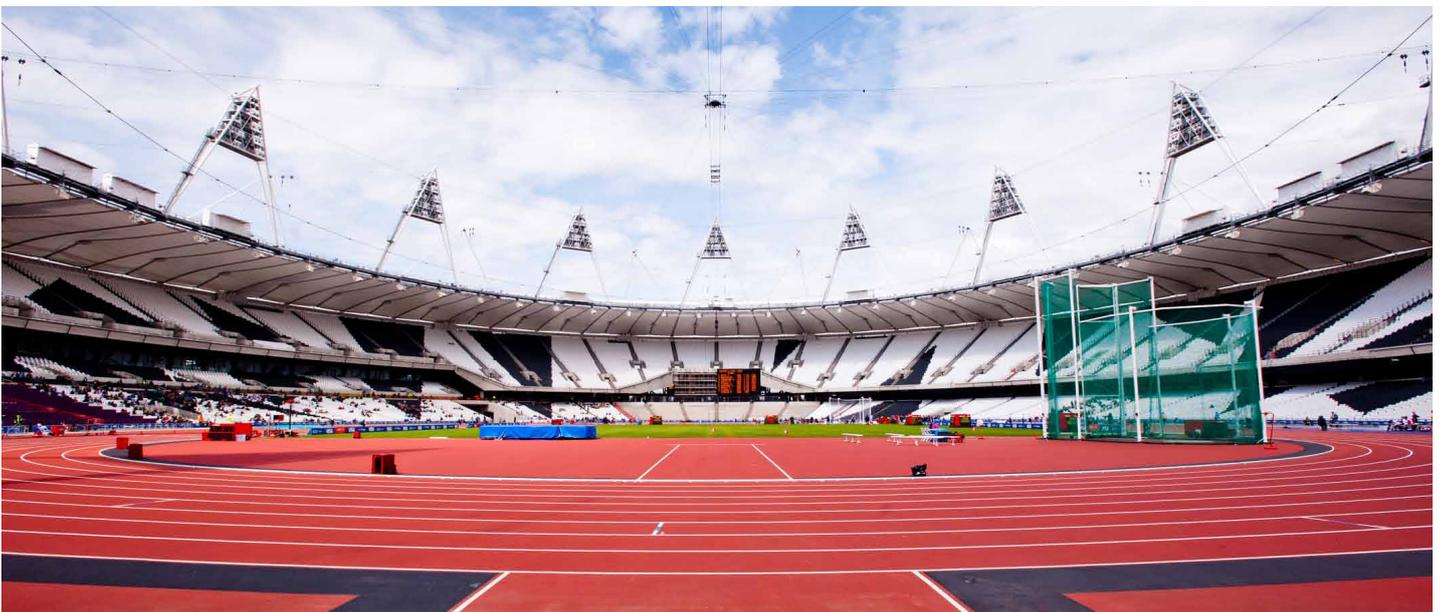


Hackney CIRCUIT

Reflections on the 2012 Games

Produced as part of Hackney Museum's Mapping the Change Programme 2012

The Legacy Issue



Legacy is an aspiration and a goal that made its mark during the seven years leading up to the 2012 Games. From health and diversity to regeneration and job creation the expectations now the Games are over are admirable, though the reality is still waiting in the wings.

Since 2010 local people in Hackney have been building their own community legacy through the Mapping the Change Journalism Programme by generating stories on the impact of the Olympic development on their everyday lives. As one of the six host boroughs, Hackney has undergone great change with more to come.

Alongside learning basic journalism skills, participants on the programme have been supported to pursue and shape the ideas they are passionate about. While writing their stories they were very aware they would be leaving a footprint for Hackney residents (and visitors) to see - now and in the future.

As the third and final edition of Hackney

While writing their stories they were very aware they would be leaving a footprint for Hackney residents (and visitors) to see - now and in the future.

Circuit, we felt it would be beneficial to look beyond the Games at the possibilities being created. **Natalie Gormally** wonders what Hackney's legacy blueprint would look like with a focus on youth and employment, regeneration, community engagement and health and wellbeing. The less obvious role of

the 2012 Games in raising awareness of sexual health among young people is examined by **Abiola Olanipekun**.

Inspired by the introduction of health parks for older people in Spain, China and the US, **Cathy Aymer** looks at what is happening in the UK while **Nancy McCarthy** profiles Eton Misson Rowing Club, which has been training rowers in Hackney for over 127 years.

Sharon Boulwood uses the Olympic concept of nationhood to develop her family tree, and discovers links to two host boroughs. Finally we ask **four participants** who contributed to the first two issues of Hackney Circuit to highlight how being on the programme has impacted on their lives.

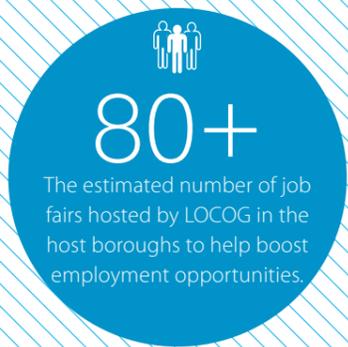
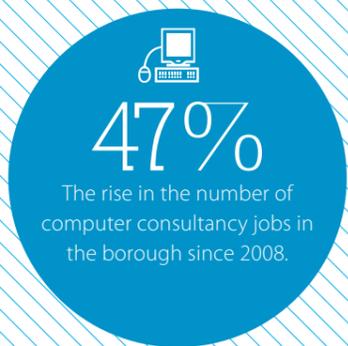
We hope that all the stories generated by 24 people for three publications, spanning more than two years, makes a positive difference to how future generations view Hackney.

By Joy Francis

A blueprint for change?

As one of the six host boroughs for the summer 2012 Games, Hackney was part of a momentous celebration that captured the heart and minds of people from across the globe. But what happens now the party is over? **Natalie Gormally** selects four key legacy areas and explores their potential.

Over the last seven years significant investments have been made in Hackney from new sporting facilities to major transport links. However, a key requirement of the 2012 Games is to leave a lasting and positive legacy, as highlighted in the original London bid. This ideal outcome isn't guaranteed. Based on past experience in other host countries, the Games have been occasionally tainted by post event images of derelict stadiums or stories of unrecoverable debt. Sydney in 2000 and Athens in 2004 are two notable examples. Yet cities such as Barcelona have shown what is possible with a sustainable legacy and economic growth. With Hackney undergoing a process of Olympic-led regeneration since 2005, the question looming is what will be the borough's legacy blueprint?



Youth and employment

Hackney is a young borough with an estimated 2,044 residents falling into the 18 to 24 age bracket. Before the Games there was a lot of activity around job creation. Since 2011 the numbers of 18 to 24 year olds claiming benefit for over six months has risen by 19 per cent. The figure for those aged 24 and under who have been claiming for more than 12 months is up 163 per cent, which is the difference between 120 young people and 350 young people in 2012. The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) held over 80 job fairs, attended by thousands of people looking for careers advice, training, apprenticeships and volunteering positions. Most of these jobs came to an end in September 2012.

What are the long term employment prospects for young people in Hackney in the wake of the 2012 Games?

Diane Abbott, MP for Hackney and Stoke Newington, said: "The 2012 Games was won on a promise to radically transform the economic landscape of east London, but there are less highly skilled jobs than was hoped for. We need to do more to link opportunities to local residents with real leadership on employer-led job creation. Hackney residents need to be in line for the long term benefits." There are some encouraging signs. Since 2008 Hackney has seen a 47 per cent rise in computer consultancy jobs, a 61 per cent increase in data processing jobs and a 26 per cent rise in engineering-related scientific and technical consulting. During the Games 2,000 Hackney residents secured jobs, mostly short term. When announcing the jobs boost in May 2012, the Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: "There are thousands of people in the host boroughs getting jobs. They will have on their CVs an Olympic qualification for the rest of their lives and there is no doubt it will lead to long term employment."

Regeneration

The bid for the London 2012 Games was based on a plan to regenerate parts of east London.

In November 2009, the six host boroughs published the Strategic Regeneration Framework, which set out an ambitious vision for them to have the same social and economic chances as their more affluent London neighbours.

What is the long term vision for Hackney's regeneration?

Since London won the bid to host the Games, Hackney has undergone strong infrastructure development. Transport improvements, such as the East London Line, have made the borough more accessible.

There are also social housing projects such as Woodberry Down, which is part of Hackney Council's regeneration programme.

Plans are afoot to turn the Olympic site into the largest urban park, with state-of-the-art sports buildings and thousands of new homes.

The Olympic Media Centre, which will be taken over by iCITY, could bring an additional 7,000 jobs into the area.

A spokesperson for Hackney Council said: "As a host borough for the 2012 Games, we are seizing this opportunity for Hackney to secure the best legacy possible for our residents, businesses and environment. There are major opportunities for businesses and enterprise, especially with a new neighbourhood in the east of the borough."

"Plans for the Media Centre are to also provide a lasting employment legacy and the growth of local enterprise and investment."

That said there is still some concern over how far residents and local businesses will benefit from the regeneration, which was also flagged up in a 2010 report by the Greater London Assembly Economic Development, Culture and Sport and Tourism Committee.

Liberal Democrat Dee Doocey, committee chair at that time, said: "It is still unclear whether local people will get their fair share of the new housing compared with affluent incomers."

Community engagement

Hackney is a vibrant borough, well known for both its diverse and creative communities. Over 100 languages are spoken in the borough and a history of multiculturalism has created a strong sense of community. A growing number of voluntary and community sector organisations and groups regularly come together on common issues, interests or identities.

How far have Hackney residents been able to influence the changes taking place in the borough as a result of the 2012 Games?

Rikki Butler, London 2012's community engagement lead, said the London Legacy Development Corporation has also been working closely with them and the community since 2007. Butler said: "For regeneration to be successful, a sense of ownership among local communities is essential."

Butler added: "We have engaged with the community through a number of means, from making a 24/7 hotline available to delivering a quarterly newsletter. We introduced a tour programme, where local residents were allowed access to the Olympic Park in its development, after they expressed their concerns."

The Olympic Park is one example of the community having an ongoing and hands on involvement in the area's legacy. For many, it has provided a unique opportunity to have their opinions listened to.

But for a few locals, the communication could still be better. Hackney Wick resident, Abdul Thorly-Bansura, added: "They [Hackney Council] tell us what is happening, but after the decision has been made. I don't feel I can change anything. Decisions should be made at a grass roots level, through the estates and neighbourhoods."

A LOCOG spokesperson confirmed that these concerns will be taken on board. "London 2012 and the London Legacy Development Organisation Corporation are working closely together to ensure the [community] engagement continues after the Games."

Health and wellbeing

The 2012 Games is the first to have stated aims to increase participation in physical activity and improve health. The government has set a target of getting 2m people more active during 2012.

Wellbeing is a broad cross cutting theme with links to a range of areas, such as living standards, open spaces, physical activity and community.

Much of the strategic focus has been on providing healthier lifestyle opportunities through the Olympic Park and venues.

Games sponsors, including Cadbury's, have pumped over £1m into sporting programmes, and many charities are associating their programmes with the 2012 Games wellbeing aim.

Now the Games are finished, will this momentum of change be sustainable?

The 2011 Healthy Urban Planning Practice for the Olympic Legacy Masterplan Framework explains how changes and improvements can be made over the next 20 years to reduce the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes.

Air quality, access to travel, healthy food and work and climate change are just a few of the areas covered.

Katie Williams, head of occupational therapy at East London NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The proximity of the London 2012 Olympics has been an opportunity to focus on exercise and group activities with mental health service users."

She added: "These activities will assist them in developing long term and hopefully lifelong strategies to manage their personal wellbeing through exercise and contact with others through exercise."

Melissa Bliss of CoolTan Arts, a mental health and arts charity, said: "We know that wellbeing can be enhanced through creativity, meeting new people, developing relationships, as well as physical activity. We used the Olympics and the Paralympics to highlight our cause and the public Legacy Walks we did around Hackney and the Olympic Park."

"We are hoping that participation in CoolTan activities and the support of our charity will continue after the Games."

Playing it safe



Most people associate dedicated athletes and super human sporting prowess with the Olympic and Paralympic Games. What isn't usually connected to the event is the role of raising awareness of sexual health among young people. Before the Games **Abiola Olanipekun** spoke to young people and sexual health professionals about this responsibility and found quite mixed reviews.

Celebrations often go hand in hand with the Olympics and Paralympics. In the lead up to the 2012 Games, Hackney hosted many festivals. With festivals come young people, access to alcohol, lower inhibitions and the risk of unprotected sex. Making a connection between the sexual health of young people and the Games may seem a bit leftfield, but not according to the Sexual Health for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Sexual Health Communications Strategy.

A duty

The document states that "the Games offer an opportunity to engage with... young people" about sexual health. More tellingly, the strategy claims that there is "a duty" to engage with young people "during this high profile time".

Sexual health and the Games are not mutually exclusive. During the Athens Games in 2004, 130,000 condoms were

handed out to athletes while four years later 100,000 were distributed in Beijing. This year, Durex provided free condoms to athletes, along with information about safe sex. The International Olympic Committee ran HIV and Aids information campaigns for athletes in the Olympic Village.

Urgent attention

With health and wellbeing being strong themes in the run up to the Games, there was a great opportunity to raise awareness of sexual health among young people to inspire a positive legacy. And there are many good reasons to give it urgent attention.

According to the Family Planning Association and the National Children's Bureau, young people under 25 have the highest rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the UK. The peak age for an STI in women is between 19 and 20 years. In men, it is between 20 and 23 years.

In 2009, a poll of over 2,000 adults

discovered that 92 per cent found it hard to name the 15 types of contraception available to them. So imagine what the findings would be like for young people?

Figures released by the Department of Health in June 2012 show that in 2010 Hackney had the second highest rate of STI diagnoses (after Lambeth), at more than 2,000 per 100,000 members of the public.

Health professionals

Many professionals are working hard to make young people more aware of their sexual health. Before the Games we spoke to some sexual health professionals to get their views.

David Wright, an outreach sexual health worker based in Hackney with a special interest in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues, said: "I don't see the Olympic and Paralympic Games having an impact on young people's sexual health inside or outside of Hackney unless there is a safer sex message within the [overall] health promotion."

He believed that there should be "more national campaigns on preventing STIs, including public information films on prime time TV as well as better advertising on available services and where young people can access free advice and condoms".

Lisa Bartlett, head of income generation at Brook, a national young people's sexual health charity, agreed that the 2012 Games "could potentially impact" on young people's sexual health as there would be an influx of visitors from across the world.

Bartlett stressed the importance of young people being conscious of the need to use a condom every time they have sex, "because condoms are the only form of contraception to protect against both unplanned pregnancy and STIs".

Short-sighted

With funding cuts in the public sector, health promotion is seen as a vulnerable area. She said that any cuts to sexual health services would be short-sighted. "If you invest in contraception services you actually save money. For every £1 you spend on contraception, £12.50 is actually saved. We know that when access to education and services is restricted, this impacts on [young] people's sexual health and wellbeing," Bartlett added.

So did young people feel the Games would provide an opportunity to help them become more aware of

their sexual health? Rita, a 25 year old website designer who works in Hackney, believed that such a big event would have extensive medical resources on hand to deal with any eventuality.

Individual choice

"I don't see why the Games should increase or decrease the attention young people pay towards looking after their sexual health. But with all the festivities and the alcohol at these events they could lead to reckless behaviour, including not practising safer sex."

Making a connection between the sexual health of young people and the Games may seem a bit leftfield, but not according to the Sexual Health for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Sexual Health Communications Strategy.

Carl, 22, a university student from Stoke Newington, admitted that he hadn't really thought about the issue and that young people "may be missing something important". While 19 year old Thomas, a college student from Haggerston, added: "I believe it all boils down to individual choice. It is up to the individual to have safer sex, not the event."

Although most of the young people approached on this topic didn't believe the 2012 Games would have a profound impact on their sexual health, there seemed to be a general consensus that it could heighten the risk factors.

Only time will tell whether the sexual health strategy for the Olympic and Paralympic Games has made a positive difference to young people.

For more information visit:

www.brook.org.uk
www.sho-me.nhs.uk

Sexual health at Games time

The three main themes that form the foundation for the planning and promotion of sexual health services during the Games were:

Resilience

Safeguarding sexual health services during the Games, ensuring lower cost interventions and minimising the call upon NHS resources.

Transformation

Using the development of resilience to transform services and relationships between partners and stakeholders for lasting a benefit in line with NHS Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention principles.

Engagement

Maximising public participation, particularly from young people and raising awareness of personal responsibility and positive behavioural changes to ensure good sexual health.

Source: MBARC

Sexual health tips

1. Always use a condom to protect against unwanted pregnancies and STIs.
2. Always have regular sexual health screenings so you can protect not only yourself but anyone else you have sex with. This is because many STIs don't show any symptoms, which is why it is vital that you regularly get checked if you are sexually active.
3. If you have recently been diagnosed with an infection, don't have sex again until you have been given the all clear by a medical professional.
4. Always finish any course of treatment you are given to clear the infection. Never stop just because the symptoms have gone. Unless it is fully treated, it may return.
5. If you use a clinic, everything will be confidential.

Source: www.eefo.net

Park life



Dolores Norton, 72, is a regular user of the exercise equipment for adults in Hyde Park.

With an ageing population, finding creative solutions to help keep older people active and well is essential. **Cathy Aymer** reports on the benefits of parks tailored for older people as a valuable post 2012 Games legacy.

A health legacy was an integral part of the 2012 Games Olympic bid. A quick glance at the website of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games shows a focus on young people's

participation in sport and fitness.

Yet with an increasing number of older people living longer, I have begun to think about what this legacy might mean for the health and wellbeing of people aged 55 plus.

Figures published by the Office of National Statistics from the 2011 census data shows that the average age of the population in England and Wales is 38 for men and 40 for women whereas in 1911 it was 25.

In addition, the percentage of the population aged 65 and over is the highest seen in any census at 16.4 per cent. This means that one in six people in the population is 65 and over.

Not ignored

Despite the attention given to young people during the Games, older people weren't ignored. There are many instances of older

people being engaged such as taking part in the Olympic torch relay, performing during the Cultural Olympiad and being volunteers.

Recent research in the medical journal *The Lancet* suggests that a lack of exercise accounts for a large number of premature deaths worldwide, and implies that this situation is more dangerous than smoking or obesity. Although Hackney has excellent gym facilities, as an older person I have noticed that these facilities are mainly used by younger people. Is this the case borough-wide?

A Hackney Council spokesperson said: "The council does a lot to encourage everyone, including the over 50s, to get involved with sport activity. We have the annual Wellness Games, which is a popular over-50s programme."

New Age Games

The council also runs the New Age Games, which is open to Hackney residents age 50 and above. "The aim of the Games is to encourage older people to try out new sports such as archery, swimming, aerobics and darts," the council spokesperson added.

There is the possibility that older people feel too intimidated to make use of these facilities, which raises the question of how the health legacy of the Games will impact on the everyday lives of the older population.

This is an important question as health and wellbeing is not only about fitness and activity, but about maintaining social contacts and reducing isolation. The picture on the ground is mixed.

Age UK promotes fitness, exercise and wellbeing for older people while the Mayor of London's Sports Legacy Fund recognises the needs of disabled people, but not specifically older people. It seems as if a good opportunity for promoting health and wellbeing for older people across London is at risk of being missed.

Developments

Across the pond there are some encouraging developments. The World Health Organisation is thinking about the older population in terms of the allocation of Age Friendly Cities. New York has received

this status in the US. In the UK, Manchester has made a pledge to become one.

The criteria used are fairly straightforward, including how easy it is to walk around the city, whether ample seating is provided for people to rest and the efficient provision of public toilets.

On a recent visit to Andalusia in Spain, I discovered something very exciting. In every village, often situated near to a children's playground, there was an outdoor park with exercise facilities for older people. The



exercise machines were safe and easy for older people to use. In fact, in the early evening, older people would go for a walk and spend time on the equipment.

Socialising

Not only were they getting invaluable exercise, it was also an opportunity to gather and gossip. The ability to maintain social contacts and combat isolation was inspiring. Every day during my holiday I set aside time to go to the "Healthy Park" to exercise and hang out with the older folk.

It is true that the hot weather in Andalusia is conducive to outdoor activities. However it got me wondering how these healthy parks might be adapted for a British climate. After all children's playgrounds are exposed to the vagaries of our weather. Also, in Andalusia, the parks are highly respected by local people and are rarely vandalised.

These so-called playgrounds for seniors are gaining popularity internationally with

parks in China, Japan, Germany, Croatia and the US. In 2010, one such playground was opened in Hyde Park, London. This followed on from the first UK park for older people which opened in Manchester in 2008.

Hyde Park

On a very sunny Sunday morning I head to Hyde Park to take a look at the older people's playground. Chris Norton aged 70 and his wife Dolores, 72, who both live in sheltered accommodation in

An added benefit... is that younger people's attitudes towards older people would have the chance to shift in a positive direction by seeing them exercising.

Kensington and Chelsea, are regular users.

Chris says: "We read about the park a year ago and started coming. At that time we thought that there were too many kids using the equipment. They should make it clearer that it is for older people."

Dolores, who is using the cross trainer, adds: "I would like to come more often. I have recommended it to other people where I live but they haven't taken it up." She admits that the park "is a hidden away and a bit hard to find," which is also a problem.

Unclear branding

It is understandable why young people benefit from the exercise machines as the signs state that you must be 15 and over to use them. While this ensures that very young children do not use the equipment, it doesn't give a clear enough message of being specifically targeted at older people.

The cost of a seniors' playground is estimated at £50,000. Hyde Park is one of

London's eight Royal Parks and is situated in a wealthy London borough. What then is the likelihood of one being launched in any of the six Olympic host boroughs?

In Abbotts Park, Walthamstow, outdoor gym equipment is provided, but this is mainly for teenagers. Similarly Mabley Green in Hackney has some outdoor gym equipment, but this is non-specific to older people.

There is also the likelihood that older UK residents are not so used to the outdoor life. Activities for them are usually provided in day



centres with some offering a range of fitness activities. Staff need to be encouraged to take older people out of the centres to go walking to increase their chances of meeting other people of their age and experience.

Outdoor options

An added benefit of this approach is that younger people's attitudes towards older people would have the chance to shift in a positive direction by seeing them exercising and enjoying themselves.

Meanwhile I dream of having access to a park for older people on Stoke Newington Common. Well used by people of all ages, there is a children's playground, impromptu football matches and cricket matches. People walk their dogs or wander around at a snail's pace.

In my fantasy there are older people on exercise equipment waving as people pass by. Hopefully, in my lifetime, this will become a reality.

Back to the future

The impressive arenas built for the Olympic and Paralympic Games are expected to inspire local people to be part of an important sporting legacy. Despite being a worthy goal, **Nancy McCarthy** considers the hidden legacy of a long established sporting facility in Hackney with a trip to Eton Mission Rowing Club.

Creating a local sporting legacy to exist after the Games was always a key aim of the organisers.

In the final presentation before the London bid was won in 2005, both Seb Coe, chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee, and former London Mayor Ken Livingstone stated that the regeneration of east London would include “sport as an integral part of everyday life”.

In November 2010 Jenny Price, chief executive of Sport England, declared: “We can’t all be Olympians or Paralympians, but with great local facilities, inspirational sports leaders on the ground and sporting challenges to suit everyone, we can all be part of the mass participation legacy of the Games.”

Motivate residents

Today the expensive Olympic sporting arenas are expected to motivate communities to be more engaged in sporting activities, now the Games are over, as part of a community legacy.

When you consider the original meaning of the term “legacy” (something inherited from past generations), the future of longstanding Hackney-based sporting venues comes into question.

Eton Mission Rowing Club falls into this category. One of Hackney’s oldest sporting venues it has been training local rowers on the River Lea for 127 years.



Rowers get ready for a training session.



Eton Mission boathouse.



Robert Hall is proud of Eton Mission’s long history.

As the club is located on the banks of Hackney Cut, which is directly opposite the Olympic Media Centre, this means that plans for a lasting legacy in Hackney post Games are having an enormous impact on the club and its rowers.

When it was first founded in 1885, the boats used to be stored in St Mary of Eton Church before a boathouse was built close by for them in 1911. Twenty-five years later Eton Mission moved to a bigger clubhouse further along the river on Wallis Road in Hackney Wick, which is where they are based today.

Proud history

Robert Hall, a senior member of the club, is steeped in the club’s impressive sporting legacy and is full of pride at its long history. “In 1928 there were over 100 members,” he says. “You can go through the archives and see all the club’s racing details, and everything else that was going on.”

The walls of the clubhouse are covered with old photographs, newspaper articles and awards dating back to when the club was first founded. Men with old fashioned haircuts and unfamiliar clothing pose seriously in front of the camera, oars held aloft.

Hall’s family association with the club is also a long one. “I’ve been coming down here since I was about eight,” he says with a smile. Before that his father and his uncles had rowed at Eton Mission.

Despite being slightly damaged in the bombing of Hackney Wick during the Blitz, the club continued to thrive. After WWII, local swimmers used the clubhouse for a while – even holding a swimming competition on Christmas Day for a few years.



Local impact

As the club is located on the banks of Hackney Cut, which is directly opposite the Olympic Media Centre, this means that plans for a lasting legacy in Hackney post Games are having an enormous impact on the club and its rowers.

To ensure that Hackney Wick and local residents are well connected to the Olympic Media Centre, the Olympic Park Legacy Company is building a number of bridges across the Hackney Cut, which will link Hackney Wick to the Olympic Park. One of these bridges has been built on land that once belonged to Eton Mission Rowing Club, but was taken over under a compulsory purchase order (CPO) issued by the Olympic Delivery Authority.

Setback

A CPO is a legal way for land or buildings to be taken from an owner without their consent, if it is considered necessary for the greater good. A Hackney Council spokesperson told Hackney Circuit that the new bridge was designed to “improve connectivity between the Olympic Park and the rest of Hackney”. They added that “the council is at the heart of the Tech City initiative, which embraces the Media Centres and the huge inward investment plans for Hackney Wick”.

The loss of this land has meant that the club has had to call a halt to its plans to expand and improve its changing rooms. It has also left the club without any space alongside its boatshed to maintain its boats or with enough shore to launch four or eight man boats.

Club membership has also dwindled.

One of Hackney’s oldest sporting venues Eton Mission has been training local rowers on the River Lea for 127 years.

The remaining 20 or so members who want to train on the longer boats currently row from a temporary site in the Docklands, which is not ideal because of the strong winds on the River Thames.

New future

Despite this setback, Hall says that Eton Mission plans to expand. “The Olympic work in this area has attracted more people,” he says. “I’ve had three enquiries today about

coming down here and rowing, but I’ve had to email them to say that we can’t accommodate them at the moment because we can’t get the boats out onto the water.”

Eton Mission Rowing Club wants to build on its strong sporting legacy by building better facilities and attracting new members, which reflects the aspirations set out by Sport England and the Olympic and Paralympic organisers.

Although, at first, Eton Mission’s important history seemed under threat, it is now in a position to create a more exciting future.

Eton Mission Rowing Club

Fact File

- Eton Mission Rowing Club gets its name from a charitable mission set up in the East End of London by the famous public school Eton College.
- As well as founding the St Mary of Eton Church, Old Etonians associated with the mission also founded Eton Manor Boys’ Club in Hackney, which ran many different sports and social clubs for local boys until the late 1960s.
- In 1923 four old Etonians bought 30 acres of land opposite Hackney Marshes to build a large sports and recreation ground for Eton Manor Boys’ Club. The sports ground had nine football pitches, two rugby pitches, a cricket pitch, six tennis courts, a squash court, a running track, a bowling green and a swimming plunge pool.
- Eton Manor sports ground is now part of the Olympic Park and hosted the wheelchair tennis events at the Paralympics.
- In addition to Eton Mission Rowing Club, three other sports clubs associated with the mission still operate in London. They are Eton Manor Rugby Club in Wanstead, Eton Manor Athletics Club in Leyton and Eton Manor Football Club in Dagenham.

Family ties

Researching your family history isn't an easy task and takes time, money and patience with no guarantee of success. **Sharon Boulwood** decided to take the plunge while on the Mapping the Change course to honour her grandmother's memory. What she discovered not only links her family to two Olympic host boroughs, but another culture and country.

Roger Blitz, leisure industries correspondent at the Financial Times, recently told students on the Mapping the Change Journalism Programme that the 2012 Games is creating "nationhood". A space where athletes and spectators feel emotionally connected to the event through their national heritage.

I too have made a nationhood connection while undertaking this 2012 Games-related journalism course. In my case it is the emotional connection to my family, spanning centuries and covering two host boroughs – Hackney and Waltham Forest.

Memories

My journey into researching my family history started in Waltham Forest where I was born. I was lucky enough to live close to all my grandparents in Walthamstow. The death of my last living grandparent prompted me to start my family research to help ease my grief and keep her memory alive. As I explored my maternal grandfather's side of the family what I discovered changed my perspective on nationhood and legacy.

My late grandfather's name was Joseph Charles Smith. I have always known that my grandfather was born in Bethnal Green, east London and that the family had moved to Walthamstow in north east London. With



Sharon Boulwood outside what used to be her great great great grandfather's pub in Scawfell Street, Hackney.

a common name like Smith I thought that any attempt to find a family connection would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. Thankfully my mother had kept my grandfather's birth and death certificates.

On his birth certificate I found that my great grandmother's name was Alice Mary Wocha, which was surprising as it didn't sound like an English name such as Brown or Smith. I wondered where this name originated from.

While trying to find the origin of the Wocha surname, I established that Alice's father (my great great grandfather) Edward Charles Wocha was born in 1871 in Hackney. This was my first family connection to Hackney, though I was still no closer to finding the origin of the surname.

The next surprise was that Edward's father (my great great great grandfather), whose name was George Jacob Wocha, was a "licensed victualler". In today's language he would be known as a pub landlord. He owned a pub called The Duke of Clarence, address 106 Scawfell Street, Hackney.

Family tragedy

Both George and his wife Sarah worked in the pub together and both died while struggling to make the pub a success. Sarah died first in August 1881. It may well be that George couldn't carry on without his wife as he died a month later in September, leaving three small children orphaned (one being Edward).

A probate advert in The London Gazette

dated 17 January 1882 requested that any persons owed money by George Jacob Wocha should come forward. The England and Wales National Probate Calendar Index of Wills and Administrations 1864-1914, confirms that George's personal estate and the care of his three small children was granted to his father George Jacob Wocha Snr.

Armed with this information, I visited Hackney Archives to see if they had any pictures of Scawfell Street in the 1880s, to give me an idea of what life was like at that time. The picture I found shows how much the street had changed. It was much longer back then and had many more houses on it.

This find inspired me to visit Scawfell Street to take in the road that my ancestors had worked from and lived in over 200 years ago. It felt quite emotional to know that both the building (now flats) and the street survived two World Wars and allowed me this opportunity to connect with my ancestors.

Unusual name

So what of the Wocha surname? I found other family members on the Ancestry.com website where I also discovered the origin of the Wocha surname. It seems that the Wocha family were silk weaving refugees from a little town called Luneray in France. They were forced to leave as a result of the revocation of the Edictes of Nantes 1685, which led to an exodus of Protestants.

The name was indirectly changed as Victorian Londoners regularly mixed up the sound of the 'V' and the 'W'. So Wocha inadvertently became Wocha. The name change doesn't stop there as my research has taken me to the French

Huguenot community in Whitechapel around 1699/1700 and the name Vautier.

After unearthing family links to Hackney and France, my research is now on the brink of taking me on another journey into possibly another country. Hopefully all this will leave me with an even deeper understanding of legacy.

www.hackney.gov.uk/ca-archives

Researching your family history

Top tips for beginners

- Speak to other family members to see if anyone has any birth, marriage or death certificates, or any other information or records to help you start building your family tree.
- Before you begin, gather as much information as you can about how to conduct family research. For advice on how to start a family tree look on the internet and go to your local library or archives. You can also find lists of societies and family research centres.
- Be cautious when you find people who may be family members as many previous generations with large families, and who lived close to each other, also shared the same name. Cross reference the name and addresses of the person you find to make sure you have the correct family member.
- Keep any relevant information you feel relates to your family. As with a jigsaw puzzle, some pieces may not seem to fit at the time, but will fall into place later.
- Never give up. Sometimes you come across false trails, wrong family connections and the most disheartening brick walls.
- It can be more expensive to make a request for certificates on family research websites, so make a reference of the certificate's details and order it through the General Register Office.
- Useful websites and places to help you research your family tree include Ancestry.com, Findmypast.co.uk and Rootschat.com. The main family history research centre is at the National Archives in Kew, London, but local libraries and archives are also useful.

SHARON BOULTWOOD Family History Research Timeline



The last word

Hackney residents, workers, students and volunteers are at the heart of the Mapping the Change Journalism Programme. They turned their passion for the borough and an interest in journalism into Hackney Circuit. As the programme comes to an end, we ask four graduates from the first two programmes to reveal where the learning has taken them.



"I remember coming across the advert for the Mapping the Change Journalism Programme and thought it sounded great as I had always wanted to learn about journalism. Doing the course locally was even better. With the changes in the borough as a result of the Olympic development, being part of an historical programme excited me. It was while researching my piece for the first ever Hackney Circuit that I discovered that my family had been in Hackney for five generations. This legacy encouraged me to start my family tree. Hopefully future generations will see how much Hackney changed in the run up to the 2012 Games and realise that they too can do great things."

Hyacinth Myers (Hackney Circuit 2010)



"The Mapping the Change Journalism Programme has changed my life. I want to thank the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) for all of its wonderful support during the programme, and two Paralympian swimmers, Chris Holmes and Hackney's own Dervis Konuralp. Their generosity enabled me to write a feature. Little did I know how brilliant the course would be and how quickly we would produce a newspaper. The newspaper's name - Hackney Circuit - was selected by all the participants. The question now is what will the legacy mean for Hackney people and businesses after the Games, especially disabled people?"

Ron Newman (Hackney Circuit 2010)



"Anything I could do using the media to promote Hackney as a great place for living, working and investing in was my driving force to apply for the Mapping the Change Journalism Programme. Looking back at copies of Hackney Circuit, it is clear they were written with a great deal of passion and understanding by local people, covering a variety of topics that affected the community at the time of writing. I found the course enjoyable for its well structured and varied activities. The opportunity to meet and learn from national journalists and speakers from LOCOG was a plus. The outcome for me was being able to bring my media skills up to date. I am now writing professionally."

Jane Tchan (Hackney Circuit 2011)



"I feel very lucky to have been accepted on to the Mapping the Change Journalism Programme, especially in relation to such an historical event like the 2012 Games. I have always been interested in journalism, but like many have never felt skilled enough to commit words to print for public consumption. The programme gave me a crash course in journalism, and provided me with the skills to feel comfortable writing. I am now working with a football website, producing news and editorials. I hope to start writing for The Guardian's social care website shortly. I doubt I would have been able to have done any of this had it not been for the course."

Keith Mahon (Hackney Circuit 2011)



Mapping the Change



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For more information visit:
www.hackney.gov.uk/mapping-the-change

Disclaimer

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