Jack Golson 1990 - 1994

Jack Golson, WAC President from the second Congress in Barquisimeto in September 1990 to the third in New Delhi in December 1994, was born in England in 1926.

He studied history and archaeology at Cambridge University. In 1954 he took up a lectureship in archaeology in New Zealand in the young Department of Anthropology at the University of Auckland, where he carried out research on the prehistory of New Zealand and the islands of the tropical South Pacific. In 1961 he moved to the Department of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, which was just moving into the archaeological field. Here he came to head a Department of Prehistory carrying out archaeological research in Australia, New Guinea and the nearer islands of the southwest Pacific, with his own fieldwork taking place in Papua New Guinea. He was due for retirement at the end of 1991, and this made it possible for him to agree to being nominated for the WAC Presidency in 1990.

WAC was less than four years old at the time and was still in the process of defining its aims and objectives and equipping itself with the structure and the constitution to carry them out. Golson's aim and hope was for a few quiet years of consolidation for this to be achieved. Important steps in this direction were taken at meetings of the WAC Executive in Nairobi in January 1993 on the eve of an InterCongress in Mombasa, and at a business meeting of the general membership during it.

During its Nairobi meetings the Executive received the first intimation of future problems for WAC flowing from the destruction of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya, particularly in the light of the fact that the next WAC Congress was to be held in New Delhi within two year's time. The issue came to dominate the planning and proceedings of that Congress.