

BARN THEATRE

NEWS

Volume 17 issue 1 February 2013



Olympic Game Maker

Barn Theatre stalwart Chrissy Webb volunteered to become one of the now famous 'Game Makers' at the hugely successful 2012 Olympic Games. Here Chrissy shares her experiences with us in what was a memorable three weeks for her.

The long journey started in September 2010 when I filled in my application form, along with 250 000 others. The next step was the selection interview in October 2011. The organisers had already allocated roles for all the volunteers based on details in their application form. My role was to be an 'Olympic Family Assistant' (OFA). I heard just before Christmas 2011 that I was successful.

From the first day at Wembley Arena, on a chilly February morning, when 10 000 of us attended Orientation Training, I realised something special was on the horizon. Everyone talked to each other even while waiting for the tube at Waterloo – people we would never see again – and this set the scene.

As an OFA I completed five days of training including having my driving assessed by an advanced driving instructor. My role was described as a PA with wheels. I was at the beck and call of my client and his family – to take them where they wanted to go and sort out any arrangements for them.

My first day as an OFA was Sunday 22 July. I had to report to the Grosvenor Hotel at 9.00am ready to be contacted by my client, the Secretary General of the International Tennis Federation, Juan Margets. By 10.00am I had been 'activated' and I was on my way to pick him up. The best three weeks of

my life had started. I worked six days on and had one day off until Juan left for Barcelona on Friday 10th August.

For the first week I was driving to and from Hyde Park underground car park, where all



Chrissy with some tennis player

the BMW 5 Series were securely parked overnight, to Wimbledon Tennis Club. While my client worked my accreditation enabled me to wait in the grounds and watch all the tennis

players practising. I was lucky enough to see all the big names at close quarters and even managed to wish Andy Murray good luck. Other venues I drove my client to during this first week included Claridges, the Spanish Embassy and Kensington Palace.

During the second week his daughter and her partner arrived so I drove them around as well. This included driving from Wimbledon to The Olympic Stadium during rush hour – thank goodness for the Games Lanes! Once again my accreditation was good enough for me to wander around the Olympic Park and go into any of the venues while I waited for them.

On my second day off, Saturday 4 August, I decided that I would go to The Olympic Park with my accreditation and have a wander around. I went to the Velodrome and saw GB win two gold medals and then spotted Paul McCartney. Then I decided to go to the Stadium and managed to get a good spot to watch the three gold medals of Super Saturday – what an evening! The roar of the crowd was second to none.

The third week saw more of the same; driving the family around. I was not looking forward to finishing on Friday 10 August when Juan left to return to Barcelona. However, he had a final surprise in store for me; a ticket to the closing ceremony.

On Sunday 12th August my three weeks as a volunteer had come to an end but it was not the final curtain. Team GB parade, Games Maker Choir and meeting Sebastian Coe were all to follow.

The highlights of my time

- Being on 'Murray Mound' when Murray won the gold medal
- Being there on 'Super Saturday' and for the Men's 100m Final
- Driving the BMW around in the Games Lanes
- The general public just chatting to me when I was in uniform
- Talking to other GMs and the camaraderie
- Helping Gold medallist Katherine Grainger find her friends for a hockey match
- The party atmosphere in London
- Barrel loads of chocolate arriving at all the venues after I had emailed Cadbury

Not only was it the best three weeks of my life but it was also a life changing experience. Why? It is very difficult to pin point one particular reason but it is more the combination of all my experiences. I know I am not alone in this as other Games Makers agree – London 2012 was just THE BEST!