

An Olympic Gathering in Gothenburg

by Mark Maestroni

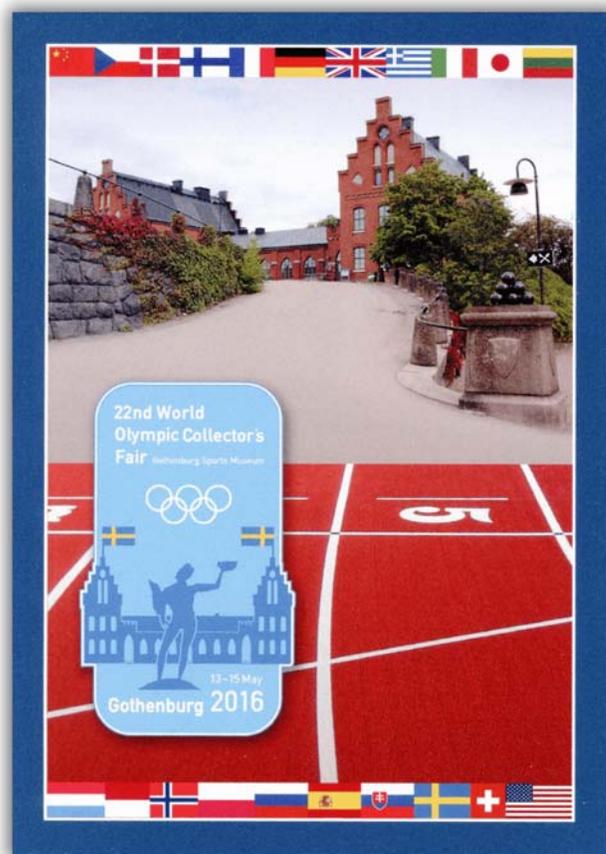
Each year, Olympic collectors from around the world gather for an annual festival of buying, selling and trading Olympic collectibles (stamps, coins, pins and memorabilia). Playing host this year to the three-day event from 13-15 May, was the Sports Museum in Gothenburg on Sweden's southwest coast, about a 3-hour train ride from Stockholm.

The Gothenburg Sports Museum (*Idrottsmuseet*, in Swedish), a member of the Olympic Museum Network, is housed in facilities that were once used by the Göta Artillery Regiment dating back to 1895. Known as the Kvibergs Kaserner, the complex of buildings has, since the 1990s, become part of a modern sports complex complete with hotel, sports school and both indoor and outdoor activities for families. There is even a subterranean ski complex – the Nordic Wellness Skidome – beneath the hotel, complete with 1.2 km of snow-covered cross-country skiing tracks!

The organizers of the fair provided a well-lit indoor hall large enough to provide plenty of space for the bourse of 100+ dealers. In addition to the usual preponderance of memorabilia and pin vendors selling everything from Olympic torches to unusual trinkets, there was a surprisingly robust philatelic representation from a wide variety of Scandinavian dealers. Typically this has not been the case in more recent World Olympic Collectors Fairs. Some of the philatelists who were present discovered some very nice items for their collections/exhibits.



A view of the Fair at the Kvibergs complex.

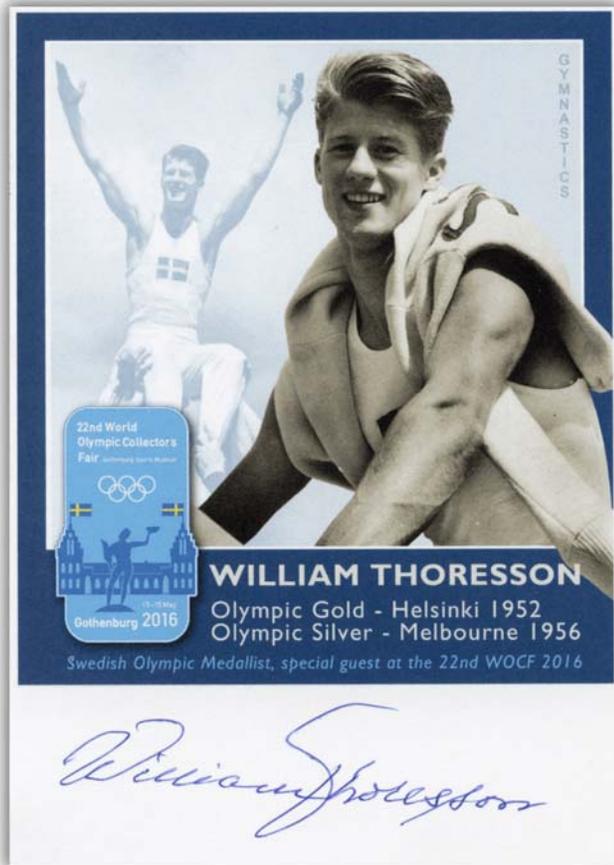


Official postcard of the 22nd World Olympic Collectors Fair hosted by the Gothenburg Sports Museum.

For the first time at a World Olympic Collectors Fair, admission was charged – the equivalent of US\$12 for adults and US\$2.50 for children. This may have been a factor in the light visitor traffic on both Friday and Saturday. One dealer mentioned that she



Official fair opening: (standing) Roman Babut, President AICO; Lars Rifve, Swedish Olympic collector; Stephanie Coppex, IOC; Hans Elbel, Director, Gothenburg Sports Museum; Yasmin Meichtry and Patricia Reymond, IOC. At front, David Lega, Paralympian medalist 1996 & 2000, new President of the Gothenburg Sports Museum.



William Thoresson was one of 20 Swedish Olympians to sign special limited edition postcards which were free to all attendees.

had been told that there were only a total of 85 paid admissions the first two days of the show.

The relative success of dealers seemed mixed: some were moderately pleased by the business they conducted while others felt that the effort and cost of attending were not rewarded. Having experienced a number of these Fairs, this seems to be a perennial complaint.

The host committee provided additional events for the participants including guided tours of the Sports Museum, a sightseeing tour of Gothenburg, and a catered banquet Saturday evening at the Kvibergs Kantin Restaurant adjacent to the Museum.

An effort was made to provide an opportunity for visitors and participants to meet and greet over a dozen Swedish Olympic medalists. Each day of the show featured from four to six different athletes, the oldest being William Thoresson, a gold medal winner in men's gymnastics (Floor Exercise) at Helsinki in 1952 and silver medallist at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

A cleverly designed limited edition postcard (100 per athlete) was created for 19 Olympians featuring one or more images of them. A generous



Postmarking covers and postcards with the special Fair cancellation.

amount of white space was provided for their autograph. The postcards were free to everyone. A complete list of the postcards is reproduced on the following page. The complete set of postcards may also be viewed by going to the SPI website: www.sportstamps.org/PDFdocuments/2016WOFC_pc.pdf

A special postmark (right) was available at the fair. The postmark is a reproduction of the Fair logo, created by artist Karl Cederblad, featuring the easily recognizable crenelated roof of the Sports Museum and the statue of the Greek god Poseidon standing on Götaplatsten in downtown Gothenburg.



The logo was also used to create a handsome blue, white and yellow pin (see postcard at upper left) in three variations, all numbered on the back: a visitor pin (350), a pin inscribed "PARTICIPANT" at bottom (130), and one reading "ORGANIZER" (20).



The museum's collection of Gothenburg-related material included Davis Cup trophies honoring Sweden's wins over the USA (1984) and India (1987).

Do you collect autographs!

a limited edition of 100 postcards per (autograph signing) Olympians, has been produced for the fair!



Swedish Olympic Medallists, special guests at the 22nd WOCF 2016:

Therese Torgersson	Sailing	Olympic Bronze	- Athens 2004	World Champion 2004	Saturday
Vendela Zachrisson	Sailing	Olympic Bronze	- Athens 2004	World Champion 2004	Saturday
Magnus Wislander	Handball	Olympic Silver	- Sydney 2000	World Champion 1990 and 1999 (+ 2 silver, 2 bronze)	Friday
		Olympic Silver	- Atlanta 1996		
		Olympic Silver	- Barcelona 1992		
David Lega	Swimming	Paralympics	Sydney 2000 and Atlanta 1996	14 world records	Friday
* Magnus Petersson	Archery	Olympic Silver	- Atlanta 1996	Silver (team) World Championship 2003	Sunday
Håkan Algotsson	Ice Hockey	Olympic Gold	- Lillehammer 1994	World Champion 1992	Sunday
Torbjörn Kornbakk	Wrestling	Olympic Bronze	- Barcelona 1992	European Champion 1990, 1997	Friday
Magnus Cato	Handball	Olympic Silver	- Barcelona 1992	World Champion 1990	Sunday
Bernt Johansson	Cycling	Olympic Gold	- Montreal 1976	World Champion 1974 (team)	Friday
Gunnar Larsson	Swimming	Olympic Gold x 2	- Munich 1972	World Champion 1973	Friday
Gunnar Jervill	Archery	Olympic Silver	- Munich 1972	European Champion 1972	Saturday
Lars-Eric Lundvall	Ice Hockey	Olympic Bronze	- Innsbruck 1964	World Champion 1957 and 1962	Sunday
Kjell Bäckman	Speed Skating	Olympic Bronze	- Squaw Valley 1960	World record 1960 - 10,000 meters	Saturday
William Thorsson	Gymnastics	Olympic Gold	- Helsinki 1952	Silver - World Championship 1954	Friday
		Olympic Silver	- Melbourne 1956		
Vanja Blomberg	Team Gymn.	Olympic Gold	- Helsinki 1952	Olympic Silver 1956 as Team Leader	Saturday
Pre signed:					
Anna-Carin Ahlqvist	Table Tennis	Paralympic Gold	- London 2012 (ind.)	European Champion 2009, 2011, 2013	
		Paralympic Gold	- London 2012 (team)		
Ronnie Sundin	Ice Hockey	Olympic Gold	- Turin 2006	World Champion 2006 (+ 3 silver, 1 bronze)	
Pelle Petterson	Sailing	Olympic Silver	- Munich 1972	World Champion 1969	
		Olympic Bronze	- Tokyo 1964		
Jonny Nilsson	Speed Skating	Olympic Gold	- Innsbruck 1964	World Champion 1963	
Gert Blomé	Ice Hockey	Olympic Silver	- Innsbruck 1964	World Champion 1962 (+ 2 silver, 2 bronze)	

* May not have participated



AICO Executive Board (2016-2018): Stephanie Coppex, IOC representative; Branislav Delej, Treasurer; Christophe Ait-Braham, Secretary; Roman Babut, President; Mark Maestrone, 1st Vice President; Massimiliano Bruno, 2nd Vice President.

AICO General Assembly

The timing of the Fair was partially predicated on the need to hold the AICO General Assembly on or before 22 May, marking the end of the first two years of the Olympic collectors' organization.

Among its many accomplishments, as summarized by President Roman Babut, were the establishment of a solid foundation for the new organization including winning the designation of an "Organization Recognized by the International Olympic Committee." The successful launching of AICO's website in both English and French, inaugurated the key means for communication with and between its members. The advanced capabilities of the new website will provide numerous direct benefits, including an extensive e-catalogue of all Olympic collector resources available around the world – a work now under construction.

Another important project of AICO will be working with the IOC's Foundation for Olympic Culture and Heritage on the subject of combating fakes and forgeries while at the same time keeping the collecting public abreast of alerts.

The new Expert Committees within AICO have been constituted and are beginning work.

The General Assembly elected two new members to AICO: Klubben 1000 from Norway, and the China Sports Philately and Memorabilia Association (CSPA). The latter is provisional until AICO receives the required letter of approval from the Chinese NOC. Both new member associations are on probationary status for one year.

A much-anticipated election to fill three seats on

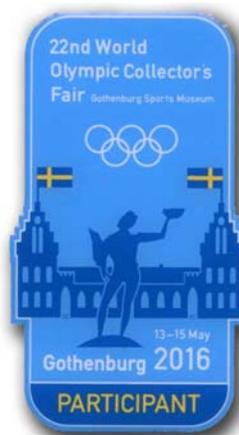
the Executive Board, AICO's governing body, was the focus of the General Assembly. Initially, six candidates had put their names forward: Roman Babut (Poland), Jonathan Rosenthal (Great Britain), Branislav Delej (Slovakia), Massimiliano Bruno (Italy), Scott Reed (USA) and Pablo Galan (Spain). At the last minute, Mr. Galan suddenly withdrew his name from consideration, leaving five candidates.

Ms. Stephanie Coppex, representing the IOC, and Mr. Christophe Ait-Braham, Secretary of AICO, conducted the counting of ballots in plain view of the assembly with the results of each secret ballot displayed in a spreadsheet format on the television screen at the front of the room. Each ballot was required to rate every candidate from most desirable (1st place) to least (5th place). Thus, much as in the sport of golf, the three candidates with the lowest totals (in effect, more first-place votes) were elected. Out of a possible 27 ballots, 24 ballots were cast (three member associations failed to return their ballots). One ballot was disqualified for not having rated every candidate.

The results, in order of finish (the lower the number the better): Roman Babut (46), Massimiliano Bruno (58), Branislav Delej (69), Scott Reed (79), and Jonathan Rosenthal (94). Msrs. Babut and Bruno will serve for four years (2016-2020), while Dr. Delej will complete the final two years (2016-2018) of the late Gianni Galeotti's term.

At the new Executive Board's first meeting, which immediately followed the election, officers were chosen. Roman Babut continues as President, with Mark Maestrone as 1st Vice President, Christophe Ait-Braham as Secretary, and Branislav Delej as Treasurer. New member, Massimiliano Bruno, assumes the office of 2nd Vice President.

AICO is ready to tender bids for upcoming World Olympic Collector Fairs. While no formal applications have been received, two groups have mentioned an interest in holding a future fair: the new Chinese group hopes to apply for the 2017 Fair (Hohhut, the capital of Inner Mongolia, was suggested), while UICOS (Italy) has the Alpine skiing center of Cortina d'Ampezzo (host of the 1956 Olympic Winter Games) in mind for the 2018 Fair. The 2019 WOCF has already been approved for Warsaw, Poland. 🍀



Participant pin