

Press Release  
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## London's Olympic history comes to life

*New website brings to life archives of rare photographs, newspaper articles, documents and ephemera of London's Olympic past*

Over 1,700 images of London's previous Olympic Games in 1908 and 1948, together with British Olympians and Paralympians throughout history, can be seen for the first time on a new website [www.winningendeavours.org](http://www.winningendeavours.org). The website includes many unseen images that have been taken from archival documents, newspapers, journals and ephemera currently in the care of the British Library, London Metropolitan Archives and 23 other archival repositories in London and the South East of England.

The project was led by Archives for London in partnership with London Metropolitan Archives and the British Library. It has been made possible by a funding grant of £49,400 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and is one of the National Council on Archives' Pace Setter projects.

Researchers, sports enthusiasts and the general public can see unique aspects of the first Olympics to be hosted by London in 1908; of the 'Austerity Games' of 1948, hosted by London in the years of rationing after World War II; of other Olympic Games which London has been involved with, and the participation of London athletes in sport in London outside the Olympic Games, all on the Winning Endeavours website.

Including some unseen photographs and documents of previous Olympic heroes, many of the items included online are being given a new lease of life through their upload on to the new website. With the inclusion of items from small archive repositories, Winning Endeavours will help the custodians of these sources to ensure that these resources are made available to a wide audience without jeopardising their future survival.

Unique items that can be seen include: photographs and souvenirs of the marathon from the 1908 games; programmes dating from 15 July 1908; a special Olympics Edition of the Picture Post from 14 August 1948 and photos of paralympians taking part in archery competitions, all providing a distinctive insight into the history of the Olympics in London and the South East.

Although most of the site deals with archival and newspaper sources, there are also a few artefacts shown among the items, including medals from the 1948 games, and a steward's medal from 1908.

Ed King, the British Library's Head of Newspaper Collections, commented: "The Winning Endeavours website provides an extraordinary and fascinating glimpse at the historic past of the Olympic Games in London. So much of our Olympic past has been cherished and looked after by archive repositories across London and the South-East and we are fortunate to be able to digitise many of these unique treasures and bring them together for the first time for the benefit of researchers and Olympic enthusiasts alike and hopefully introduce new audiences to these unique sporting archives."

David Mander, Chair of Archives for London Ltd said: "Archives for London is very pleased that this exciting project to develop the Winning Endeavours website attracted so much support from a wide range of archives in London and the South East. It brings together a wealth of resources for everyone interested in the Olympics and we hope that many people will enjoy the events planned to promote the project."

An important element of the website is the inclusion of contextual notes for many of the subjects represented on the site, giving useful background stories. These appear at the bottom of each item where relevant, and historical information about the 1908 and 1948 Olympics also appear on the site. A series of events have also been planned including a Guided Walk of "White City and the Ghosts of the 1908 Olympics" and a "Guided Walk of London 2012 and the History of the Lower Lea Valley".

An outreach and education programme is also being developed to help stimulate contributions to the People's Record, a framework envisaged by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in its Partnership Programme 'Setting the Pace' (2007), within which communities can develop new and exciting heritage projects through oral history, film-making and other media.

It is intended that the website itself will remain live until the end of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and then will be archived at the British Library.

**-Ends-**

**For more information please contact**

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**Events Programme**

### **White City and the Ghosts of the 1908 Olympics**

Guided Walk – a downloadable guide is available on the Winning Endeavours website.

This walk explores the recent social history of Shepherd's Bush including the building of the White City Exhibition Centre and Olympic Stadium which were both opened in 1908. Although none of the original buildings remain reminders of the various exhibitions and London's first Olympic Games can still be found amongst the streets and parks of an area now dominated by the BBC and one of Europe's largest shopping centres.

### **London 2012 and the History of the Lower Lea Valley**

Guided Walk – a downloadable guide is available on the Winning Endeavours website.

By the time they open in July 2012, the Olympic Games will have helped transform the lower Lea Valley. The gains will be considerable and are well publicised but what might be lost or forgotten is the social and industrial histories – stories of aircraft pioneers, of timber, of furniture, of London's water supply. This walk will seek out remaining evidence of this history.

**The British Library** is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. The Library's collection has developed over 250 years and exceeds 150 million separate items representing every age of written civilisation and includes books, journals, manuscripts, maps, stamps, music, patents, photographs, newspapers and sound recordings in all written and spoken languages. Up to 10 million people visit the British Library website - [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)

**Archives for London (AFL)** is a voluntary membership organisation, and the independent voice for archives in the Capital. Its main aim is to bring together everyone interested in archives in or about London – users, practitioners and enthusiasts. Members of AFL include family and local historians, professional and amateur researchers, academics and students and anyone working with archives, such as archivists, conservators, local history librarians and records managers

**London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)** is the largest local government repository in the United Kingdom. It is based in Clerkenwell and administered by the City of London, and its holdings run to around 83km of documents dating from 1067 to the present day. LMA holds local government and other records for the Greater London area and the City of London. These collections have been awarded designated status by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council.

### **The Heritage Lottery Fund**

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects, allocating over £4.5billion across the UK, including £868million to projects in London alone. Website: [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk).