

*Peter Stoyle was head of the British Schools, Montevideo, Uruguay when it became the first school to offer the IB Diploma Programme in the southern hemisphere in January 1971.*

*Susie Stoyle was the DP Manager and CAS Supervisor for IBLA from 1985 until 2001.*

### **Recollections of Peter and Susie Stoyle**

The first period of involvement with IBO as the only school in the southern hemisphere was marked by extreme isolation and a sense of distance from the centre of development; it brought with it the need to be in informal contact with IBO since there were no conferences or workshops beyond the consultative meetings of the early 1970s, dominated by the enthusiasm and commitment of founders Alec Peterson and Gérard Renaud, then Director General and Director of the Geneva office respectively. A short period of voluntary service at IBO at 12 chemin Rieu, Geneva was one means of significant contact in those early days. Then there was sustained contact with the only two schools in the region which joined in the mid-1970s: the Colombo-Británico in Cali (Colombia) and St Catherine's School in Buenos Aires. Another activity in those early days was the effort made to get the IB diploma recognized, successful in Uruguay as early as 1973 but not so in Argentina until the early 1980s.

On leaving his position as headmaster of the British Schools, Montevideo, Peter Stoyle, then a school representative on the recently expanded Council of Foundation, undertook further voluntary work at the request of Alec Peterson. Its main focus was the first joint grand tour of Latin America in June 1978 on behalf of IBO and UWC. The main aim for IBO was to contact schools which had expressed interest in the IB diploma programme within the stated objective of an IB school in each capital city. In this respect the tour was a dismal failure, since not a single school visited joined in the short term, and the only one to do so, the American School in Belo Horizonte (Brazil), was not part of the itinerary. By early 1980, however, three bilingual schools, in Bogotá, Mexico City and Sao Paulo, had expressed interest, and joined in the course of that year. That same year IBO appointed Peter Stoyle as regional representative in Latin America and the process of recruitment continued, a slow and painful business, which led to the membership of 15 schools by 1982, located in Argentina (1), Brazil (4), Chile (3), Colombia (3), Ecuador (1), El Salvador (1), Mexico (1) and Uruguay (1). Slow progress was being made with recognition, with most of this having to do with government approval as a baccalaureate alternative - hardly any universities gave any kind of admission or credit.

At this point, IBO took the plunge and started up the IBLA regional office in 1982, which for the first 12 years operated from our home on the beautiful campus of St George's College, Buenos Aires. A part-time secretary was appointed. The office proper was a small room of about six square metres, but the reception area was the living room, the photocopier was housed in the utility room, and there were filing cabinets in the master bedroom! Methods of communication were primitive by today's standards: the only country outside Argentina which could be dialed direct was Uruguay, messages were sent by telex relayed by telephone to a helpful office in downtown Buenos Aires and a heavy green IBM typewriter completed the office inventory at the time. Some years later, before

the move to St. Andrew's Scots School on the other side of town, IBO financed the building of an office extension to the house which tripled the office space available and heralded the arrival of the first fax and computer in 1990.

There were a number of significant events in the 1980s which led to considerable expansion and the beginnings of recognition on a broader basis. The first was the initiation of the November examination session for just two schools in 1982 and the adoption of Spanish as an examination language at the same time. Another important event in September 1982 was the Cocoyoc Conference in Mexico which led to official IB recognition in that country, the recruitment of the first state school in the region and the basis for strong growth there. The first workshops and regional conferences also date from the early 80s. The first World Heads Conference in Latin America took place in Quito in February 1985 and led to the recruitment of a large number of schools in that city which can still boast the highest density of IB schools in terms of population! Great impetus was given in Argentina by a presentation of the IB, and progress to date in the country, at a local theatre on Black Monday in October 1987; as a result of this meeting the number of schools in the country tripled within a couple of years.

It would be impossible to chart the progress of IBLA without acknowledgement of the remarkable voluntary service rendered by IBLA schools and local associations in general and certain individuals in particular: Mabel Mazzini in Argentina, Elisabeth Fox in Chile, Jack Cushnan in Colombia, Leonard Mayer in Mexico and Jim Norbury in Peru all made enormous contributions to the work of the office. The constant support and frequent visits to the region by Director General Roger Peel also made a huge impact on the development of the programme in Latin America.

The work undertaken by the regional office in these years included a number of tasks which have since been centralized: the sale of publications, the translation of IB guides into Spanish, the recruitment of assistant examiners and oral examiners, even the distribution of question papers to schools in Buenos Aires prepared on our dining room table! But above all there was a pioneer spirit and a sense of commitment and enthusiasm which carried the office through the difficult days of the 1980s and laid the basis for the future progress and expansion which continues to this day. One of our important priorities in a region where there are vast social differences, with IB schools tending to represent the more privileged sectors of society, was the CAS element which allowed IB students to obtain a broader and more realistic view of the countries in which they were living and develop a commitment to working actively for those less fortunate than themselves.

Peter Stoye, IBLA Regional Director, 1982-2000

Susie Stoye, IBLA DP Manager and CAS Supervisor, 1985-2001