell. Sports literature, stickers and other emblems, nostalgic pictures, postcards, posters, miniature

games, videos, slides, etc., and replicas of historic pieces of sports equipment are but a few examples.

Special tours with interactive programmes, series of lectures, meetings of sports clubs and even seminars can increase a sports museum's income considerably. As in all areas, a careful assessment should be made of the profitability of each activity. Should the premises be available, it could be worth while opening a museum restaurant, which could do a good trade in special foods and drinks for athletes.

An equally lucrative source of income consists of special services. The media, authors and private collectors are avid users of historical picture archives. Although the reproduction fees frequently have to be shared with the photographers, people pay these fees willingly on account of the rarity value of such collections. An interesting activity in the context of its role as a service industry has been undertaken by the Finnish Sport Museum in Helsinki, although it should be added that it requires years of preparation. This modern sports museum, which, incidentally, is one of the oldest in the world, possesses a comprehensive data bank that not only stores information on national sporting achievements but also regularly processes the data contained in contemporary sports literature. Agreements concluded with the media and with sports associations (on a subscription basis) generate over a third of the income earned by this remarkable institution.[2]

It is not my intention to formulate an appropriate marketing strategy for every type of sports museum. For the present, we shall have to continue to rely on an independent public sponsor for our basic funding. However, the fact that sports museums also benefit from the numerous markets opened up by sport means that their directors are continually obliged to compete with one another and improve their services, in which respect they may be said to resemble athletes. ■

2. See Pekka Honkanen's article in *Museum*, No. 160, 1988, p. 222. – Ed.

The athletic heritage in Hellenic museums

Elisabeth Ryan Gurley

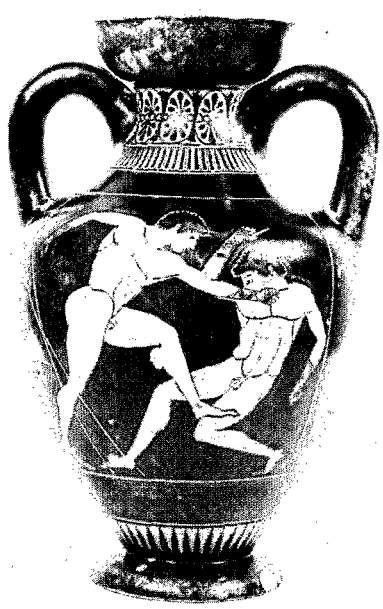
There is something touching about the flickering films of athletes wearing baggy shorts competing in early events of the modern Olympic games. A much deeper response is elicited by portrayals of contestants in the original competitions in Ancient Greece, reviewed here by an American art historian whose work has been published in Archaeologia, Connaissance des Arts, L'Estampille, Plaisir de France, Die Kunst und das Schöne Heim *and the* International Herald Tribune.

The international spirit of the Olympic Games, with their stress on disinterested fair play, is also to be found in the autonomous yet co-operative explorations of Greek Antiquity carried out today by the German Archaeological Institute at Olympia, by French specialists at Delphi, by American teams in the Athenian Agora as well as at Isthmia and Nemea, and of course by the Greeks themselves, at Dion and Vergina, for example. Given the importance of sports in ancient Greece, it is quite natural that these explorations continue to turn up various kinds of artistic expressions that bear witness to the grace and prowess of athletes more than two millennia ago.

At a time when the return of cultural property to its countries of origin is a concern of many museum professsionals, it is also fitting that all finds now being uncovered remain in Greece. In fact, visits to several of that country's museums enable one to review – in aesthetic as well as historical terms – salient aspects of its ancient sporting activities.

Even if only temporary, peace among the antagonistic city-states of Greece was a welcome result and companion of early athletic contests. Thus Isocrates (436–338 B.C.) inaugurated a fourth-century B.C. Olympiad with this panegyric:

Now the founders of our great festivals



National Archaeological Museum, Athens

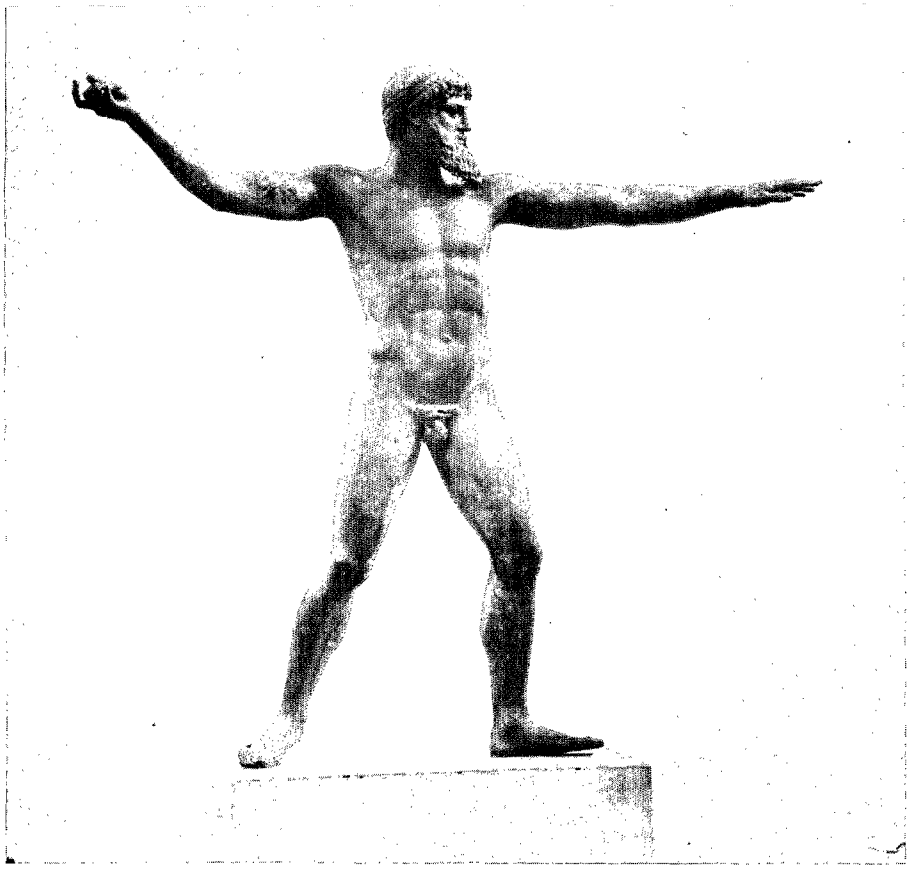
Pugilists wore thongs of fur-lined leather to protect their fists. Surrender was signalled by the loser raising his index finger, as shown on the fifth-century B.C. red-figured *amphoriskos* from Aegina, in the National Archaeological Museum.

National Archaeological Museum, Athens

His broad shoulders earned the philosopher (and wrestler) Aristocles the nickname 'Plato' (wide). Antithetical to his attachment to harmony and beauty is this 330 B.C. bronze head of a boxer, found at Olympia and now in the National Archaeological Museum, with his mangled features, bruises and chaotic hair and beard.

which are justly praised for handing down to us a custom by which, having proclaimed a truce and resolved our pending quarrels, we come together in one place where, having said our prayers and made our sacrifices in common, we are reminded of the kinship that exists among us and are made to feel more kindly toward each other for the future, reviving our old friendships and establishing new ties.

Study of ancient artefacts enables us to reconstruct a major athletic contest of those times. In a stadium, before an exclusively male audience of some 10,000 seated on the ground, the naked athletes sprinted 200 metres, ran 400- and 1,400-metre races and competed in the pentathlon, for instance. The nimble silhouettes of boxers, wrestlers, long-jumpers, discus and javelin throwers, equestrians and attendant coaches and referees compete perenially on both the black-figured ceramics originating in Corinth about 700 B.C. and the later red-figured ware which was a specialty of Athenian vase painters beginning about 530 B.C.



National Archaeological Museum, Athens

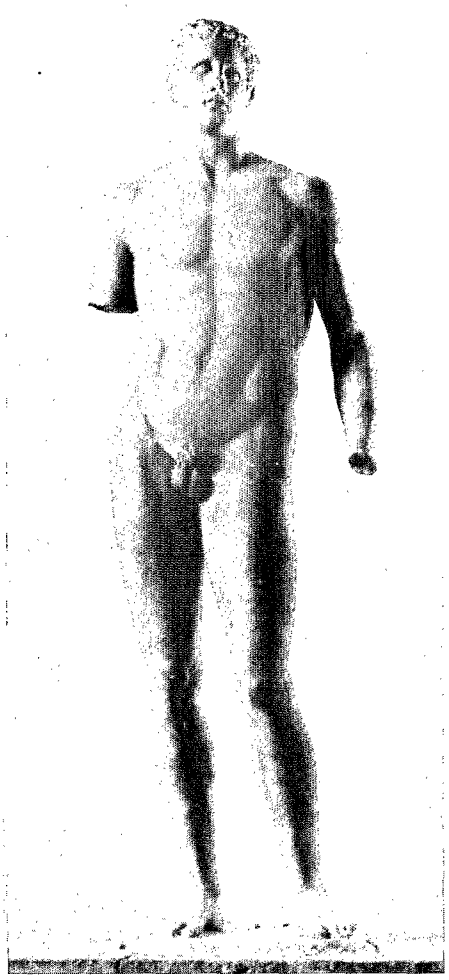
Zeus, to whom the Olympic games were dedicated, depicted in bronze by an unknown fifth-century B.C. sculptor at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Dredged from the sea at Artemision, he projects here his potent majesty, poised in harmonious balance to hurl his 'flashing thunderbolt', a fitting javelin for this all-powerful father of the gods.

Panathenian panoply

Excavations carried out by the American School of Classical Studies at the Agora in Athens show that, in palestras and gymnasiums, boys were coached in gymnastics to the accompaniment of flutes in order to encourage rhythm and grace. Traditional Panathenian festivals, with a procession honoring the goddess Athena along the sacred way up to the Acropolis, were reorganized in 566 B.C. to integrate a broad variety of athletic contests stemming from the Olympic prototypes, and open to all Greeks.

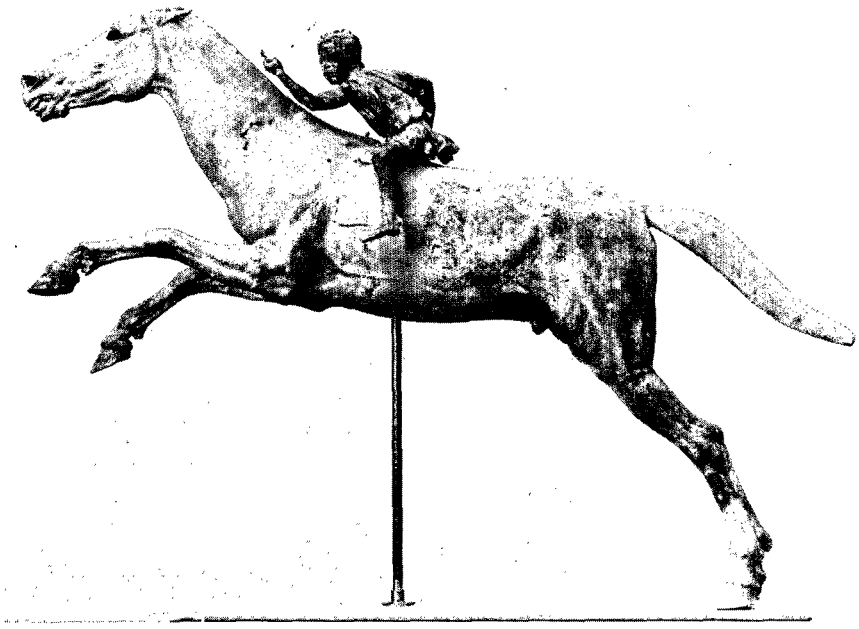
Gymnasts from Sparta, whose training without music was meant to prepare them for the harsh realities of war, were frequent victors in the Olympiads, as finds at Isthmia and Nemea, among other places, have shown. The Athenians too held martial exercises that offered a panoply of subjects to artists: mock cavalry battles, boat races, the javelin throwing on horseback, a Pyrrhic war dance and a relay torch race that began at the Academy and ended at the altar of Athena on the Acropolis.

The horse loomed large in Greek life, work, war, mythology, literature – and sport. Funeral games, including equestrian contests in honour of the



Archaeological Museum, Delphi

Agias, a great pankratiast (boxer-wrestler), was sculpted in bronze by Lyssipus in 340 B.C. The portrait was commissioned by the athlete's great-grandson as a family monument to commemorate his own appointment as tetrarch of Thessaly.
Pankratiasts competed in a gruelling event, popular with the crowds, in which most boxing punches and wrestling holds were allowed, including strangle-holds; biting and gouging were forbidden (except in Sparta). Despite the sport's violence, neither knotty sinews nor contracted muscles interrupt the visual flow of this marble replica of the bronze original, exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Delphi.
At the apogee of Greek sculpture, physical prowess was more implicit than explicit. When sculptors became preoccupied with realistic representation of suffering and the grotesque, sculpture degenerated.



National Archaeological Museum, Athens

In this sixth-century B.C. bronze, horse and rider seem to be one in the pulsing intensity of their joint pursuit. Created by an unknown sculptor, it lay in the sea for centuries and is now in the National Archaeological Museum.

Museum of the Agora, Athens. © The American School of Classical Studies

The curved figure of the charioteer echoes the buoyant arch of the four horses in a scene on a red-figured pseudo-Panathenian amphora, *c.* 500 B.C., found in the ancient Agora, and now in the Museum of the Agora (Athens).

deceased, date from the antiquity, and racing in armour was a feature of the Olympiads. Prizes varied according to place, time and event, but could include a bronze crucible, amphorae filled with oil and a woollen headband (compare with today's joggers), not to forget a garland, which could be of olive, pine, laurel or even celery leaves. A banquet where as many as several hundred animals – slaughtered as sacrifices – were eaten, and the encomiums of the judges and a hail of flowers glorified victors.

There is a sense of well-being, even righteousness, about such scenes. The athletes did not, however, always respect their oath, sworn on a sacrificed animal, 'not to sin against the Olympic games'. Long before anabolic steroids, there were perfidious competitors and treacherous city-states who failed to respect the sacred truce declared at the time of the games. Neither sanctions nor flogging deterred them. To propitiate Zeus, the dominant deity to whom the games were offered, special statues were thus erected – the Zanes – with monies collected as fines from those breaking their oath. The Zanes have disappeared, but their pedestals have remained – as have the games.

In Ancient Greek thought and mores, health and sport were inseparable. The healer god Asclepius and his progeny Hygeia (Health) and Panacea (Cure-all), were worshiped at Dion, a major Macedonian cult centre at the foot of Mount Olympus, where athletic games and musical events were introduced by King Achelaos (414–399 B.C.). Indeed, in the fifth century B.C. there were even special games called the Asclepeia, held at Epidaurus.

Do these events and traditions seem far from and foreign to our present-day appreciation and perceptions of sport? Before answering affirmatively, it is well to pause, after nightfall, and look upwards and ponder such Greek-defined representations of physical prowess as Hercules, the Centaur, the Charioteer, the Bull and Pegasus who, star-figured, illuminate our nights. ■

SOME MUSEUMS

The Olympic Museum of Benin: doing what it can with what it has

Julien V. Minavoa

Heat, humidity, lack of money, etc., are just a few of the obstacles facing any museum-creating initiative in sub-Saharan Africa. They were certainly there right on cue for the creation of the Olympic Museum of Benin. Its director, a former footballer and handballer and at present head of the education and documentation department of Benin's National Olympic Academy, relates the adventure with all its ups and downs.

There is an African adage that says: 'To braid new rope you must start from the tail end of the old one.' Although the example of present-day sportspeople may occasionally suffer from the vicissitudes of contemporary practice, the example of sportsmen of bygone days bathes in the aura of splendour that only time can bestow. This has the power to attract the young and lead them towards sport, that invigorating source of qualities both physical and moral, including deeper comprehension of others, friendship, peace – all the virtues that Baron Pierre de Coubertin once dreamt of.

To remember, to recall, and to braid the new rope from the tail end of the old – these were the aims of our country's National Olympic Committee when, in a modest effort to extend the admirable work of the Olympic Museum and Study Centre at Lausanne, it created the Olympic Museum of Benin.

The idea for the museum first came to the National Olympic Committee leaders as a result of a discussion between generations, the younger people eager and enthusiastic, the older ones cautious, condemning, in sport, the excessive lure of money and the use of anabolic steroids, as well as the ravages caused by alcohol and tobacco. The debate widened and turned into a veritable consciousness-raising campaign within the country's different sports federations, a campaign which was built up around the project to create a museum not only to commemorate the sporting achievements of Benin and Africa but also to pay homage to the whole Olympic movement and the Games themselves.

The Olympic Museum of Benin was established in Cotonou and was opened to the public on 12 March 1988. The project had reached a successful conclusion but there were still many challenges to overcome, the practical problems of building up, displaying and conserving a collection (which now amounts to 1,250 objects and 850 photographs).

The heart of the problem

Methodical building up of a collection was hampered to begin with by political and structural problems. In Benin, as almost everywhere in Africa, sports confederations and leagues and even the Ministry of Sport mirror the general administrative scene, with no reliable archives (since little attention is given to keeping written records), no adequate premises, and the virtual monopolization of the mass media by the state, whose chief concerns are political much more than historical.

We also came up against another of the scourges holding Africa back: the problem of illiteracy, since only a tiny minority of the population is able to read and write. This meant that when we wanted to set up a biographical section, there were very few replies to the letters which we sent out individually to a great number of people asking for their life-stories. To get round the problem we sent a team of investigators 'into the field' and they finally managed to gather a great deal of information by personal interviews

Museum (Unesco, Paris), No. 170 (Vol. XLIII, No. 2, 1991)

Photo by courtesy of the Olympic Museum of Benin

With too much humidity and overhandling, this is all that remains of a photograph testifying to the participation of Benin (formerly Dahomey) in the first tri-continental table-tennis tournament, held in Beijing as recently as 1973!

recorded on audio- or video-cassettes. These visits had an added bonus: through them the museum was able to obtain many donations (of sporting equipment actually used at a significant time or during a significant event) as well as loans of items which we could copy (photographs, press cuttings, postcards). Thus, despite the difficulties, we succeeded in putting together a treasure trove including not only objects relating to national sports, both modern and traditional, but also to sports practised elsewhere in the world.

The next tricky question was how to organize and display our collection. We finally decided to constitute seven sections: a photographic library, a video-cassette library, a section devoted to posters and newspaper cuttings, another to philately and biographical accounts and one each to pennants, badges and souvenir objects including charms. Each of the objects on display was to be accompanied by a label giving a brief account of its history. However, it is one thing to form a collection and put it on display but quite another to guarantee that it will last a reasonable length of time; and that, as they say, is the heart of the problem.

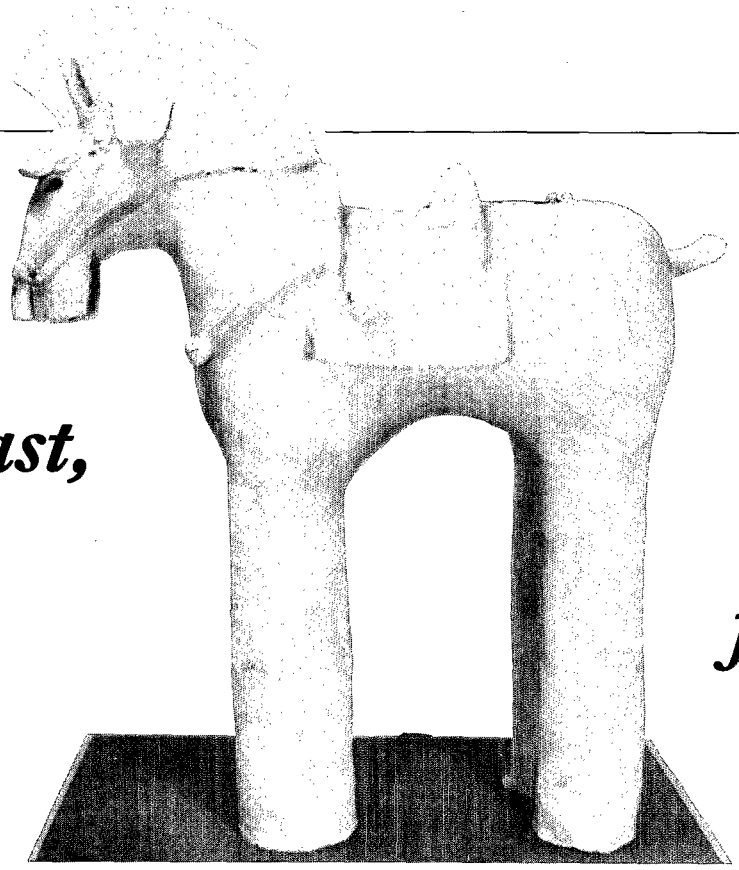
Conservation: dangers and counter-measures

In Benin the tropical climate conspires with limited means to threaten the survival of collections not only in the Olympic Museum but in all the country's other ethnological and historical museums. It is quite pointless to have an object in a museum unless it can be shown to the public or, at the very least, made available to researchers. Yet the display and handling of an object expose it to dangers which are particularly serious and numerous in sub-Saharan Africa, dangers which include often torrid heat, omnipresent humidity, pervading dust, rodents and insects of all shapes and sizes. The first line of defence was naturally to equip the museum with air-conditioning. The second was to put all objects (whether in museum rooms or in storage) in hermetically sealed frames, showcases or cupboards. We are doing all we can to prevent 'the labour of so many days being undone in only one', and we are doing this despite having to adapt our policy to our resources, since the reverse is impossible.

Despite our difficulties, we draw solace from the opening we have gained into the world of international life and co-operation. In June 1989 we were happy to be able to attend (along with Ghana and Zambia) the international conference of sports museum directors in Lausanne. There, as well as on other similar occasions, we found confirmation of our belief that the use of memoirs and trophies to illustrate sporting achievements strirs up enthusiasm and makes it possible to mobilize the country's creative forces. ■

Yokohama: horses past, present and future

Yutaka Yoshioka



All photos courtesy of the author

Clay horse, sixth century A.D.

Horses have contributed to, and reflected in many ways, the evolution of Japanese sports and civilization – through war, peace and ritual – for over 1,500 years. These roles are described and illustrated in our article on Yokohama's Negishi Equine Museum, whose author is President of the museum, which is run by the Japan Equine Cultural Affairs Foundation. He expresses his gratitude to the museum's chief curator, Masumi Suezaki, for assistance with its preparation.

In our modern society, it is difficult to visualize that, at one time, people used to live in a state of co-existence and co-operation with other animals. Nevertheless, our ancestors' intimate relationship with animals, particularly the horse, contributed greatly to the development of industry and culture for humankind. The primary aim of the Negishi Equine Museum is to collect, preserve and study a variety of information on our relationship with the horse. The museum is located on the site of the first authentic Western-style horse-racing course in Japan, which was built in Yokohama 100 years ago when Japan began its modernization after the model of the West.

Stone sculpture (replica), sixth century A.D.

The origin of equestrianism in Japan

History tells us that the practice of horse-racing was brought to Japan from the Asian continent between the late fourth and the early fifth centuries A.D. Archaeological evidence substantiating this abounds, including a great deal of riding gear excavated from ancient burial mounds. Riding gear can also be seen on the clay images of horses (*haniwa*) used in decorating burial mounds. Clay images of the horse are the oldest of all animal figures used as decoration for the ancient tombs of Japan. It is obvious, then, that horses were extremely important animals to the ancient Japanese.

Several stone images of horses have also been found preserved in some areas. The stone horse shown here was made in the early sixth century to decorate an ancient burial mound in northern Kyushu, though its head and legs were cut off during a war in A.D. 528. The riding gear depicted so clearly on this horse may indicate that the practice of horse-riding was already quite common by this time. Later, in the Nara Period (710–93) and Heian Period (794–1191), however, horses were used mainly for ritual purposes. In the Kamakura Period (1192–1333), horses became indispensable elements in warfare and, in fact, played

Museum (Unesco, Paris), No. 170 (Vol. XLIII, No. 2, 1991)

Detail from a six-panel folding screen showing racing at the Kamo Shrine (Edo Period).

a vital role in the late-twelfth-century battle between the Genji and Heike clans. From that period on, warriors were eager to have good horses, and thus they came to be used mainly in battle.

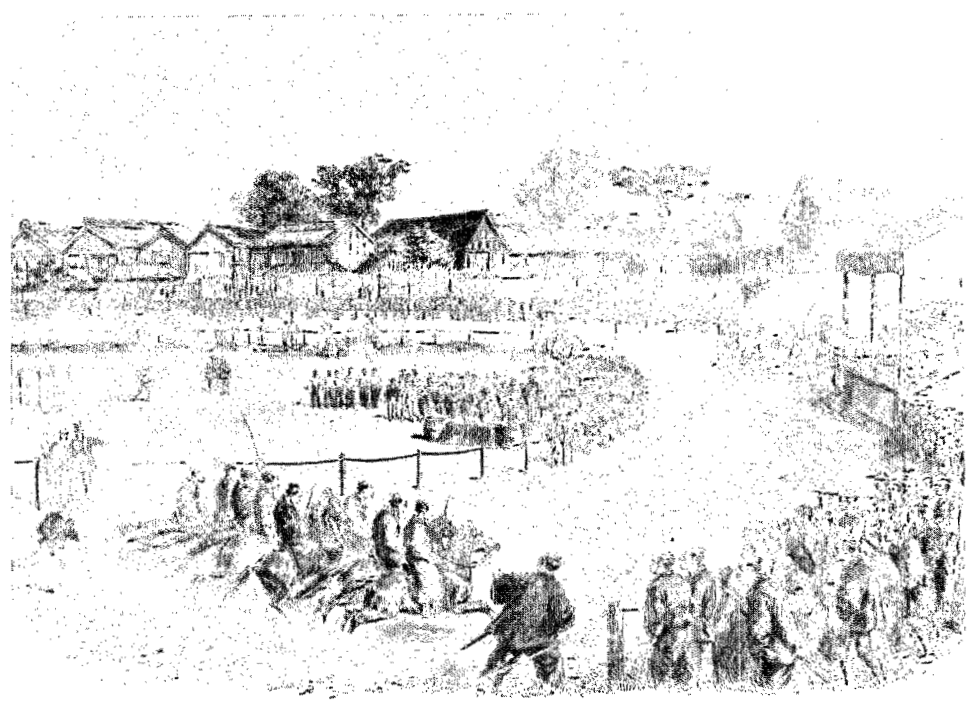
Horse-riding as a sport

Traditional Japanese-style horse-racing has its origin in an event that was held each fifth of May at the court of the Imperial Palace during the Nara period. In the Heian Period, which followed, people raced horses at nobles' residences, temples and shrines around Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. In each race, two horses competed for superiority in speed on a straight course. Horse-racing at temples and shrines was used as a Shinto ritual to forecast, based on the results, whether that year's rice crop would be bountiful or not. At Kamo Shrine in Kyoto, horse-racing has continued as a traditional Shinto festival event as it is very popular among the people of that area.

Another illustration here shows a folding screen (*byobu*) depicting a horse racing scene at the Kamo Shrine. Still another is a work of the same style. In this wide picture, two horses are running between two fences built on a riding ground while spectators watch. In the Edo Period (1660–1866) there were many folding screens made, but perhaps none is praised as highly as these two.

Among the traditional equestrian sports in Japan, *yabusame* and *inuoumono* and *dakyu* are the most representative. *Yabusame* and *inuoumono* are hunting sports in which riders on horseback shoot with bows and arrows at targets or animals. *Dakyu* is a polo-like sport that originated in the Sassanid Dynasty of Persia. This sport is believed to have come to Japan via the Silk Route and

Warriors' Invitation Race at Yokohama (*Illustrated London News*, 1865).



China. These traditional horse sports, except *inuoumono*, are still seen in some areas of Japan.

In 1861, Western-style horse-racing was introduced into Japan at Yokohama, where European and American government, business and military representatives lived in accordance with the open diplomatic policy adopted by the Tokugawa Shogun. An illustration here shows the scene of modern horse-racing in Japan at an early stage of its development. This image, published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1865, vividly shows government officials in traditional clothing. These officials were invited as guests to the event.

Horses and the quality of life

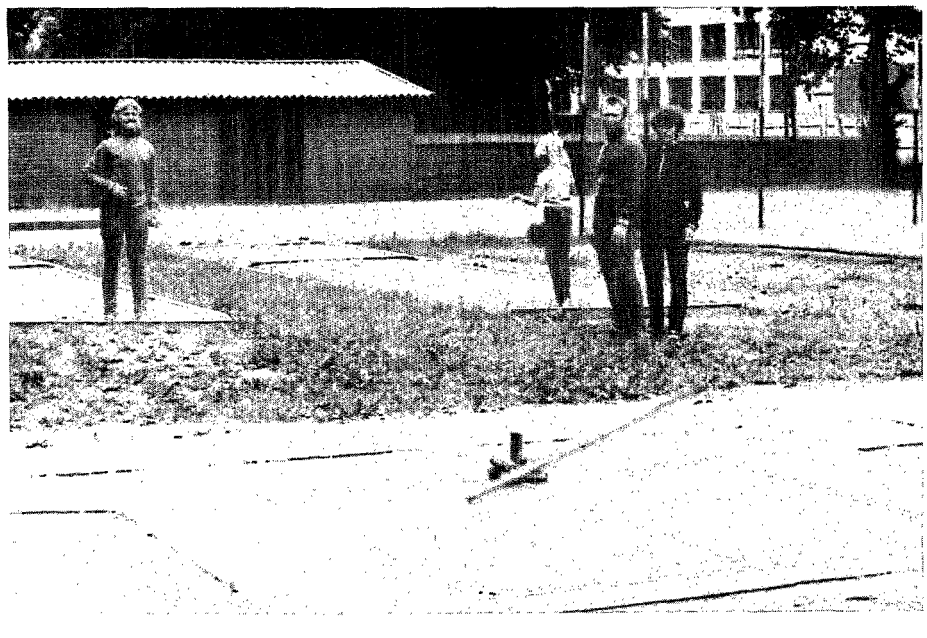
In the long history of Japan, horses have been used for a multitude of purposes. Even as late as the 1940s and 1950s, there were more than a million horses in the country. Rapid mechanization of agriculture and the development of the automobile since have resulted in a sharp decline in the number of our equine companions. Today there are but 2,000, excluding racehorses, and memories of the traditional equine culture have rapidly faded. A new and encouraging trend is, however, emerging among Japanese today. People now want to enjoy their life through contact and communication with nature and animals, and the horse is regaining in popularity. The Negishi Equine Museum intends to contribute to this trend, i.e. to the promotion of the horse in Japan. ■

In a new Soviet museum: national forms of sport

'To be young in body and mind.' In the words of this popular Soviet song lies perhaps one of the chief aims of the Central Museum of Physical Culture and Sport now being set up in Moscow. The problems involved in launching it are discussed by its curator, Igor Borisov, with the editor of the Russian edition of Museum, *Irina Pantykina.*

Museum: The organization in Moscow of a Central Museum of Physical Education and Sport meets a need. As far as I know, there hasn't been a museum like this in the Soviet Union before. There are sports museums in a number of cities and some sports bodies have museums concerned with their history. Moscow's Central Stadium in Luzhniki has a museum whose exhibits represent all the Republics. The museum is small, though, and what is on show is fragmentary and more like a temporary exhibition. The Central Museum thus has the challenging and by no means simple task of collecting, preserving, studying and displaying items showing the development of physical culture and sport within what is now the Soviet Union from remote times to the present day.

Igor Borisov: It seems very likely that the museum we are setting up will become a major institution providing a panorama of the history of physical education and sport. This task is particularly important in view of the inevitable loss of irreplaceable material connected with sport. Our museum's



S. Solovev (APN)

Nowadays too, there are many enthusiastic players of the old Russian game of *gorodki* in the USSR. Pskov, RSFSR.

S. Preobrazhensky

The traditional sport of the Nivkhi, reindeer racing, on Sakhalin Island.

Dog-team racing on Sakhalin Island.

S. Preobrazhensky

job is to save and preserve such material. In addition, it will serve as a scientific methods centre for all the country's sports museums.

Museum: Your staff must be busy getting the collection together. Could we know exactly what your plans are?

I.B.: The decision to found the USSR Central Museum of Physical Culture and Sport was taken less than two years ago and since then we have managed to collect over 12,000 items. They include prizes and cups won by Soviet players and athletes in various world, European and other championships, sports awards (like pennants, banners, club badges, medals, emblems and so on) and athletes' personal possessions, together with certificates, diplomas, posters and philatelic material on themes to do with sport.

The museum has an archives department with about 20,000 photographs from the collections of sports veterans. There is also a specialized library with sports literature, catalogues, reference works and files of magazines and newspapers.

Museum: Something crossed my mind as I was listening to you: suppose that in recent years skaters in the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada had been handing over their world championship gold medals in figure skating to museums. They would, of course, have to be put on display as reflecting the history of sport. But if museums in different countries confine themselves just to exhibiting things like that, won't their collections look pretty similar?

As I see it, for a sports museum to have a character of its own and be unique, national forms of sport and games must be widely represented. By the way, your museum has quite a bit of scope in this respect. For instance, you can tell the story of *gorodki* [a Russian national game akin to skittles – Ed.] and dog-sledding, contests that the northern peoples commonly go in for. In Central Asia, there are various kinds of horse-riding competitions and so on.

I.B.: Yes, indeed, national brands of sport will feature prominently in the work of the museum and its permanent exhibits. You see, we know that all peoples have their range of physical exercises and original forms of sport. As well as *gorodki,* it must be remembered, the Russians play knucklebones and the ball game *lapta.* We have already contacted existing *gorodki* federations in the country and they have promised to help us with the museum exhibits. We shall also be getting in

S. Preobrazhensky

Sledge-jumping at Naryan-Mar, Nenets Autonomous Okrug (area).

touch with *lapta* enthusiasts. And take a sport such as wrestling, which has been widespread among the different peoples of the world since time immemorial; all peoples have their own particular style of wrestling. I learnt about some extremely distinctive forms among the northern peoples, about which I had no idea before, even though I myself used to go in for wrestling in a serious way once upon a time. As a specialist, I can say that in almost all our republics, dozens of varieties of wrestling have been practised since the earliest times. So we have a vast field of activity.

But building up the collection on national sports and games is a complicated business with considerable difficulties involved as well as field research and distant missions, and it calls for substantial resources and, of course, excellent specialists. What's more, 'time and tide wait for no man' and we can't delay the collection of exhibits, since unique specimens of sports gear and equipment are perishing. You see, national forms of sport have least protection of all. As a result, we are losing knowledge about how and from what materials particular objects are made.

Museum: It seems to me that there are two aspects of this problem. First, it's extremely important to preserve the actual objects connected with national sports and games. They are, after all, part of the cultural heritage. Second, traditions must be safeguarded; national sports and games must not be allowed to become mere museum exhibits. Children must play skittles and *lapta* as they used to, and the northern peoples must have races with reindeer and dog teams. This is where the museum can play an invaluable role, gathering and documenting objects, accumulating information, spreading knowledge of a particular sport and, if necessary, bringing about its revival.

I.B.: Unfortunately, we have to waste too much time on purely organizational matters to the detriment of collecting and scientific work. For instance, we haven't yet moved into the premises assigned to us and our collection is now scattered about in various places.

Museum: Well, let me wish you patience. ■

'A fine disregard for the rules of football'

Adam Robson

During a football match in (perhaps November) 1823 at England's select Rugby School, a pupil picked up the football with his hands *and began to* run *with it. Commemorated today by a plaque at the school as 'a fine disregard for the rules of football as played in his time', young William Webb Ellis's rebellious gesture is widely considered to mark the creation of rugby. In the more than a century and a half since, the game has spread to many countries and has become an increasingly popular sport – one indeed with its own museums. In this article the Scottish Rugby Union's Library and Museum are presented by their convenor, who played for Hawick and – between 1954 and 1960 – appeared on Scotland's international side twenty-two times.*

It was with imagination and foresight that, in 1873, a group of enthusiasts founded what was originally the Scottish Football Union, and which name was altered to the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) in the season 1924/25. The early years were notable for steady and colourful development in playing and administration, with international matches held at various venues in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Indeed, the first-ever rugby international, the result of a Scottish challenge to England, was played at Inverleith (Edinburgh) in 1871. Not surprisingly, from then on memorabilia were gradually acquired, for rugby football generates goodwill which, in turn, ensures the existence, exchange and safeguarding of mementos and souvenirs.

A memorable milestone in the path of Scottish rugby was the purchase, in 1922, of the former polo ground at Murrayfield, which became the world-famous home of the Scottish Rugby Union, with an inaugural match against England in 1925. In a pulsating encounter, Scotland won narrowly by 14–11 to gain their first Grand Slam, having previously beaten France, Ireland and Wales.

The match engendered numerous mementos, including an oil painting which is today displayed in the Rugby

The garb of today

Photos by courtesy of the author

Museum at Murrayfield. The opportunity to exhibit such an item permanently to the public is comparatively recent. In the original West Stand at Murrayfield there had been no available space for the relative luxury of a museum; it was not until 1985 that the chance arose to have a specifically designed and custom-built area.

Throughout the post-war decades rugby in Scotland flourished and there was an ever-expanding representative fixture list. In 1960, Scotland made a short tour abroad and was thus the first nation to try out the concept of an abbreviated rugby visit overseas. In keeping with such an enterprise, the administration also developed, with extra space needed at Murrayfield. By the 1980s, the existing office and committee space was overcrowded and outdated, which led the SRU to decide on an ambitious building programme. In 1983, the East Stand replaced the famous Murrayfield terracing; then, in 1985, an extensive office and committee complex behind the West Stand made a very significant improvement in facilities. Today it stretches the full length of the Centre Stand, with a spectator concourse below.

Plaques, ties and histories flowed in

Coincidentally, and happily, this valuable added asset was the catalyst for the fruition of the cherished hope for a space at Murrayfield in which justice could be done to the long, proud history of Scottish clubs and their union. The then-redundant committee room became the library and museum site. A timetable of work was proposed and a completion date was projected. A subcommittee co-operated with architects and shop-fitters to design a presentation appropriate to and expressive of the rich tapestry of Scottish rugby in what was intended as a living museum. Items of memorabilia from sources within the Union complex at Murrayfield were gathered; material from the Scottish clubs, such as plaques, ties and (importantly) histories, flowed in. Souvenirs appeared from a wide variety of individuals, including from international players past and present, former presidents and committee members; many exciting mementos materialized. The extensive range of books, previously held in several rooms at Murrayfield, were carefully set out in the brand-new library area of the museum.

Eventually, on 12 December 1986, the enterprise was ready – the deadline having been met as smartly as a match kickoff whistle is obeyed – and it was declared open by Dr D. W. C. Smith, O.B.E., former Scottish international and the then-President of the Scottish Rugby Union. Today the museum at Murrayfield is a lavish texture of colourful interwoven links with home and abroad. It is, in fact, as diverse as it is complex in the immense range of exhibits from rugby-playing countries all over the world.

A Waterford crystal chandelier, a gift from the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) to commemorate the centenary of the SRU in 1973, is a centrepiece; below it is a beautifully carved war canoe, a gesture of the New Zealand Maori Advisory Board to the British Lions in 1959. A map of Scotland, finished in leather set on a blue ground and featuring reflecting glass beads symbolizing every club in the country, is flanked by two large panels each with rectangular sections of the club ties. The origins of the game in Scotland are traced in word and illustration while a manikin clad in the garb of the 1870s contrasts with another clad in contemporary rugby dress. A third manikin depicts a child-sized figure and is representative of the present and future.

Tradition and progress are carefully balanced and this article merely touches on some highlights of our extensive collection, which is open to the public on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Moreover, the museum (which has 'national museum' status) is available for parties by arrangement, while the library can be used for research. During the more than four years since its opening several thousand visitors have viewed the collection, with callers from most rugby-playing countries of the world.■

. . . and yesterday.

Not the least of cricket's glories

Stephen Green

Cricket, the English national summer game, has a story going back at least to 1550. But the game is far from limited to its mother country's shores, being popular throughout the British Commonwealth as well as in such 'exotic' places (from a Commonwealth cricketer's point of view) as the Netherlands, the United States and – in a Sunday morning women's variant – New Caledonia. Spanning history and continents, cricket could not but have a museum. Its curator, Stephen Green, guides our visit. After being educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, and Liverpool University, he became Assistant Archivist at the County Record Office, Delapre Abbey, Northampton, before moving in 1968 to the world-famous Lord's Cricket Ground, in London

Cricket is a leisurely game and Test (international) matches are spread over five days. This unhurried pace has perhaps been responsible for fostering a remarkable literature and a corpus of paintings connected with the game. The Library of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in London contains over 10,000 books, and the paintings in the MCC's possession form one of the most important sporting collections in existence. Visitors come from all over the world to see the MCC Museum, with a particular preponderance from Australasia.

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1787 by Thomas Lord. The club's ground is to this day known as Lord's in honour of the founder. In 1865 the Honorary Secretary of MCC, R. A. FitzGerald, advertised in the national press for gifts of cricket bygones in order to form a museum at Lord's. The MCC had recently taken over the proprietorship of the ground and the property which it inherited included several important paintings of cricket in the eighteenth century.

The collection grew due to the enthusiasm of Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, the Treasurer of MCC from 1879 until his death in 1915, in collecting cricket paintings and other items con-

All illustrations by courtesy of the author

Tossing for Innings **by Robert James, *c.* 1850.**

Museum (Unesco, Paris), No. 170 (Vol. XLIII, No. 2, 1991)

nected with the game. At first the collection was in the care of honorary curators, including Captain T. H. Carlton Levick. In 1945, however Miss Diana Rait Kerr was appointed as first full-time curator of MCC. Her scholarship, administrative skills and artistic flair have largely been responsible for the great development in these areas. In 1968 Miss Rait Kerr retired to be succeeded by the present writer.

Crook and wicket

Until 1953, the whole collection was housed in the members' pavilion. This spacious and impressive building was erected in 1889/90, and contains at its centre the handsome and historic Long Room, which is one of the finest interiors in London. In 1953 the old rackets court at Lord's was converted into a public museum. Half the collection is now housed in the Long Room and adjoining areas of the pavilion, and half is on display in the MCC Museum opposite. In the Long Room there is a fine collection of paintings including a very important work, *Cricket in the Marylebone Fields, c.* 1740, by Francis Hayman. The artist was a founder of the Royal Academy and the painting clearly shows the origins of cricket as a simple rustic pastime practised by shepherd boys. The word 'cricket' is believed, in fact, to be derived from the old English diminutive for a shepherd's crook, and the wicket may come from the gate to the sheep fold. The Marylebone Fields shown in the painting are now known as Regent's Park and are situated near Lord's Cricket Ground.

Another painting in the Long Room shows cricket at Moulsey Hurst, near London, around 1790. The game by this date had evolved quite a long way and is more akin to the present-day scene though the players are still depicted wearing their top hats! Nearby can be seen the most popular of all cricket paintings, *Tossing for Innings (c.* 1850), by the Nottingham artist, Robert James. Chimney-sweeps and ragged boys are shown – a reminder that cricket has always appealed to a very wide cross-section of people in England.

Appropriately, Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane can be seen in the collection which he did so much to establish. He is shown beside the two men with whom he founded the I Zingari Cricket Club (*i zingari* is Italian for 'gipsies' and this club having no premises of its own thus has to 'wander' round other clubs' grounds).

In the museum proper visitors are greeted by an animated figure of the most celebrated cricketer of all time, Dr W. G. Grace. He is being 'interviewed' by Brian Johnston, a well-known British broadcaster. Inside the museum there is a chronological display illustrating the history of cricket from 1550 up to the present day. The most famous exhibit is the legendary 'Ashes' urn. This is perhaps the most unusual sporting trophy in existence.

It is small and insignificant in appearance and does not change hands in any literal sense when it is competed for in Test matches between England and Australia. The Ashes originated in this manner: in 1882 England lost to Australia for the first time on home soil. The English papers said that cricket in the mother country must have died and the ashes would be taken to Australia. When England sent a team to Australia in 1882/83 the visiting captain (Hon. Ivo Bligh) was often described as having been sent to recapture the ashes. Eventually some Australian ladies burnt a bail and put the ashes into a small terracotta urn which was presented to Ivo Bligh. One of the ladies eventually married him and the couple became Lord and Lady Darnley. On Lord Darnley's death, his widow presented the urn containing the ashes to Lord's. There the urn physically stays, the ashes only going metaphorically to Australia when that country wins the series.

'Real tennis' too

Elsewhere in the museum life-size models depict cricketers from England, the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent. They are shown as a batsman, a bowler and a wicket-keeper. Also in this area of the museum can be seen videos recording great moments in cricket history. In addition to a fine collection of cricket paintings including a portrait of the great Yorkshire fast bowler Freddie Trueman by Ruskin Spear, R.A., and *Village Cricket* (1855), there is also a remarkable sixteenth-century Flemish panel showing the Old Testament

The Ashes in person.

The most celebrated cricketer of all time, W. G. Grace, portrayed in 1890 by A. Stuart Wortley.

A mini-Unesco: Sablet's portrait shows a Dutchman playing an English game in Italy (the painter was a Swiss artist of the French school).

story of David and Bathsheba. A game of tennis is shown in the foreground, appropriate because Lord's has been a home of 'real tennis' (*jeu de paume*) since 1838. Another favourite with visitors is T. Henwood's portrait of *The Scorer*. The person depicted was William Davies who was a jovial, short-sighted man rather addicted to the bottle!

One of the largest paintings in the Lord's collection is the panoramic view of the ground by H. Barrable and Sir Robert Ponsonby Staples. This shows an imaginary Test match between England and Australia in 1886. The Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII) is seen walking with his wife (the future Queen Alexandra), while Lillie Langtry (the famous actress and friend of the Prince of Wales) is shown averting her glance from the royal couple! Perhaps the finest painting in the entire collection is Sablet's portrait of Thomas Hope of Amsterdam playing cricket with his friends in 1792. There are some unusual features in this picture which is perhaps only to be expected when a Dutchman is represented playing an English game in Italy painted by a Swiss artist of the French school!

Among other items of interest in the collection are David Wynne's statuette of the great bowler Alec Bedser, and a vast array of cricket cigarette cards connected with the game and its leading exponents. In addition, visitors can see bats and balls and items of equipment used by such great players as Sir Jack Hobbs, Wilfred Rhodes, Sir Leonard Hutton, Denis Compton and Jim Laker. One splendid recent acquisition was a punch bowl made in Jingdezhen in 1786. This is the only example of a piece of Chinese export porcelain to show cricket and there are good reasons for thinking that the bowl was commissioned by Thomas Lord himself.

There are, in addition, fine cricket collections in other parts of the world. Particularly significant are the museums at Haverford College, Philadelphia, and the Melbourne Cricket Club. Nearby the latter is the Australian National Gallery of Sport, under the distinguished curatorship of Tom McCullough. Those who would want to learn more about the MCC collection are recommended to study Tim Rice's sumptuously illustrated book, *Treasures of Lord's*.[1]

Cricket has a proud history, and not the least of its glories is the game's literary and artistic heritage. ■

1. Tim Rice, *Treasures of Lord's*, London, Collins/Willow, 1989.

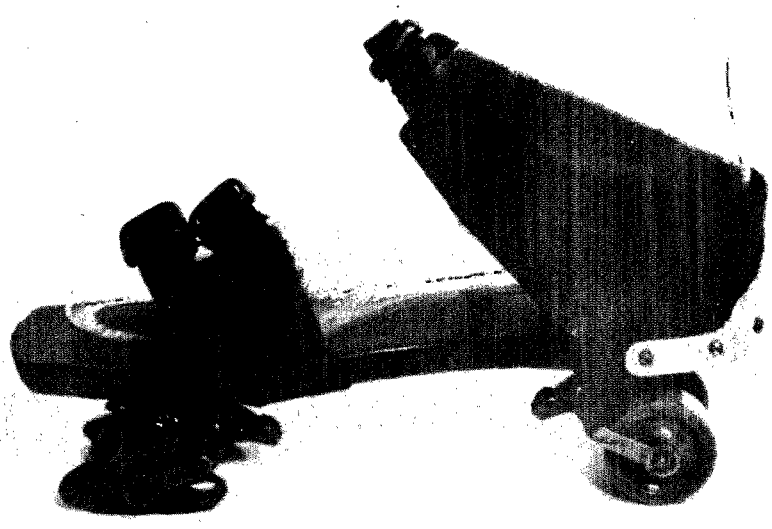


Photo by courtesy of the author

James L. Plimpton's 'Improved Parlor Skate' patented in 1866. This was a 'convertible' model. The rollers (back) could be replaced by runners in the shape of swans (front) for ice-skating in the winter.

A thousand types of roller-skate

Barbara Sorenson

Lending itself to group and individual practice by young and less young alike, indoors and outdoors, with minimal and simple equipment, roller-skating endures as a mass sport in many countries. In the United States it has its own national museum, directed and curated by Barbara Sorenson, who has a degree in education and history.

The National Museum of Roller Skating, located in Lincoln, Nebraska, houses the world's largest collection of roller-skates and roller-skating memorabilia. The museum opened its doors in 1981 after a group of individuals in the roller-skating industry were concerned that the rich history of roller-skating would be lost if an effort was not made to preserve it.

The museum occupies part of the space in the Roller Skating Association's national office. The exhibit hall's area is about 100 m^2, and the museum also has an archival section, work room and office of approximately equal size.

The collection currently has about 1,000 different types of roller-skate, and the exhibits show the history of the technology of the skates themselves as well as a history of the sport and the business. In addition to the skates, the museum has a spectacular photographic collection, beautiful costumes dating from the vaudeville era, medals, trophies, assorted memorabilia, and video tapes of national championships.

The highlight of the collections is the Van Roekel patent model collection of various skates designed in the 1860s. The feature of this collection is the original 'rocking action' roller skate, patented in 1863, designed by James L. Plimpton, considered the father of modern roller-skating. Other popular features of the museum are skates manufactured for a horse, an extensive collection of skating-rink stickers from the 1930s and 1940s, and skates with 20-cm-diameter wheels used in vaudeville shows.

Although the museum does not receive a large number of visitors during the year, they do come from all over the world. Its focus in its public relations is international, and it is considered the definitive source for all roller-skating research. The museum relies on the generosity of interested individuals for its acquisitions, and it is supported entirely through private donations from its honorary membership which is world-wide in composition. ■

Combining art, culture and sport in an Olympic museum

Jean-François Pahud

The Olympic Museum in Lausanne is an institution that not only has a past and a present but is also developing. It is presented here to Museum *readers by its director, several times capped for the national distance and middle-distance running team and manager of the Lausanne 20-kilometre race from 1982 to 1989.*

When Baron Pierre de Coubertin relaunched the Olympic Games in 1896 his main objective was to make sport, as practised in the Olympic spirit of fair play, into an active element of civilization. The Olympic Games of antiquity, as a matter of interest, included cultural and artistic events in addition to competitive sports.[1]

Thus from the very beginning Pierre de Coubertin sought to revive this tradition by bringing together art, culture and sport. Since then the International Olympic Committee has constantly attempted with the means at its disposal to act in the spirit of its founder. As with the passage of time the Olympic movement was enriched with the constant addition of new features, it was only natural for people to want to preserve them, to bring them together and to present them as essential components of the International Olympic Committee's worldwide educational action.

It was not long before de Coubertin, with the help of a group of friends, established an Olympic museum in embryo, first at the Casino de Montbenon and later in the villa of Mon-Repos, which was put at his disposal by the Lausanne authorities.

A temporary museum

It was not until 1982, however, that the International Olympic Committee, on the initiative of its President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, and with the help of the City of Lausanne, succeeded in setting up a musuem with a modest exhibition area; even then it was a temporary one. That museum was on the Avenue Ruchonnet in Lausanne.

Right from its inauguration day the temporary museum became a hive of activity, organizing exhibitions, seminars and film shows while simultaneously running a library and an Olympic studies centre. Its existence opened the way for an active policy of acquiring objects and documents belonging to the Olympic heritage. The period of almost eight years spent in following that policy has proved most useful in paving the way for the International Olympic Committee's present grand project the construction of an Olympic museum of worldwide renown, which has been entrusted to the prominent architect Pedro Ramirez Vásquez, a member of the Mexican International Olympic Committee and designer of Mexico City's famous National Museum of Anthropology.

Pedro Ramirez Vásquez is working on this project with the Lausanne architect Jean-Pierre Cahen, as he did on Olympic House, the new administrative headquarters of the International Olympic Committee, which was inaugurated on 12 October 1986 and has been warmly praised both by other architects and by the people of Lausanne.

A decisive breakthrough was made in 1985, when the City of Lausanne and the International Olympic Committee bought two neighbouring properties, which together formed a lot of about 33,000 m^2 located in the pleasant surroundings of the Quai d'Ouchy in Lausanne. The City of Lausanne is in the process of laying out a public Olympic Park on municipal property bordering Lake Geneva, which will feature some twenty sculptures on sporting themes. These are being donated to the International

1. See the article by Elizabeth Ryan Gurley on page 86 of this issue – Ed.

Museum (Unesco, Paris) No. 170 (Vol. XLII No. 2, 1990)

Olympic Committee by various national committees.

The International Olympic Museum, which will have an exhibition area of about 3,000 m^2 and will be in complete harmony with its exceptional location.

Finding the funds

Construction began on 9 December 1988, once the official building permits had been issued. In order to finance the new Olympic Museum in Lausanne, the International Olympic Committee decided to ask each of a score of firms, businesses and corporations with a worldwide reputation for a million-dollar gift, payable, if so desired, in three annual instalments.

In return for this generous aid the International Olympic Committee will confer upon each donor the title of 'Founder and Honorary Life Member of the Olympic Museum Foundation', whose statutes will be drafted soon and whose first president will be Berthold Beitz, former Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee. The official name and acronym or initials of each donor firm will be inscribed on a very large marble 'wall of honour' that will be erected in the entrance hall of the museum. The inscriptions will also appear in a reduced size in every room.

Museum layout

The various exhibition areas in the building will follow a flexible design that will make it possible to mount permanent and temporary exhibitions at the same time and to leave wide scope for creativity in the arrangement of the exhibits. At the present time, a working group headed by Luis Monreal, former Secretary-General of ICOM, former Director of the Getty Institute near Los Angeles, and member of *Museum*'s editorial Advisory Board, is studying ways of laying out the permanent exhibition areas so as to integrate harmoniously themes as varied as the following:

The Olympic Games in ancient Greece: the origin, development and organization of the Games, their social, political and religious impact, their successive dates, and references to the most famous athletes.

Pierre de Coubertin and the modern Olympic Movement: the life and work of the founder, the social, political and cultural background to the birth of the modern Games and the foundation, organization and history of the International Olympic Movement.

The modern Olympic Games: the major landmarks in the Games from 1896 to the present, illustration of the growing social, economic, political and historical importance of the Games, the development of the organization of the Games as revealed by a retrospective look at the growing number of Olympic events, National Olympic Committees and participants in the Games.

The various sports: the official rules for each sport, the development of specific sports, including comparisons between ancient and modern equipment, technical details, and results.

The Olympic Games, culture and society: the social, cultural and historical impact of the Olympic Games throughout the twentieth century and their contribution to the artistic and cultural modernization of certain host cities and to greater understanding between peoples.

The Olympic message: a presentation of the basic principles of the Olympic Charter and of the emotional impact of scenes of athletes in training, moments of triumph and defeat and camaraderie and solidarity between athletes of all countries, races and religions.

All these displays will be dynamic. They will be designed to provide visitors, particularly young people, with an exceptional array of information, through the use of the latest audio-visual communication and computerization techniques. The museum will thus be of the twenty-first century, in which visitors will feel at ease and be able to programme their own tours.

The Olympic Museum will also feature a library, an Olympics studies centre, and photograph and video-tape libraries. Once assembled, ordered and analysed, this collection will provide not only visitors but also sports organizers, sociologists, historians, researchers and journalists with a veritable data bank worthy of the universal sporting movement the International Olympic Committee has become. In addition to the Olympic Park, cafeteria and a shop will provide visitors with two welcome places in which to relax. All the necessary areas for the conservation, maintenance and preparation of exhibitions will be included to complete the project.

Since all the premises of the present museum are being used to their maximum capacity, we are looking forward to the completion of the new building. The International Olympic Committee will then be able to boast a genuine museum, whose official inauguration is scheduled for 23 June 1993. It will not be long, therefore, before we can have the pleasure of extending a cordial welcome to the readers of *Museum*! ■

Do you want to establish a sports museum or improve an existing one?

If so, you will find a brochure entitled *Sports Museum You Can and Must Create One!*, published in English, Spanish and French by the International Olympic Committee, very useful. It costs 5 Swiss francs, and can be obtained from the Olympic Museum, 18 avenue Ruchonnet, 1003 Lausanne, Switzerland.

The staff at bat – and on ice

Tony Hanik and Richard Lahey

Staff at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto are not content merely to mount exhibitions (on sports inter alia). They have also distinguished themselves for some years now on the diamond and ice rink in their own ROMantics baseball team and Sabre Tooth Tiger hockey squad, with which the authors of this article are intimately involved. A security officer at the ROM, Tony Hanik helps coach the ROMantics and has played all baseball positions (except that of umpire, to which he is rumored to have a near-patholotical aversion). Richard Lahey holds an M.A. in history and is an interpretive planner for the museum's Exhibit Design Service as well as an impenetrable (well, almost impenetrable) goal tender for the Tigers.

When the director of a major museum such as the Royal Ontario Museum is seen throwing the opening pitch at a big-league baseball game, you know the institution is no stranger to the realm of sports. Indeed, Toronto's largest museum is well known for organizing its own marathon (a twenty-four-hour fund-raising team relay, held every June) as well as for sponsoring annual cycling events. But the sports that dominate talk and speculation within the museum's corridors are baseball and ice hockey – those same two 'cultural' pastimes that dominate the Canadian consciousness, depending on the season. More than just talk, many staff members take their enthusiasms further by playing on two long-standing teams: the ROMantics of baseball fame, and the ROM Sabre Tooth Tigers, 'predators' on ice. Between the two, we have the summer-winter spectrum of Canadian sports movement covered!

A tale of two teams

'An escape to life as we wish it to be. . . . The chance to act stupid together.'
Ken Dryden, *Home Game.*

It takes a practised eye to discern the real players in the work-a-day museum scene, but they are there, waiting in the wings. Beneath the strata of bureaucracy and the blur of job descriptions lies a full farm team of weekend warriors, of after-hours heroes and heroines waiting for their chance at the big leagues. The Personnel Department may be blithely unaware of its true role as talent recruiter, yet year after year it does the job, perhaps unwittingly finding free agents with the experience to fill the varied playing positions.

Is it mere coincidence that one staff member played midget-age hockey against the Russians, or that another represented the Philippines in baseball's Little League World Series? Are the laws of chance responsible for bringing together road-hockey keeners and all star calibre skaters, or batters from local farm communities with the fielder who has caught balls in the shadow of the Pyramids? Clearly, we're all just living elucidations of Roger Kahn's observation, in *Good Enough to Dream*: 'The nature of the game is so complex that players reach their peaks relatively slowly . . . [it] often seems to be a game played best by [people] on the brink of middle age.' We're certainly on the brink; so we *are* getting better at it, aren't we?

The Sabre Tooth Tigers, 1987/88 season.

Photo by courtesy of the authors

The archetypal season

Thrilling victories, but oh those agonizing defeats! Excerpts from our newsletters reveal a remarkably similar pattern of ups and downs for both the teams:

After a sensational start to the season . . . the team is confident of its ability to attain stellar heights in the league . . . ROMantics win four, the team is on roll! . . . a 500 record over the first twelve games . . . but recent play has given cause for some con-

Rike Wisner

The ROMantics in an earlier incarnation known as the ROMBsquad, *c.* 1980.

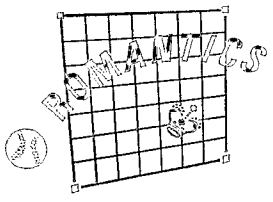
cern . . . three straight losses, the team is in slump . . . in hopes of rekindling the flame, team management has introduced new tactics: pre-game war dances, limousine service for old-timers . . . the slump continues . . . the Tigers now have a coach. His presence should instill extra confidence come mid-season . . . particularly vexing was a series of late-game letdowns . . . slipping to fourth in the standings . . . but near the end there were flashes of winning form . . . the team breaks out of its slump just in time for the Invitational Tournament. First Place Victory, hurray! . . . we make a comeback; we make the Playoffs . . . ROMantics take first-round playoff game! Tigers get big goals to tie up the series in Game 2! . . . everything's down to one game! . . . and . . . then . . . Agh! – annual elimination from the playoffs: Tigers come out toothless; ROMantics lose heartbreaker.

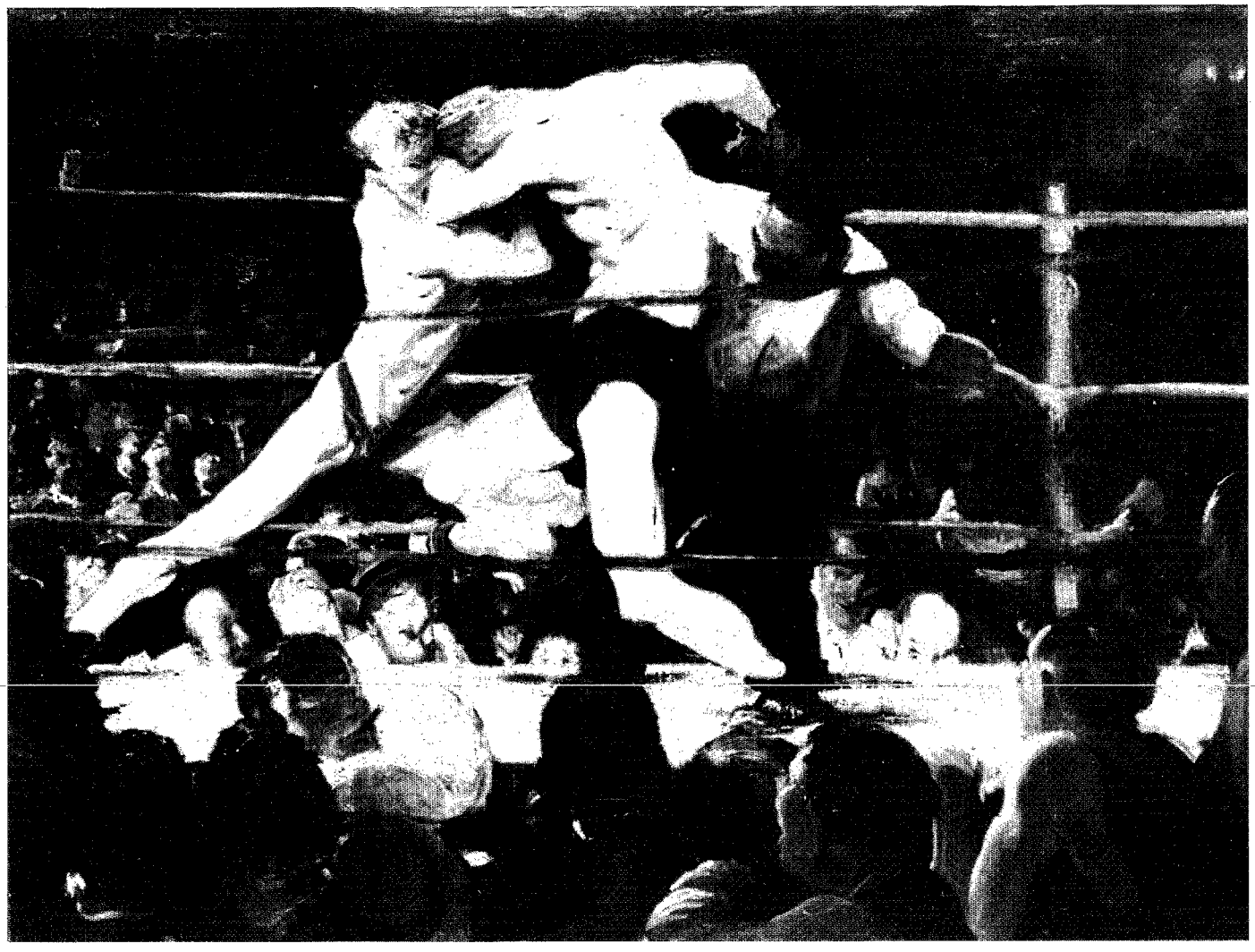
Post-season post-mortems might provide some consolation, and the dedicated fan pondering the team gamesheets may even rediscover Rob's Law: the player who keeps the statistics invariably wins the championship. But, in the end, who, anyway, really remembers the outcome, of this season, last season, or the season before that? Because, number one, *there's always next year* . And, ultimately . .

It's not whether you win or lose . . .

Most important is to remember that it's *fun.* Even when you're struck out by a pitcher who's supposedly on your own side, even when the back of your neck gets sunburned from the goal light *behind* you flashing on too often. Well, it's mostly fun. Making the big play, saving or breaking open a game, masterminding the winning strategy, earning the accolades of the fans – these are the fantasies lived that make it memorable. Yet the benefits of play can reach even further: out into the larger community, for example, when team supporters excel themselves making donations at a special game in support of a food bank, or when team players actively participate in a museum promotion to raise funds for minor-age hockey.

The biggest winner of all? The museum itself – and not only from the fitness point of view, or the indirect benefits for work efficiency of people getting to know who's who on staff. Sport is a vital part of contemporary society, and while the ROM has been endeavouring to expand its role in the study of popular culture, those very people on staff engaged in team sports provide a meaningful point of contact with it. The effect has recently come full circle, with the players at the museum substantially contributing to the preparation of exhibits dealing with sports: a feature exhibition on baseball in society, *Let's Play Ball,* and a component in the Arms and Armour gallery looking at hockey equipment as a form of moden armour. Beyond the chance for play afforded us by the museum, such 'exhibitry' will have to suffice until we get that longed-for call-up to the majors! ■





Hinman Hurlbut Collection/Cleveland Museum of Art

'A Stag at Sharkey's'

In the first decade of this century, public prize fighting was forbidden in the United States. To outwit this prohibition, bouts were organized in the evenings on private premises, such as Sharkey's Athletic Club in New York City, as 'stag' (men-only) occasions.

George Bellows (1882–1925), already a very popular painter in his own lifetime, had an affinity for the stark and sometimes troubling realism of the so-called Ash-Can School. He is said to have remarked: 'I don't know anything about boxing; I'm just painting two men trying to kill each other.' [1] Be that as it may, *A Stag at Sharkey's* is one of the best-known pictorial representations of sport in the history of American art.

The picture was painted in 1909 and is now in the Cleveland Museum of Art.

1. Quoted in Frances Carey and Anthony Griffiths, *American Prints 1879–1979*, London, British Museum Publications Ltd, 1980.

AT YOUR SERVICE

The International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE)

The International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) is an international umbrella organization concerned with the promotion and dissemination of results and findings in the field of sport science and their practical application in cultural and educational contexts.

Its aims are to contribute to the awareness of human values inherent in sport, to improve health and physical efficiency, and to develop physical education and sport in all countries to a high level. In these ways it helps to defend and develop the concept of fair play and sports ethics and to promote peace and understanding between peoples.

Its fundamental objectives are:

To encourage international co-operation in the field of sport science.

To promote, stimulate and co-ordinate scientific research in the field of physical education and sport throughout the world and to support the application of its results in various practical areas of sport.

To make scientific knowledge of sport and practical experience available to all interested national and international organizations and institutions, especially to those in developing countries.

To facilitate specialization in sport science while promoting the integration of the various branches.

In accordance with its consultative relationship (category A) with Unesco and its 'recognized organization' status with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), ICSSPE serves as a permanent advisory body to these international organizations. It regularly conducts research projects on behalf of Unesco and the IOC.

To achieve its objectives ICSSPE:

Initiates, supports and organizes international conferences, symposia, meetings and seminars.

Enhances and promotes the exchange of experts, as well as co-operation between institutions for higher learning and research in sport and physical education.

Promotes the processing of information and documentation in sport science and their exchange among national institutions.

Stimulates and provides for the publication of knowledge in sport science and encourages the mass media to spread the ideas emerging and other results.

ICSSPE conducts its work through committees and working groups, which have the status of international organizations in their fields. Currently more than 160 organizations and institutions from all parts of the world are affiliated to ICSSPE.

ICSSPE's major publications are:

Sport Science Review: an international journal with contributions from all areas of sport science.

Sport Science Studies: a monographic series offering scientific reports, treatises and other research findings.

Bulletin: a news magazine with reports on research projects, meetings, events, and further activities from within the organization.

Calendar of Events: a current list of forthcoming international congresses, conferences, symposia and seminars.

More information may be obtained from:

International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education
Bureau MS2-38,
Unesco,
1 rue Miollis,
75015 Paris (France). ■

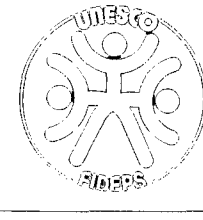
AND UNESCO?

While more than 80 per cent of children in industrial countries receive physical education at school, in the developing countries the proportion of children *not* receiving it is estimated at some 80 per cent, without forgetting the widespread lack, in the same countries, of leadership and equipment for sports.

To face this problem, Unesco set up in 1978, and in the framework of a broader programme in this area, the FIDEPS (International Fund for the Development of Physical Education and Sport). FIDEPS aims to raise public and private funds in order to promote a culture of sports for all as an integral part of lifelong education (traditional and modern sports and games), thanks to leader training, assistance to the practice of sports by young people and adults, and the creation of appropriate equipment and installations.

Indeed, FIDEPS could certainly help relevant projects organized in a museum framework. For more information, *Museum* readers may contact:

Unesco/FIDEPS
7 place de Fontenoy,
75700 Paris, France
Telephone: (33) (1) 45.68.10.00
Fax: (33) (1) 40.65.94.05.

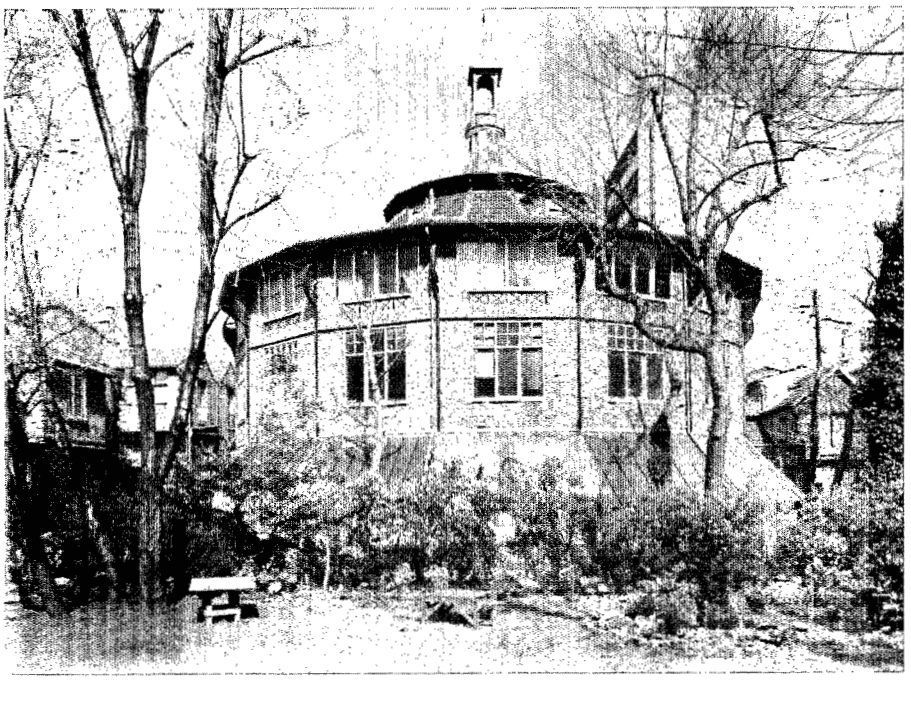


FEATURES

Robbers get 'On Target'

La Ruche today.

La Ruche as it was, the Food and Wine Palace of the City of Bordeaux at the Paris Exhibition of 1900.

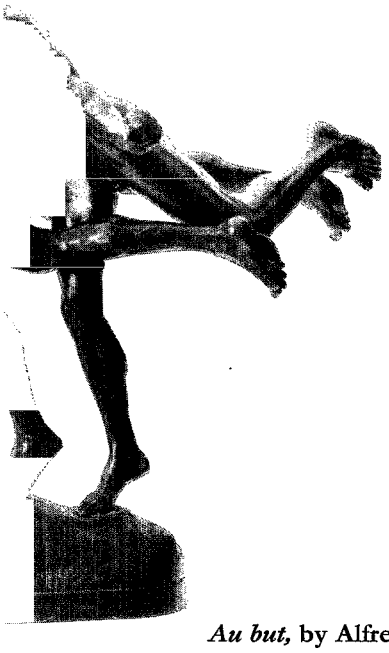


Blake

Hidden away at the end of a dark alley in the fifteenth *arrondissement* of Paris is La Ruche (The Beehive), an artists' colony where robbers recently made away with a work of art that is sorely missed.

It was Alfred Boucher, a sculptor living at the turn of the century, who had the brainwave of using bits and pieces salvaged from the Universal Exhibition of 1900 to create a curious residence for artists whose occupants have included Léger, Zadkine, Soutine and Chagall. Today their place has been taken by avant-garde artists who live and work in this original setting. The huge portal was once the entrance to the 'Pavilion of Womanhood' and the central rotunda, known because of its shape as *la ruche*, was originally the Food and Wine Palace of the City of Bordeaux.

Monsieur Boucher deserves our thanks! But the irony is that it was one of his own sculptures – *On Target*, a triad of lifesize athletes at full tilt peacefully



Christian Larrieu

Au but, by Alfred Boucher

ensconced at the bottom of the garden for nearly a century – that was stolen during the night of 31 December 1990.

Here is a photograph of it. Any reader of *Museum* able to help La Ruche recover its now orphaned athletes is warmly urged to get in touch with the Editor.

Antananarivo: beautiful, useful and enthralling

Hery-Zo Ralambomahay

Bachelor of history and founder member of the Scientific and Cultural Association, Tamberina, the author is at present Secretary-General of the Malagasy National Commission for Unesco.

Antananarivo (the city of a thousand warriors), the capital city of Madagascar, is situated on the high Malagasy plateaux. This urban centre, with its old quarters built on the steep hills and a sprawling lower town, numbers more than a million inhabitants. Bubbling over with activity, Antananarivo is the centre of political, socio-economic and cultural events. Like any showcase city, it boasts many centres of cultural interest, among which are the national museums, reflecting a considerable proportion of the Malagasy heritage.

These museums promote knowledge about Madagascar from different angles. Indeed, the Antananarivo museums cover a whole range of fields concerning the history, ethnography, archaeology, art, geology and natural history of our great Indian Ocean island. There is something for everyone to see, whether he/she is an inquiring layperson, a tourist with an urge to see something new, or a student thirsty for knowledge.

The Queen's Palace – a 'Tower of London' in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

RESTORING THE QUEEN'S PALACE

Honour to whom honour is due. The Queen's Palace, converted into a museum and opened to the public as long ago as 1897, was once the residence of the nineteenth-century Malagasy monarchs and the centre of their government. It was built in 1610 on the highest hill (at an altitude of 143 metres), hence its natural strategic position. It consists of buildings dating from various periods, which retrace the architectural developments of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Formerly enclosed by a fence, then a brick wall, the royal compound (Rova) was built for two reasons. It provided protection for the king and it marked an area within which certain rules had to be obeyed. When entering this area, one had to carry out certain rituals, such as stepping in with the right foot first, and not entering at night, so as to prove one's purity and chase away evil spirits.

The Royal Tombs can be seen when one passes through the main gate. The two largest ones, which are very imposing, contain the mortal remains of all the sovereigns since King Andrianampoinimerina (1787–1810). The Malagasy people believe that the soul remains immortal even though the body perishes. This is why the Royal Tombs are topped by 'sacred houses' which are furnished just like real residences. In this way, the spirits of the deceased sovereigns can protect their descendants and be at their disposal. Visitors are not allowed to enter these monuments, no doubt so as to prevent the spirits of the real masters of these dwellings from being disturbed.

The building which receives the most visitors at present is the Tranovola (Silver Palace), which was recently restored. Work was concentrated particularly on the ground-floor room whose walls are richly decorated with very picturesque designs in colour, brightened up by heavy, garnet-coloured, velvet hangings. Collections of portraits representing the various sovereigns since Andrianampoinimerina as well as Europeans who developed diplomatic, military, and technical links with Madagascar in the nineteenth century, are exhibited in this large, square and very high room. These paintings are bright and fresh and have rediscovered their youth since they have just been restored and repainted. The first floor of this palace is used as a laboratory where the various costumes are still being restored. Consequently, certain showcases remain sadly empty. This building, the most impressive of the Queen's Palace, has a tower at each corner and is reminiscent, as a whole, of the Tower of London.

The oldest building inside the Rova enclosure is the one called Mahitsielefanjaka (long will be the reign of the honest man) and dates back to 1796. It was constructed for one of the twelve wives of King Andrianampoinimerina and is an example of traditional Malagasy architecture. There are no openings to the east and south because they are thought to be the sides favoured by evil spirits. It also happens that strong winds come from these two points of the compass. The objects in this building (tools, arms, the king's red flag), which are extremely well-preserved, are in precise places that have been astrologically determined.

Visitors might regret that the lighting is not very good here and there inside the Queen's Palace. However, certain rooms and even entire floors are at present closed to the public because this historic centre is undergoing restoration thanks to sustained efforts by the Ministry of Culture and Art, responsible for the Palace, and by foreign sponsors, including Unesco.

COAL, BITUMEN, BERYLLIUM

The capital's Geological Museum is in Ampandrianomby and was opened to the public a few years before independence. It contains 27,500 items, occupies part of the ground floor of the Department of Mines building and comes under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mines. The samples that have been gathered and are on exhibition in this room of moderate size (30 × 15 metres) cover nearly all the geological varieties of Madagascar, which include sedimentary, metamorphic and mineral rocks. Huge rock samples, such as coal from Sakoa, bitumen from Bemolanga, or even beryllium, sit imposingly on the top of cupboards at the back of the room.

The aim of the museum is to make the Great Island's various mineralogical samples known to the general public. Admittedly, the museum is somewhat away from the centre, but a large number of visitors still go there, all for their own reasons. The tourist is likely to admire the range of samples and wonder where the deposits are. The amateur prospector will inquire about the prospecting sites and the techniques of panning or the size of the gems. As for students, caught up in the pressure of exams, they will try to learn more about the main characteristics of the different specimens.

Exhibitions are organized from time to time in other regions of the island, with samples taken from the National Geology Museum. This museum, which is both educational and informative, needs to add to and renew its collections as well as clean the existing items.

THE MUSEUMS OF TSIMBAZAZA

Obviously, no one should ever stay in Antananarivo without visiting the Queen's Palace. The same applies to the museums of Tsimbazaza, which include the Malagasy Natural History Museum, coming under the National Commission for Scientific Research, and the Ethnographic Museum, under the supervision of the Malagasy Academy. They occupy buildings within the Tsimbazaza Botanical and Zoological Park, which continues to attract an ever-growing number of visitors, particularly people who are passing through Antananarivo.

The Natural History Museum is highly thought of by visitors, starting with the children. Various items such as whale vertebrae, dolphin, dinosaur and dwarf hippopotamus bones, and even subfossil lemur skeletons, are shown to the public in this 15 × 22 metre room. Visitors are filled with wonder and readily linger over skilfully stuffed animals (such as the crested ibis or the paradise flycatcher) and collections of different species of insects, in particular butterflies, with their wonderfully graceful shape and vivid colours. Indeed, this museum boasts a remarkable variety of collections that contain some species unique to Madagascar.

The Ethnographical Museum is a good starting-point for the study of the various traditions and life-styles of the different Malagasy ethnic groups. Little-known objects, exhibited in this 12 × 20 metre room, illustrate the variety of the great Island's customs and traditions. Fishing and hunting implements, musical instruments and looms, ornamental jewellery and the apparatus of witchcraft capture the visitors' imagination.

A PROMISING FUTURE BUT A LACK OF SUITABLE PREMISES

The Art and Archaeological Museum was opened in 1970. It is attached at present to the Antananarivo University Research Department and works to promote a better understanding of cultural history in general and of archaeology in particular. The essential role of archaeology is to enable a long period of Madagascar's remote past, about which written and oral sources are lacking, to be reconstructed. The museum therefore has three main tasks: (a) to carry out research on all cultural artefacts that provide evidence about the Malagasy identity; (b) to teach art, archaeology and ancient civilization; and (c) to organize cultural activities (exhibitions in Madagascar and abroad).

Despite the usual difficulties (in particular, shortage of resources), some figures reflect the energy with which various activities have been undertaken. There are more than 4,000 ethnographical objects in the museum's reserves and there is a documentation room with more than 1,000 books as well as photos, slides and several archaeological remains from various regions of the island.

Lectures, seminars, audio-visual projections and exhibitions concerning various subjects have been organized throughout the island. International exhibitions have also been organized to promote Mala-

At the Queen's Palace: the Royal Tombs topped by real, furnished houses (*left*), and the Silver Palace, which receives many visitors (*right*). The Botanical and Zoological Park of Tsimbazaza.

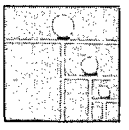
gasy culture. These include exhibitions such as: *What is a Malagasy?* in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, 1973; *Ancestors and Society in Madagascar* at the University of Bordeaux II, France, 1985; and *Madagascar, Island of the Ancestors* in London, United Kingdom, 1986/87.

The aim of the Art and Archaeological Museum is to arouse the interest of the general public through its many and various cultural activities, and is therefore far from being reserved to researchers and academics. Despite the fact that it is away from the centre and in small premises, its exhibition rooms show good attendance figures. In addition, it produces ethnographical films and, for more specifically educational purposes, organizes exhibitions on subjects included in the school curricula that are of interest to both secondary-school teachers and students.

In conclusion, it is clear that technological change as well as the growing needs of the public, or rather of the different kinds of museum-goers, would be more effectively met if the staff of the Antananarivo museums could take training or refresher courses. Better co-ordination between museums and with foreign countries – as occurred recently with the very successful *Traditional Architecture in the Islands of the Indian Ocean* exhibition at the Queen's Palace – would also breathe new life into the activities of the museums of our capital so as to combine, even better than at present, the beautiful and the useful with the enthralling. ■

Photos by courtesy of the author

WFFM CHRONICLE



World Federation of Friends of Museums
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WFFM Newsbrief

From 2 to 6 April 1990, the seventh International Congress of the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) was held in the Mosque in Córdoba, Spain. It was presided over by H.M. Queen Sofia of Spain, who delivered an address on 'The Museum as a Cultural Focus in Cities'.

The Congress was organized by the Spanish Federation of Friends of Museums, whose chairman is Carlos Zurita, Duke of Soria.

At each of the daily meetings, current and problematic issues were discussed such as: 'Re-evaluating the Museum in the 1990s'; 'The Museum as a Focus of Culture through its Activities'; and 'New Challenges for the Friends of Museums'.

About 350 participants attended the Congress. Among the eminent foreign and Spanish persons present, special mention should be made of Professor Kurt W. Forster, historian and architectural critic and Director of the Getty Center for the History of Art, Los Angeles, California, and Professor Robert J. Loesher, historian and Director of the Department of History of Art, Art Institute, Chicago. The meeting was also attended by persons eminent in different fields, such as architects, professors and various members of the different Federations of Friends. Among the distinguished figures from Spain itself, mention should be made of such well-known names as Professor Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez, Director of the Prado Museum; Daniel Giralt-Miracle, Director of the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art; Simón Marchan Fiz, Professor and Cultural Director of the Congress; the architects Antonio Vaquez de Castro and Luis Fernández Galiano; and the museologist Juan Igancio Macua.

The Spanish Federation, for its part, has decided to ask the Ministry of Culture to promulgate as soon as possible the Sponsorship Law, which will regulate matters such as taxes, collecting and relations between the government and museums.

Two themes dominated the discussions at this meeting. One was the distinction between the museum as entertainment and the traditional museum; and the other was the divergence between permanent collections and spectacular exhibitions. The cultural director of the Congress concluded: 'An intermediate solution must be found between the empty, forgotten museum and the museum as a mass attraction or spectacle. A study needs to be made of the nature of the museum and its social and geographical situation, which must then be very much borne in mind.' As regards the second issue, he considered that the best solution would be to avoid large museum concentrations, and that dispersion and the establishment of museums on a smaller scale would be preferable.

The American specialists supported the idea of the museum as a comprehensive civic centre, while the Europeans set greater store by the role of the museum as a place, open to the general public, where works of art are conserved.

For their part, the Friends of the various Federations requested governments to acknowledge the role played by the Friends and to take the opportunity to consider a code of conduct that would enable volunteers to work in museums.

The report of this Congress will be on sale soon. ■

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Museums: Education or Commerce?

Reg Williams

The author is National Secretary of the United Kingdom's Free Access to Museums movement.

Does the heading of this article seem a bit stark? Well, it is meant to be.

Sadly, the concept of museums and galleries as portrayed by Europeans in the latter part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century no longer exists. Then, they believed that museum visiting was vital for the educational development and self-improvement of everyone in society, whatever their social background. In fact, one report commissioned and accepted by the British Houses of Parliament and presented by T. Greenwood in 1888 stated: 'A museum and free library are as necessary for the mental and moral health of the citizens [of a town] as good sanitary arrangements, a water supply and street lighting are for their physical health and comfort.' No one who frequents museums and galleries can deny the common sense expressed here.

But for the past two decades all these sound and sensible sentiments have been overtaken by other buzz phrases such as 'cost effectiveness', 'value for money', and 'market-oriented' to justify governments' approving admission charges to museums and galleries. This despite the overwhelming case that museums are not only a source of entertainment and pleasure, but a vital source of education for people of all ages in society. To charge fees for access to this vast source of education is nothing short of élitism, ensuring that only those who can afford to pay for admission will be allowed to see the heritage of their nation. This disputes the fact that the large bulk of the artefacts contained within museums were donated by early benefactors who invariably presented them on the basis that they should be 'freely' viewed by the general public.

In the United Kingdom, in 1974, the Conservative Government, in the face of bitter opposition, introduced admission charges at national museums. The results were just as the critics of the policy had predicted: visitor levels fell dramatically. Attendance at the Science Museum fell by 51 per cent in January, 46 per cent in February and 24 per cent in March, compared with the previous year. The Victoria and Albert Museum in those three months lost 36, 51 and 49 per cent respectively. When the policy was ended by the incoming Labour Government, it was thought that the notion of charging had been thoroughly discredited.

Not so. The provision of public services has again been questioned by the present British Government, which has sought to encourage a 'business' spirit. National arts bodies have been told that they can no longer expect government to meet their financial needs, and that they will have to rely increasingly on sponsorship and fund raising. In April 1984 admission charges were thus introduced again, for example at the National Maritime Museum. In 1985 the Victoria and Albert Museum made a bigger splash in the autumn when it brought in the policy of 'voluntary donations', reinforced by supermarket-style check-outs and staff explaining the reason for paying. The final number of visitors for the first year of donation was 1 million, compared with 1.7 million in 1984, the last full year of free admissions. The Natural History Museum, introduced compulsory charges in April 1987 and now holds the record for the highest admission charges in the whole of Britain, £3.

A 'SELECTIVE' SELECT COMMITTEE

In June 1989 the House of Commons set up a Commons Select Committee to consider evidence on museum charges. A number of organizations in addition to ours gave evidence to ensure free admission to

Photos by courtesy of the author

our museums and galleries, at the same time encouraging private sponsorship to exhibitions where possible. Sadly the Commons Report, *Should Museums Charge? Some Case Studies*, published in February 1990, confirmed our suspicion that the Select Committee was only another vehicle for endorsing the view that museums and galleries are the province of those citizens who can afford to pay.

The Select Committee certainly lived up to its name by being 'selective' both in its review of evidence and in its report. For example, when national museum directors telephoned the Select Committee on the same day offering to give oral evidence, two directors in favour of charging admission were given an appointment, whilst the director of the largest and most popular museum in the country, the British Museum – which was in favour of free admission to everyone – was told that the Committee was too busy and could only accept written evidence.

Regarding evidence from abroad, the only topic where the Committee spent some time was the museum financing structure in France; it even quoted an anonymous French Civil servant who 'believed that charges were a good thing because they kept the riff-raff out'. The Select Committee did not study Germany or the United States, where most of the national museums are both properly funded and free. Why are independent museums, both large and small, so successful in the United States? It is because a tax receipt is given to visitors for every admission charge and voluntary donation; these are then saved and deducted in full from the visitors' income tax bill at the end of the year. So every dollar paid at the door is a dollar not from the visitor, but from the government, totalling a huge $5 billion a year. This amount, compared to what is spent in the United Kingdom, really shows how absurdly low British public funding of museums and galleries is.

For the Select Committee to recommend that all national museums and galleries should consider introducing compulsory admission charges was tantamount to proposing the reinstatement of the British class system under which only those with money have the advantages, while those without get nothing but charity.

THE FREE ACCESS CAMPAIGN

Already in August 1986, a conference was convened in Edinburgh under the auspices of Edinburgh District Council to consider what should and could be done to help change the policy of charging admission to museums and galleries. The result of this Conference was the formation of the campaign for Free Access to Museums. From the beginning the campaign immediately informed all interested bodies of its general principles, as follows:

'We believe that publicly funded museums exist to serve the whole community. Consequently, free access to core collections must be maintained.

The government should provide sufficient funds to the national museums and galleries to enable them to offer a full range of services without having recourse to the introduction of admission charges.

We call upon the major political parties to make a manifesto commitment to free admission to publicly funded museums in the run-up to the next General Election.

We call upon local authorities and other public bodies which administer museums to re-affirm their commitment to the enlightened introduction of free admission.'

To date, the campaign has the support of the TUC in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England along with the endorsement of every major political party in the United Kingdom, except the Conservative Party. Over sixty local authorities support the campaign, half giving it financial support. Our national position now has over 110,000 signatures and more are arriving each day. We know we can win because we are not seeking the impossible. The total cost to the British Government of ensuring free admission to national museums is so tiny that any reasonable person would wonder why charges were imposed in the first place. And since recent changes in the world call into question the need for heavy defence budgets, there is more reason to abolish charges.

Finally, we are trying to set up an international free access to museums campaign. Anyone interested can contact us at this address: Free Access to Museums, 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN, United Kingdom. ■

Letters to the Editor

The following open letter to Kenneth Hudson has been received by the Editor from the President of La Villette Science and Industry Centre, and forwarded to the author of the article discussed (see Museum No. 162).

Dear Mr Hudson,

In a recent issue of *Museum* you published an article entitled 'An Unnecessary Museum'. It contained a general, peremptory and absolute judgement on the Science and Industry Centre, a judgement based on a single consideration: its sheer size.

This is a rather short-sighted view, if I may say so. If we accept this criterion of size, should we not conclude, for instance, that: Swiss culture is superior to Chinese culture, a village is preferable to a town, a music- hall song to an opera, the short story superior to the works of Proust or the Mahabharata – to take a few absurd examples?

Size is not a bad thing in itself. A large complex like La Villette offers the considerable advantage of facilitating the development of diversified activities spread over two adjacent sites, which enhance each other and provide visitors with a genuine choice of different types of training and culture. In fact the designation 'museum' does not adequately cover this diversity and synergy of action.

As a matter of fact, one needs to be familiar with our multimedia library, our classes, our careers information centre, our science discovery department for young people, our discussion and training activities for teachers, our exhibitions which each year feature a particular theme presented in great detail, our scientific and technological history research centre, our automated production workshop, our weather team, our activity kits, and the foundation we have created with some forty industrialists (see, for example, the article by Adèle Robert on our Inventorium in the same issue of *Museum* in which your article was published). These are all schemes and projects 'on human scale', packed with content, that you may well wish to discover and write about in future publications.

I for one would be delighted to show you them all. Come and see me – unless, of course, you think that a visit to our dangerous cathedral might compromise your museological faith, which you seem to think would be better served in the intimate atmosphere of chapels and parish churches.

Roger Lesgards

In response to the letter from Roger Lesgards, we received this letter from Kenneth Hudson:

Dear Editor,

This correspondence is giving me a lot of pleasure and I hope the others taking part in it are able to say the same. It started off slightly on the wrong foot, because in an important detail we were not well served by our translators. I described La Villette in my title as 'an unnecessary museum', but in the French version this most unfortunately became *un musée inutile*, which is not the same at all and also even slightly derogatory. This was *not* my intention and I hasten to apologize to Mr Lesgards, though the error was not mine. We shall have an opportunity to discuss this and no doubt many other international misunderstandings when, as a result of his very kind invitation, we take a look at La Villette together – hopefully soon.

I am in fact always and in every field suspicious of size, and I tend to see life in terms of the microcosm, rather than the macrocosm. I come to terms with it more easily and I understand more through it. I dislike mass spectacles of any kind, whether those spectacles are a football match, the Pope's Easter Message in St Peter's Square, *Aïda*, a May Day parade, the British Museum or Disneyland. I shall not be among those who make the pilgrimage to Eurodisneyland. These things are not for me. They make me feel claustrophobic. I do not respond. I switch off. I go into my shell. This it no doubt a matter of temperament, but experience suggests to me that I am not the only person in the world to possess such a temperament.

For me, however, there is a profound difference between Proust and China, to choose two of Mr Lesgards' 'big' examples. Proust's great work, like *War and Peace*, speaks to me personally. There is nobody else present when I read them, no crowds to get in the way and confuse my judgement. At La Villette and Disneyland, on the other hand, the crowds do get between me and the goods on offer, in a way which they do not at the Palais de la Découverte and the Maison de Victor Hugo. I do not defend this attitude. I merely say that for me it is a reality. But I do also happen to believe that people think better, function better, interrelate better, learn better in small units. If I were the Editor of *Museum*, I should greatly prefer not to have to work in such a great, impersonal rabbit-warren as Unesco headquarters, and nothing in this world would persuade me to endure the horrors of La Défense five days a week.

I sense in Mr Lesgards' letter a wish that I could accustom myself to thinking of La Villette not as a huge, monolithic unit, but as a federation of small sub-units, each with a life and an identity of its own. This, to me, is rather like asking a convicted prisoner to forget about the prison and to create a fruitful, meaningful life for himself within his own cell. Even the most self-centred person cannot do this. The prison and the other prisoners are always there.

Museums at their best are about learning, about pleasure and about extending experience. Mental conditioning is quite another matter. There are those, probably and unfortunately the majority of our fellow citizens nowadays, who can only do what large numbers of other people do at the same time. To be asked to act or think individually is very difficult and indeed painful for them. Mass tourism depends totally on such emotion and there is no essential difference between mass tourism and mass museum visiting. What La Villette has to ask itself very seriously is whether it belongs to the same culture as the Palais de la Découverte or whether it lines up more naturally and logically with Eurodisneyland. The idea that it is really a complex of autonomous, self-motivating, educational units I reject.

I feel sure Mr Lesgards and I are going to have a most enjoyable time together. I am looking forward to it.

Kenneth Hudson

Museum *apologizes for a translation slightly wide of the mark, but is pleased that a substantive, lively and courteous debate about big/small has been set in train in its columns.*

First archaeology, then museums: 'Spread the word, children!'

Serge Maury

Is it possible to interest children in prehistory? What turned out to be an entirely successful endeavour to do just that was by no means a foregone conclusion. Serge Maury, who has for the past six years been Departmental Archaeologist to the Regional Council of Dordogne, an area of France where prehistoric remains abound, describes here how he carried out a novel experiment. Before becoming a professional archaeologist he worked from 1970 (he was a teacher at the time) as a volunteer with research teams under the Prehistoric Antiquities Department of Aquitaine. Serge Maury knows how important personal involvement in this kind of undertaking is, and in presenting the educational venture he thought up he makes a point of leaving space for the children who took part in it, and for whom it was devised, to speak for themselves.

For children, prehistory is a fantasy world inhabited by animals and primitive people who easily enter their fertile imagination. It is scenes depicting the life of the period that make prehistory come alive for children; they find it difficult, on the other hand, to weave a story out of the endless rows of stone and bone artefacts they find in museums.

It seems to me that the first step needed is to bring prehistory out of its exclusive domain of myths and dreams and relate it to the practical reality of archaeological digs – a step, incidentally, that in no way diminishes the children's ability to give rein to their imagination. Moving away from a verbal description of historical facts and demonstrating by appropriate practical experience how prehistoric artefacts relate to an understanding of the life of those who created them is an original approach to prehistory, and was in fact the aim of the exercise described in this article.

The basic premise of the exercise was that activity and experimentation are of enormous benefit to children if these appeal to their creativity and imagination and set them thinking, which increases their retentiveness tenfold. Children become emotionally involved if they are given a role in a story. It is possible to make available an environment that allows such involvement. Two complementary but separate activities were in fact selected: (a) an experimental dig and (b) an experience of prehistory life by the children. An account of each follows.

THEORY IS FINE BUT PRACTICE IS BETTER

Anyone involved in an archaeological dig will be familiar with the kind of remarks made by the general public, and their total lack of understanding, when they see a group of diggers meticulously scratching at the ground, equipped with ludicrously small tools and paint brushes. Very few people immediately grasp the significance of all these minutiae; most do not understand and just find it amusing.

But what they are looking at is in fact an essential stage of archaeological research, when every detail has to be examined, have its position noted and be recorded; otherwise a large part of the information about our ancestors may well be lost.

Thanks to our experimental dig the children came face to face with the questions of 'why' and 'how' and learned why not a single one of the items must be moved, since one has to be able to pinpoint its location and to make drawings. In this way the children came to realize that the history of our ancestors is closely linked to a long and fascinating research in which progress can be made only if the necessary rules are observed.

The re-created original layout of the site showed them how different kinds of objects were grouped together and how the space was divided up into areas of different activities. The children had an opportunity to observe how connections between finds can be discerned, to question and to suggest hypotheses, in short, to put themselves into the place of the archaeologist.

Although archaeological knowledge is growing, it is constantly being reinterpreted by fresh discoveries and further investigation. We tend too much to try to keep the public happy by giving them hard and fast facts. An approach to knowledge that does not leave any room for questioning, for an inquiring mind and thus for genuine comprehension.

If children have ten times as many questions to ask at the end of an activity than they had at the beginning, then it has been a success, inasmuch as it has done its work of awakening their interest, and that is what happened at the site in question.

The practical experience of a dig combined with exhibitions providing the necessary background knowledge make up an introduction to archaeology that is set up at one place after another in our department, with the collaboration of cultural centres and schools. At the end of Archaeology Year[1] more than 3,000 children, drawn principally from the final year of primary and the first year of secondary school, were given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with practical archaeological research and in this way gained a somewhat clearer understanding of the need to protect this kind of heritage.

To give some idea of how we went about this we shall describe the experiment, which was carried out in conjunction with the Association des Francs et Franches Camarades.[2] Eight children, aged between 11 and 12, took part in the venture. Around a chosen theme a scenario was written describing the activities and experiments to be carried out by this group for the benefit of other children.

A TASTE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

This experiment, which was conducted as a discovery-learning activity, took place outdoors during the summer, and lasted ten days. The chosen field was prehistory, and the archaeologist who had been approached suggested dealing with the topic in relation to a specific time and place, for the sake of greater clarity, having introduced the children and organizers to the basic notions of prehistory in general. The Upper Palaeolithic (35,000–10,000 B.C.) was chosen, and within that period, the Magdalenian civilization (16,000–10,000 B.C.), which produced a large variety of art-and-craft objects.

On the basis of the knowledge obtained by archaeological research an attempt was made to relive a few days in the life of a tribe of hunter-fisher-gatherers. The region of the Vézère valley was an ideal place to re-enact and demonstrate many features of the lives of these prehistoric people, such as:

The use of natural shelter as living accommodation.
The building of huts in the open air.
The making of tools, weapons and items of furniture.
Hunting and fishing.
The cutting up of game.
The use of fire for cooking, heating water and lighting.

1. In France the school year 1989/90 was declared Archaeology Year by the Ministry of Culture.
2. An outdoor-activities association for boys and girls.

Sewing and the making of clothes.
Art: painting, engraving, sculpture, etc.
By rediscovering these crafts the children were able to steep themselves in the daily lives of the Magdalenians.

Getting to know a bygone people by following some of their daily routines, and grappling with some of the techniques of which they were masters, fixes in children's minds what their lives might have been like. Above all, it helps them to think about those people. They are in some small way in the situation of the ethnologist who shares the life of a group of people, observes them and questions them.

MUSEUMS OF PREHISTORY COULD CARRY ON THE WORK

The children actively built up their knowledge by maximum use of their creative potential. This inside approach forms the basis of activity learning, which states that knowledge comes above all from the observation of facts and from finding out by experimentation. Education in school too easily forgets or even avoids this basic principle of research. And museums, with their emphasis on visual appeal and their way of protecting exhibits, too often preclude the use of other senses, especially that of touch.

The acquisition of knowledge relies on the action described here, using a sensory memory made up of input from the senses of hearing, smell, sight, touch and taste. This direct sensory perception, backed up by the inventiveness and creativity of the child's mind, provide the child with knowledge that is no longer merely a veneer, but actual experience.

The history and geographical position of the Dordogne department, thus, prompted its archaeological office to devise – for the purpose of getting children interested in archaeology – a programme (based on activity-learning principles) that would give them just what they needed. So far, the programme has been very successful, but to be fully effective it needs to be made part of a regular process directly involving museums of prehistory. ■

Accommodation

'Pull the stick down a bit to open the smoke vent, Frédéric.'

Magdalenian huts were pretty good; perhaps our modern camping tents aren't so new, after all. Mind you, it did take several of us to put this hut up, but it's really tough.

When we used to talk about prehistoric people, you know, we used to think of them as cavemen, a bit like animals nowadays sheltering under a rock.

But now we know that they were very clever and that they knew how to build houses for themselves. They made them out of what they could find, such as branches, and skins of animals they had killed.

We didn't find it very easy, especially to get the slope of the tent right, so that the smoke would go out through the roof and that the space for sleeping in would be as big as possible, between the fire and the back of the tent.

We're pleased that it works well. In the daytime we open the smoke vent, but at night we have to close it to keep in as much of the heat as possible. It's nice inside; it's really cosy, even if it gets a bit smoky sometimes. And the smoke drives the mosquitos away. It also makes us cough, though.

Making music

Playing the flute isn't easy, but we tried and tried till we managed it. The sound is very beautiful: high-pitched and clear. It would have been nice to know what kind of tunes they played. Unfortunately that's not possible, so we just improvised. We swung bullroarers round, too, and we played whistles made from reindeer foot-bones with holes drilled in them. They were modern reindeer bones that an archaeologist had brought us back from Lapland.

Sébastien

Heating water

Before we tried this experiment we didn't know you could heat water in any other way than by putting a pot over a fire. But this other method works very well. We heated some stones till they were red hot, and we only had to throw a few into the water – two or three litres of it in a goatskin 'pot' – to make it boil almost straight away. This is very handy for making soup stock from reindeer bones. It's best not to eat what's at the bottom of the goatskin, though, because the very hot stones crumble into little bits when they come into contact with the cold water, and they're *not* very digestible!

Christelle

Photos by Marie Dolard

From peat to public:

two bog bodies 'live' again

Vincent D. Daniels

Now one of the most popular exhibits at the British Museum, Lindow Man did not emerge ready for display from more than 1,000 years of burial in a Cheshire peat bog. Quite the contrary, the conservation problems he presented upon discovery were quite complex. How they were solved is recounted here by Vincent D. Daniels, who holds a Ph.D. in polymer degradation techniques and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry as well as Principal Scientific Officer of the Department of Conservation at the British Museum.

All photos by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

A thorough scientific examination of Lindow Man was carried out by pathologists and other medical and archaeological experts.

On 1 August 1984 the preserved body of a man was discovered by workmen excavating peat in a bog at Lindow Moss, Cheshire, United Kingdom. One of the men found the lower part of a human leg. Police and archaeologists were called in. In less than a week a block of peat containing a body, which came to be called Lindow Man, was taken to the mortuary at Macclesfield Hospital. Soon most of the peat was removed from the body. A box was constructed, and Lindow Man was wrapped in cling-film and placed inside, the cavities being filled with expanding polyurethane foam to keep him in place. The box was placed in the mortuary's cold store to minimize deterioration. The coroner asked for radiocarbon data to ensure that the body was archaeological and not a recent murder victim. On 17 August the Atomic Energy Research Establishment declared the body to be at least 1,000 years old, and Lindow Man could begin his journey to the British Museum where he would be conserved under a team headed by Sharif Omar, Head of the Organics Conservation Section.

It was important that Lindow Man should be stored at about 4° C to ensure that no unwanted deterioration take place. A special refrigerator was built for the purpose. During the work of scientific examination and conservation the body had to be kept both cool and wet. This was achieved by intermittent spraying with cold water. The body was returned to its cool-box when its temperature rose to 10–12° C.

One of the first tasks carried out by the conservation team was to make a contoured mount for the excavated body so that it could be turned over. A mount was made from strips of Delta Lite, a fibreglass tape which is used in hospitals for wrapping round broken limbs. The body was covered with cling-film and layers of Delta Lite applied. After spraying with water the Delta Lite became rigid. The mount was given further strength by a layer of polyester-resin laminate. Now the peat could be removed from the back of the body, and another mount was made for the front so that it could be turned over at will.

SMOKE, DRY OR TAN?

Lindow Man was to be subjected to a thorough series of tests by a team of medical experts. Reports written included ones on the anatomy, the hair, the chemical composition of the body tissues, pollen, parasites and on plant foods in the gut. When these tests were completed the final problem was that of choosing a method of conservation for an object the like of which had never before been treated in the United Kingdom.

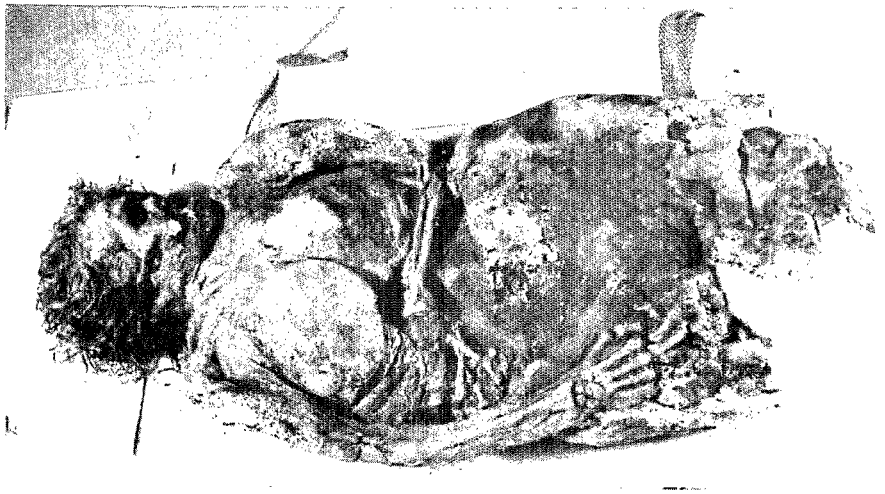
A few bog bodies had been conserved in the past. Sharif Omar visited several museums in Denmark to examine bog bodies and discuss their preservation with curators and conservators. In particular, two bodies were examined: Graubelle Man at Arhaus and Silkeborg Museum where Tollund Man is on display. Staff at the Danish National Museum were also visited.

Several different methods have been used for the preservation of bog bodies. In 1871 Rendswühren Man found near Kiel (Germany) was preserved by smoking and drying. Graubelle Man discovered in 1952 was found to be partially tanned when excavated. It was decided that the process be completed and the body was soaked in a tanning bath of oak bark for 18 months. A total of 828 kilograms of bark was used. After removal from this bath it was soaked in water and Turkey red oil and finally impregnated with glycerine, cod-liver oil and lanolin. Collodion (a cellulose nitrate solution) was injected into some parts to help to retain their shape. Shrinkage was minimal.

After Tollund Man was found in 1950 it was decided only to keep the head. This was placed in acetic acid and formaldehyde for six months, then pure alcohol. It was finally impregnated with wax. There was 12 per cent shrinkage of the head.

In the last twenty years the process of freeze drying has proved itself successful for the preservation of waterlogged materials such as leather and wood. Waterlogged material is often weak and much of its internal structure has decayed with the result that were it allowed to dry naturally its structure would collapse and considerable shrinkage and embrittlement would occur.

In the process of freeze drying, the wet object is frozen and placed in a vacuum chamber. Here, the ice evaporates,



Meenybraden Woman before conservation had commenced.

going from solid to vapour without liquefying. In this way the collapse of the internal structure of the object is avoided. If the object is previously soaked in a solution of polymer it is possible to leave behind a deposit of polymer, which helps to consolidate and strengthen the object. For conservation of waterlogged wood and leather a polymer called polyethylene glycol (PEG) is often used. It can be a waxy white solid or a viscous liquid depending on the molecular weight. It is safe to handle and is a water-soluble material with many industrial uses, for example as an ingredient in cosmetics.

The outcome of the discussions with the Danish conservators was that none of them was happy with the conservation methods used in the past and they thought that freeze drying offered the best hope for successful conservation. The question remained that if PEG was to be used, which type was best. We discovered that when a substitute for human skin is required for freeze-drying experiments, pigskin is often used. If this could be waterlogged and then impregnated with PEG and finally freeze dried, it might give some clues to how Lindow Man would behave under the same conditions. Several pieces of pigskin were duly sealed in jars containing oxygen-depleted water and peat (the conditions in a peat bog) and left outdoors for four months. At the end of this time the pieces of skin were immersed in various grades of PEG prior to freeze drying. The finished pieces were inspected for appearance and, most important of all, shrinkage. In the end a liquid type was selected: PEG 400 used at a concentration of 15 per cent. This would avoid the problem of Lindow Man's hair becoming encrusted with crystals of PEG and would also produce the minimum shrinkage.

EVEN EYELASHES

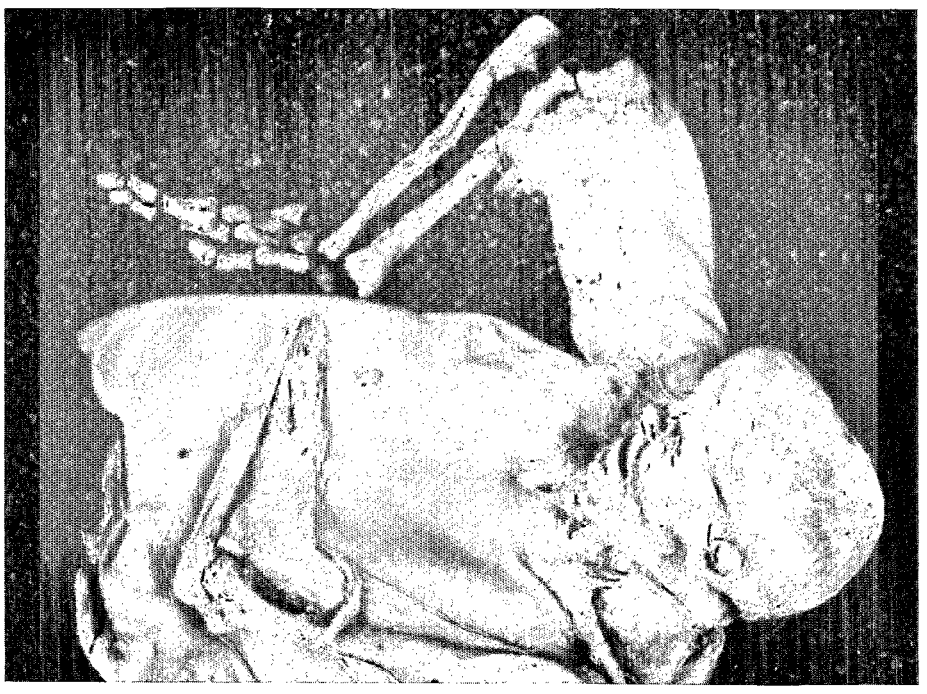
Meanwhile other museums had come to learn of our activities. The National Museum of Ireland had recently acquired a bog woman from Meenybraden. She had been excavated in 1976 and had subsequently been stored in a freezer. The National Museum of Ireland sent Meenybraden Woman to us so that we could make her stable in ambient conditions and by doing so, use her as a test for the treatment which would be used on Lindow Man.

Meenybraden Woman's body was more complete than Lindow Man's and possessed both legs (though these had been sawn off soon after the original excavation to facilitate transport!). A support for Meenybraden Woman was made in a similar way to that for Lindow Man. Stainless-steel pins were fixed into the body at measured distances so that shrinkage between them could later be calculated. The body was soaked in PEG 400 solution for four weeks. It was removed, a thermocouple was inserted and the body was wrapped in cling-film; it was then frozen at –26° C ready to be transported to the freeze-dryer.

Although the British Museum has freeze-drying equipment of its own for treatment of waterlogged wood and leather, it was too narrow to take either of the bog bodies. The English Heritage Laboratory had a freeze-dryer of suitable dimensions only a few kilometres away from the British Museum and it was decided to use its equipment. Ms Jackie Watson was to supervise the process for us.

The body was placed in the freeze-dryer and the chamber temperature lowered to –32° C, the vacuum was then applied. After a month the process was complete. The body was allowed to acclimatize to room conditions and taken back to the British Museum. The overall appearance was good. Shrinkage was small in the order of 1–2 per cent. Skin texture and

Lindow Man after conservation, now one of the most popular exhibits at the British Museum. He is displayed surrounded by a layer of peat to simulate his burial conditions.



details such as eyelashes and eyebrows became visible. The skin was supple and the only major work needed to be done was to remove some dried-out scum from the hair. It was decided to use the same process on Lindow Man.

The treatment of Lindow Man proceeded in a similar way. The freeze-drying process made any residual peat easy to remove, any smell that the body had had disappeared. Linear shrinkage was less than 5 per cent. Since the conservation four years ago Lindow Man has been stored in a specially constructed showcase where the relative humidity and temperature are controlled and there is a low level of light free of ultraviolet radiation. Thanks to conservation, he has become one of the most popular exhibits at the British Museum. ■

VOX POPULI

A Polar bear in Mexico City: how come?

Yani Herreman

A little while ago the Natural History Museum in Mexico City celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday. We use the word 'celebrate' advisedly, as the architect Yani Herreman, Director of the Museum and member of the editorial Advisory Board of our review, explains.

Our museum is a very special one. It identifies so completely with its public and staff that wonderful things are always happening there: artists, students, clowns, puppets, biologists and artisans work free of charge in the Sunday workshops which are known as 'birthday Sundays'. Fantastic! Visitors, employees and people of good will get together to entertain and enjoy themselves. Every weekend is a success. The impact of the museum on the public – and vice versa – is amazing. In passing, I should mention that an enormous polar bear towers above the other objects on display. This specimen, which was awarded a prize for the largest cranium of a trapped bear, is the property of a wealthy notable who kindly lent it to the museum. A year ago the owner asked for it back. When the public found out, there was almost a revolution. On the day when (in theory) it was going to be taken back, a wall of children emerged to prevent it from leaving, and from that moment they bombarded the authorities with letters pleading for it to remain. I should add that the gangs of young delinquents living in the neighbourhood sent a message to the effect that the bear was not to be touched because it belonged to *them,* as did the museum! I believe that there are few museums that are so close to their public. ■

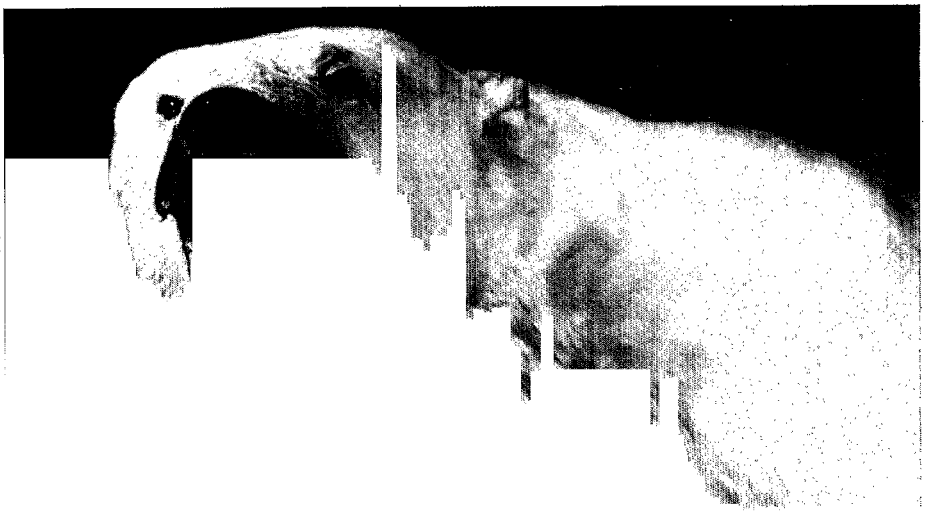


Photo by courtesy of the author

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What's next

No. 171 of *Museum* will focus on women-related issues. What are the status and prospects of women working in the museum professions? Who are some of the outstanding women museum professionals of recent years? How are women – and womanhood – presented and interpreted in museum displays? And what are some of the more innovative women's museums? Authors (including one man) from seventeen countries worldwide tackle these questions in the next issue of our magazine, which also offers some surprising illustrations.

Happy reading!