



Games Makers Peter Hale and Mary Hogben.

The Games Makers

By Nick Young

Few East Finchley residents can have got closer to the Olympics than Mary Hogben and Peter Hales of Heath View, who were part of the 70,000-strong army of volunteers who did so much to make it a success. "It's not going to happen again in our lifetimes, so I thought I had to get involved," said Peter. When LOCOG asked for volunteers three years ago, he and Mary were quick to answer.

As Games Makers, they worked ten-hour shifts. Mary, who helped the Army with the airport-style security at the Olympic Park, did eleven days, while Peter did nine days during the Games as well as rehearsals for the opening ceremony, where he marshalled athletes towards the stadium.

A major highlight was walking through the Park after

their shifts. Mary and Peter are architects, and were impressed by the landscaping and buildings (both temporary and permanent) from a professional perspective, saying that the Park has an amazing "wow" factor.

The enthusiasm of the volunteers, who came from all over Britain, was infectious. "I felt that throughout the whole site, everybody was really in festive

mood," says Peter.

In the Park, they showed people the way to seats, toilets and water fountains and, wearing their uniforms on their journeys there, they were often asked for directions. Mary showed some people a quicker route than they were planning, but says, "A lot of people just wanted to say thank you."

Hosting an Olympic volunteer

By Diana Cormack

"You're not going to have a complete stranger staying with you for three weeks!" was one of the comments when we told friends of our Olympic plans. To be honest, our first thought had been to let the house and earn a lot of money. Then we wondered about letting out the loft extension and earning less money. But when we heard about the Herts 2012 scheme of hosting guests free of charge, we knew that was more in keeping with the Olympic spirit.

The idea was to host visitors connected to the Games (from the Commonwealth only) who would find the cost of staying here prohibitive. We were allocated Christine Spiliopoulos, an experienced volunteer who would be paying her own fare from Australia and taking time off work to come to London. Emails and photos were exchanged well beforehand so we could get to know something about each other. I was relieved to learn that Christine had helped at the Athens, Sydney and Beijing Olympics, so would be mature enough for me not to worry about her being alone in a strange city.

Fourteen-hour day

Christine was kept pretty busy, leaving here at 7.45am and returning around fourteen hours later, but managed to

pack in a lot of sight seeing in what little spare time she had. She worked from a hotel in Kensington for the Sydney-based Kingdom Sports Group, a ticketing agent for thirty-three countries mainly in Africa and Asia. As well as allocating tickets, she supplied outfits to athletes, uniforms to some Olympic committees and carried out a number of event management duties involving accommodation and hospitality packs. Christine also had to meet and greet VIPs, escort them to events, hospitality venues and even shopping.

Our knowledge of a variety of Olympic arrangements increased during the three weeks she was with us. The time flew by and we all enjoyed the experience. It is something we would definitely do again.

When the circus came to town

By Daphne Chamberlain

When the circus came to town, it must have been rather like the arrival of the Torch. That's not an original thought: I heard it on the radio, but isn't it true? There we were, crowding out North Finchley, all smiles and excitement, waiting for the procession. 100-odd years ago the elephants would have led it. Now it was the Coca Cola van and the trick cyclists (though maybe they were there 100-odd years ago as well).

Michael Johnson heard Ken Dodd's "Happiness" in the television studio, and asked where he could get it. I went to the USA/Argentina basketball semi-final, and I don't even like the game. The tickets were the only ones we could get, and I'm still not keen, but loved the experience.

Happiness and trying new things. That was what it was

about, but I do have two questions. Did any of you get goose-bumps and/or feel the hairs

standing up on your neck? I didn't, but I am wondering about all those commentators who did.



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