

Honorary Life President

Firstly I would like to thank the leader of the IOC Inspection Team who visited London recently week - Denis Oswald. He said "It is exciting to come here where most of our sports began; we are going back to the grass roots",

Yes - in 2012 we must ensure that our past has the right future. It is rich with symbolism. 2012 will be the 400th anniversary of the start of the Cotswolds Olympics - a mixture of sport and poetry. Throughout that period we in Britain have made important and regular contributions to Olympic thought. They must be cherished and re-stated in the modern idiom.

The profound sound-bites dreamed up by that committed Anglophile Pierre de Coubertin are, as ever, pertinent. I have in mind such as:

"Imperfect humanity is always trying to turn the Olympic athlete into a gladiator; the two are incompatible; you must choose."(1892)

In his first IOC of 12 members - six were educationists. Coubertin himself was perhaps the first of modern-era comparative physical educationist. The agenda at the IOC inaugural Congress in 1894 had 8 items. 7 were about money and its abuse. No 8 was - an antidote - the revival of the Olympic Games.

The battle to honour this heritage is already on. The oak which Coubertin planted in Much Wenlock in 1890 sprouted acorns last year. 100 were reared in the William Brookes School science laboratories. Some 70 are being nursed by Kew Gardens ready for perhaps a Zeus Grove at London's coming Olympic Park in Stratford. The Loughborough Bell company might contribute a replica of the Great Paul bell which they made for St Paul's Cathedral. It was there that Coubertin heard a sermon on "*many are called but few are chosen*" and dreamt up the Olympic ethos "*the honour is less in winning than taking part*". He did not say "not in winning"; that was a mistranslation from the French!

There are many other exciting strands in this battle to enhance and protect our Olympic heritage. I am absolutely confident that we can win this battle - but ensuring a place for the past in the future is only half the battle. The other half of the battle is beginning. Ensuring a place for the future in 2012!

For fifty years I have worked hard - as founder and now Hon. Life President of the national governing body for volleyball. Like so many other Olympic sports in Britain we have suffered neglect; suffocated in the sports environment dominated by "Little Englander" thinking. It has been like trying to develop cricket in Mexico! Singapore last year changed all that. It was a shot in the arm. All Olympic sports have the opportunity to compete in the London 2012 Games - if we follow honestly the IOC Olympic Charter.

I want London 2012 to concentrate on being first - on being the first Olympic Games to:

- Revolutionise our physical education system; create the 1st Museum of Physical Education in the world!
- Create an Olympic Peace Sanctuary
- Incorporate an African cadre - together with Beijing perhaps - so that the developing world can profit more widely from our experience.
- Restore on a voluntary basis - in the village - arts competitions for athletes
- Make Terminal Five a quintessential monument by judicious naming

- Give awards for "industrial attainments" - bringing bricklayers and carpenters into the Olympic equation as well as intellectuals (this was the Wenlock dream in 1850)
- Be the first Games to launch its own radio station
- Introduce the Suffragette Relays - an innovation involving relay events for teams composed of men and women equally - and do for athletics and swimming what mixed doubles does for Wimbledon.
- Let West Ham have the post-Games stadium at Stratford but only on condition that they move from uni-sport to a multisport/multiculture/community health -club, as a beacon to professional sport in this country.
- Replicate unashamedly the innovations of Games of the past - the avenue of large children's paintings in Mexico; the Olympic Family Town of Seoul; the jet-propelled astronaut in the Opening Ceremony at Los Angeles... and so on.

By the way I have copy-righted all these ideas!!

Dr. Don Anthony