**Seb Coe:**

I made London 2012.

**Lyn Garner, Chief Executive, London Legacy Development Corporation**

Hi, I'm Lyn Garner. I'm the Chief Executive of the London Legacy Development Corporation. I have a book here, it's called The People's Games, and that book was created by my partner Chris, who's a photographer, and he came here and took photographs of people during the games. It's a lovely little book to turn back to.

**Jonzi D, Artistic Director of Breakin' Convention at Sadler's Wells**

Hi, my name is Jonzi D., Artistic Director of Breakin' Convention at Sadler's Wells. And my London legacy is going to the Olympic Park, listening to all those amazing artists and performers and sports people doing their thing.

**Alistair Spalding, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Sadler’s Wells**

I'm Alistair Spalding. I'm the Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Sadler’s Wells. The memory of that closing ceremony of Akram Khan, one of our associate artists who really took us to a different place of hope at the end of this wonderful Olympics in London. And that will always stay with me.

**Helene Raynsford:**

My name is Helene Raynsford and I am one of the new board members at LLDC. For me, it was the noise and roar in support of all of the communities for our great British athletes. That really was my London legacy.

**Lyn Garner:**

The most striking thing for me back then was really that feel good factor.

**Seb Coe:**

At our closing ceremony, we can say that these were a games by everyone.

**Narrator:**

As Seb Coe famously said at the closing ceremony of London 2012, the Olympics and Paralympics then were for everyone. They were games that put a smile on everyone's face and that everyone remembers. Now, 10 years on, we want to highlight the stories, memories, and roles of all the people involved in London 2012, big or small. And just as importantly, look ahead to what's still to come at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Welcome to My London Legacy.

Coming up in this first episode, we'll focus on the year to come on the park, how you can get involved, and how preparations are going for the arrival of world class performing arts on the park.

**Alistair Spalding:**

So, it's really just around the corner now, actually, funnily enough. Though it seems a long way off, it's actually, in terms of planning, we've got to get on with it now in terms of will happened there.

**Narrator:**

London 2012 was a time where records were broken, legacy was built, and memories were made. In 2022, we want to celebrate the lasting legacy of those games, look back at the decade that defined us, and forward to the next 10 years. The London Legacy Development Corporation is responsible for managing Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, delivering development and regeneration in the local area. Here's Chief Executive Lyn Garner.

**Lyn Garner:**

It's going to be a fantastic year. 2022, 10-year anniversary, there's been so many good things achieved, such a lovely legacy, and so much more to come. We want everybody to come and celebrate with us, all the people who were involved, the partners on the park now, and those who are looking forward to the next 10 years completing the legacy on the park.

**Narrator:**

What have we got to come then in 2022?

**Lyn Garner:**

Well, we obviously have our normal event schedule, so now, post COVID, things are getting back to normal. We've got Premier League football going on all year, obviously, for the football season. International Netball's coming, Rugby League Wheelchair World Cup is coming this year, which is going to be fantastic, into our lovely venues. Professional basketball. We're hosting the cycling for the Commonwealth Games. That's a really good marker.

It's a very special year for everybody involved actually, all the way back to the original bid. What'll be doing is together with New London Architecture we'll be pulling all those people in for 2022. Whether you were an engineer, an architect, somebody working on the ground conditions, somebody clearing the land and involved in the CPO back in the day, all of the agents, everyone who was involved is going to have an opportunity to come to the park and celebrate the anniversary with us.

Everybody I speak to who's been involved in this project is hugely positive about it and hugely positive about what's been achieved for the Legacy Project. We have people working with us in the office who were here in the days of bringing the land assembly together back in 2005 and prior to that. Those people are hugely proud of what they've achieved. And they should be, actually.

**Narrator:**

I think we all know, understand, it's been a tough few years, and you've got some new board members who have joined the organization, but what would you say are the challenges you need to overcome this year?

**Lyn Garner:**

In my job, there are three main elements to it that form the challenges if you like. I'll start with housing. Getting the housing on site with the right planning and the right developers and making sure that we're delivering enough affordable housing in the area, that's up there.

Working with the stadium team. The most important things there, of course, are that we deliver really safe events, and maxing out the commercial opportunities at the stadium.

And then thirdly, the third big part of my job, is getting East Bank completed. We have some wonderful world class partners coming to the park for the new culture and education district. We're working closely with them, and we're just a couple of years away now from completing that project. It's important that we bring new ideas and new perspectives and more diverse perspectives, actually.

This will be the third time that we've refreshed our board and the non-executive directors are involved in the park. The executive team work closely with them, they bring their ideas and their skills and solutions to our problems. And, so if you're working with problem solving, I think just always good to get those new perspectives in.

**Narrator:**

And it's fantastic, isn't it, to look back to 2012. But it's not all about looking back, is it? What do you want to look forward to this year?

**Lyn Garner:**

There is so much more to come. Thousands more homes are being built on the park. Importantly, a whole new culture and education district. We're sitting here now on the park and we're looking at the new UCL campus, the first part of which we'll be opening this year, this autumn, on Pool Street. At that point we will be welcoming students onto the park for the first time. It will change the feel and the buzz in the park, and we're so looking forward to that.

So many more local people are using the park. So, they came out and used it for exercise, of course, and that has stuck. So, with our recent survey, we are clearly able to see that many more people are using this park as they're local open air choice space.

**Narrator:**

So, a big year ahead. 10 years on from 2012. Remind us, how could everyone get involved?

**Lyn Garner:**

Yes, well, there were a whole host of community events that we're going to be advertising. We'll be announcing them in a few weeks’ time, I think. So, people can get involved, put the date in their calendars. There'll be a big community get together weekend. And we are hoping to do something special for the Commonwealth Games as well. We have the cycling at the velodrome, as I said earlier, so we'll be wanting to put some publicity around that. And with a fair wind, we'll be wanting to show the games so that people can come and see, come to a free viewing of the Commonwealth Games here on the park. So, I'm working on that at the moment.

**Narrator:**

As Lyn says, there's lots of ways to get involved this year. Stay with us for more details. This is My London Legacy, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast. Still to come...

**Helene Raynsford:**

It's not really just about sports, it's all of the memories, how it brought together our nation. It's all the incredible things that can be achieved off the field of play.

**Narrator:**

We hear from former Paralympics GB gold medalist, Helene Raynsford, on why the park is so special.

As building work continues, the world-famous Sadler's Wells is preparing to join the BBC, VNA, UCL and London College of Fashion in the New East Bank development in 2023. Sadler's Wells East will support artist development and training and the creation of new work. As Chief executive Alistair Spalding and Jonzi D., Artistic Director of Breakin' Convention at Sadler's Wells, explains,

**Alistair Spalding:**

It'll be 10 years from the inception to the actual coming to Stratford. And it's incredibly exciting because it's a big game changer for Sadler's Wells. It takes us into a whole new place in East London, but a whole new way of working, which we're very excited to be doing. And what I mean by that is that we want to make sure that we're going to a place where we understand and know the communities that are around the Olympic Park and that they can come and enjoy the kind of work that we do in Islington, but also to be able to develop and find talent in those boroughs who can then be represented on our stage and [inaudible].

This is a big challenge to get that right, but it's the sort of challenge we relish and it's really our main focus to be honest at the moment. Now we're coming out of COVID, we're back onto the exciting future.

**Narrator:**

What's actually going to be there as far as Sadler's Wells East is concerned?

**Alistair Spalding:**

The physical building is a middle scale venue, that means it's 550 seats. So, we've got a 1,500-seat theater at Sadler's wells, so it's smaller but more intimate. It's got the same size stage as Sadler's Wells, though for a good facilities. It also has six studios, and that's the other big opportunity, because in those studios, Jonzi will talk a bit more, they'll be the Hip-Hop Theater Academy will be housed and also choreographic school.

We are not just in the game of just presenting what already exists, we're also developing the talent of the future. Plus, there's a very, very generous foyer, very generous, and that's where we want people to come and to dwell and to be. As well as coming in and enjoying what we do on our stages. There'll be a performance stage in the foyer as well called The Dance Floor, and we'll have community and other groups performing there.

**Jonzi D:**

After this great relationship with Sadler's Wells, which has been around 18 years now, I'm really excited to be continuing Breakin' Convention activity and hopefully doing a lot more programming in that space and developing lots of projects with the local community out there.

I have to say that I am a member of the local community. I grew up in Bo, and we used to train in the Stratford Shopping Center, so it feels like a real coming back to home feeling that I've got. But the really exciting thing is that we're going to be starting the Hip Hop Theater Academy in the building, which is really, really exciting. It's a qualification which will be a level three extended diploma in performing arts, and it'll be targeting 16- to 18-year-olds across two years. It's a really exciting thing. It's the first institution, I guess, that's going to be focused on the arts and crafts of hip hop culture and how that translates to theater.

**Narrator:**

I'll be honest, in preparation for speaking to you today, Jonzi, I was asking people what came to mind when you say Sadler's Wells, and I heard words like traditional, establishment, nobody said to me hip hop, but it's important to get that message across, isn't it, that Sadler's Wells isn't just those things like tradition and establishment.

**Jonzi D:**

Totally. And hip hop isn't just on the streets in the same way. And what's beautiful about this is that we're actually, I guess, getting rid of a lot of our preconceptions about what high art is and what street art is. Because there is a suggestion that there's a hierarchy there. But what's beautiful about the new face of Sadler's Wells is that we're trying to get rid of all of that stuff and look at what's happening today in East London. So, I think it's the true word contemporary with a small C.

**Narrator:**

Alistair, as we get ready to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the London Olympics and Paralympics, I think back to that opening ceremony, that was a modern contemporary event, wasn't it?

**Alistair Spalding:**

Yeah, it was great. It did feel like that. And one of our associates, Akram Khan, was also involved in the closing ceremony and it felt like that was the beginning of something new. Now, we didn't know what was going to happen to the world in between, but it did feel like a very, very good moment for London at that point.

**Jonzi D:**

I absolutely loved the opening ceremony. I wish I was involved a lot more, to be honest with you. But a lot of artists that I've worked with, for example, Boy Blue, Kenrick Sandy was part of the development, Kate Prince from Zooation, these are artists that have done Breakin' Convention in the past. We've got a great relationship and it was just wonderful to see the community all getting involved in the celebration.

And for me, the climactic moment was that piece by Akram Khan, which I think really summed up the values of the event, and also really looked at the connection between human beings. It was great for humanity, I think, that whole show.

**Alistair Spalding:**

I think the really important point is that it wasn't then just followed by closing that park and just saying, okay, we've done our business. The London Legacy Development Corporation have made sure that this is a continuing project and that there is a real legacy and it's not just about sporting facilities and a lovely park, it really is a lovely park now as well, it's also about culture and education, and that's happening. So, it's a very, very exciting moment for London. But it wouldn't really have happened without that Olympic moment actually, I don't think.

**Narrator:**

And Jonzi, breakdancing is going to be in the Olympics. It's going to be an Olympic sport. You didn't get the involvement you wanted in London 2012, so what about Paris 2024 for you and your students perhaps?

**Jonzi D:**

We are absolutely going to make that happen. I'm part of Breakin' GB, which is the team set up to deliver the events and all of the stuff leading up to it. And I'm really happy to say that we're in great talks about having our Hip Hop Theater Academy as being one of the official spaces in which the Olympic breaking team will be using. So that's really, really exciting, and it's all part of the legacy that we need to keep pushing, because what we're doing is unique, and what happened 10 years ago was fantastic for London. And we just got to keep that going.

**Narrator:**

So, as we heard from CEO Lyn Garner earlier, new and diverse ideas are crucial for the long-term legacy of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Helene Raynsford is a British rower who won gold at the Beijing 2008 Paralympics and is now the newest board member at the London Legacy Development Corporation.

**Helene Raynsford:**

The legacy of a games means so much, of a home games, and so much that communities, not just those that live immediately around the park, but the whole city, and hopefully wider reaching across the country. There's a lot that can be achieved. It's not really just about sport, it's all of the memories, how it brought together our nation. And at times when we are having tricky times ahead, sport and recreation is not just about the time spent on the field of play, it's all the incredible things that can be achieved off the field of play, such as that community cohesion, but also the self-confidence, self-esteem, learning new skills, social connectedness. There is so many things that can be achieved and I hope that that will be an opportunity that we can, at the 10th anniversary, which I think is why it's so exciting, we can hopefully reinvigorate.

**Narrator:**

Take us back 10 years then. What was your role back in 2012?

**Helene Raynsford:**

Yes, I was really lucky. Well, you could say lucky. Unlucky in some ways that I really wanted to go back, and I'd been an athlete prior to 2012, and I wanted to go back to defend my title at London 2012. But unfortunately, due to injury I wasn't able to do that. But I was very lucky to be successful in getting hold of a secondment, so I had a five-month secondment out of the NHS where I worked in public health at the time, and I spent five months working for LOCOG as part of the sport management team for rowing.

There were a small group of us who were based partly at Canary Wharf and then partly out at Dorney Lake, and we were responsible for the delivery of Olympics and Paralympic Games, and I had a lead for Paralympic Games.

**Narrator:**

And you mentioned obviously you were an athlete, so take us back to 2008 Beijing Paralympics, You won a gold medal.

**Helene Raynsford:**

Yes. A very long time ago, it feels. Actually, Dorney Lake, where obviously London 2012 rowing took place, was where I first saw rowing. And I was there for work, and I was there to appear in a photograph to demonstrate cross-departmental government working, so you can imagine how exciting that was going to be. So, I went along and begrudgingly appeared in the photograph, and then was hopping back to the car, and then I saw rowing for the first time live and thought, wow, this is exciting. I really quite like this. And actually, I saw a gentleman in a wheelchair who had Great Britain Rowing on his jumper, and I thought, how do you row if you're in a wheelchair? I had no concept to me, as a wheelchair user, how could you row? How could you balance a boat, how would it work?

And I got chatting to this chap and went along to row a little bit at Ardingly Rowing Club over in Sussex. And actually, there was just something about being out of my wheelchair and being in a boat which was just wonderful.

At the time I was playing in the Great Britain Women's wheelchair Basketball Team. But there was just something for me about rowing that I just loved. It took me back to being a youngster and being a dancer, and I just really loved it.

2008 was an incredible experience, but if I'm honest, it was very much at the time felt like a good day in the office because I was so focused on what I was there to do, and I did not realize how many people were really behind us as athletes back in the UK. I don't think it was really until we got off the plane and the corridors were lined with people cheering as we came back into Heathrow, and you thought, wow, actually there's a few more people than me and my immediate family and friends following this. So, it was an incredible experience.

**Host:**

And the movement, the Paralympic movement, has come on leaps and bounds from your experience in 2008. People describe London as being a game changer, and then you look back to last year in Tokyo, the WeThe15 Campaign, for example, which is featured on a previous edition of the podcast. The movement has changed beyond all recognition, hasn't it?

**Helene Raynsford:**

It really has, and I think that both internationally and domestically. I chair the Athletes Commission for the British Paralympic Association and it's great to see how much the development has come on, not just within the Paralympic movement kind of in general and the traction it's gaining now, and it's moving more from being a, look at those people, those poor disabled people, and they're now doing some sport. Isn't that lovely? It's moved from that to, actually we're here watching athletes now in whatever sport that might be.

For me, it's not about inspiring every individual with a disability to become the next Paralympian, because actually sport isn't everyone's desire and what everyone wants to do. But actually, if watching the Paralympic games can ensure that someone aspires to go and achieve their dream, whatever that dream might be, that's where the real gold dust comes in for it for me, really.

**Narrator:**

You have just joined the board of the London Legacy Development Corporation. How exciting is that? And what a great year to join, on the anniversary. Plenty going to be going on this year.

**Helene Raynsford:**

Yes, there are going to be lots of events taking place this year. For me, the legacy element of games, wherever they may be, is really important. It shouldn't just be about the couple of weeks of Olympic games and couple of weeks of Paralympic games, it should be about what difference do we leave behind for the communities after the games.

I was lucky in Rio to chair the Inclusion Summit in 2016, and we really looked at what difference did we make for a young person with a disability in Brazil. And for me, this is a point now at 10 years where we can really invigorate the connectivity between both games and the local communities, but also, we can push not just the sport, but all of the areas, such as the arts, that the park is so different now compared to 10 years ago. There are residencies there, there's Sadler's Wells there, there's science parks there, there's just so many different bits and pieces going on in the park now.

I think when most of my friends and colleagues and I've told them about this role, they just think of the stadium. They just think of the copper box. They don't think of the incredible vibrant activities that are now taking place on the park. And when I tell them a bit more about it and then they go, "Wow, now we can really understand why you're so excited about this."

**Narrator:**

Helene Raynsford. This is My London Legacy, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast. Hundreds of thousands of people have been involved in this project since the early 2000s, whether winning the bid, building the Olympic Park, venues, or delivering legacy. You can share your memories on social media. #London2012, #passthebaton.

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