

OGI: A GROWING SUCCESS IN LONDON

By Annalisa Coppolaro

Founded in 1978 by the Committee of the St Peter's Italian Youth club which is in Clerkenwell, the *Olimpiadi della Gioventu' Italiana* (the Olympics of the Italian Youth) are an appointment not to be missed and a tradition for those many youngsters who are close to our culture and for those friends of other nationalities who also want to take part.

"The purpose of the event was to bring together young Italians and their friends from all over England", wrote Vittorio, one of the founders of this event, whose 2008 edition will take place on the 25th, 26th and 27th May in London, in the New River Stadium, with swimming at the Barnet Copthall Stadium. During these days, a group of young people of an age between 9 and 21 will compete at various sports in a coral feast of sport, a good, loved way to be together and make new friends.

The number of participants goes up at every edition, and in the recent ones there have been over 400 contestants, with great satisfaction of those involved, who put a lot of effort and energy in organising this great event.

This year will also be an occasion to celebrate sport and friendship, just as it was conceived thirty years ago by the youth group who founded OGI, all twenty year olds and all very enthusiastic.

"It was also important to realise that the more we mixed with non-Italians, the better we shall be understood and this was the way that we were able to preserve many of the Italian customs and traditions that most of us are still fond of", we read in the document that Vittorio wrote.

At the beginning, when the Olympic Games were launched, people hoped they could become a tradition to repeat every two years: and it did actually happen.

Children and parents all really appreciate these three days of sport, and this edition will be, again, a way to have fun, be together, compete and make new friendships.

The event opens on Saturday morning with a big parade of all the English teams taking part. Then the young people will compete in

sports like football, swimming, long jump, high jump, relay races, 50, 100, 200, 400 meters run. A show not to be missed.

For further information: www.ogi-olympics.co.uk