

# Leeds Gold Update 5

Our celebration of London 2012 including the Leeds Inspired cultural programme

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Our Leeds athletes bidding for glory at the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games given a special send-off at Leeds Civic Hall.

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Good luck to all our Leeds athletes!

## Olympic Torch attracts crowds of 200,000 in Leeds

With around 200,000 people experiencing the Torch Relay over three days across Leeds, the Olympic Flame probably attracted the largest crowds ever seen in the city.

The torch first arrived in Leeds on Tuesday 19 June, when the tone was set by an estimated crowd of 25,000 people lining the streets of Boston Spa, Wetherby and Harewood before it was given a special royal welcome by Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrice at Harewood House.



*Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrice and torchbearer Janet Baker*

The torch returned to the city on the Sunday evening to be greeted by approximately 125,000 people on the streets of Headingley, Potternewton, Harehills and Richmond Hill as it made its way to Temple Newsam for the overnight celebration event hosted by Presenting Partner of the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay Coca-Cola, and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG).

The event featured live performances by Friendly Fires, Little Comets, Tribes and Diversity, with 13-year-old Aaron Bell from Halifax being given the honour of taking the flame onto the stage and lighting a special cauldron as part of the finale.



*Photo: Lizzie Coombes*

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The celebration also contained an element showcasing the best of Leeds' talent, with rousing performances from local Leeds choirs, the award-winning Leeds Young Authors and a mass dance led by professional dancers on stage, supported choreographed by Phoenix Dance Theatre's artistic director Sharon Watson. It looked and sounded spectacular and was described by a member of the LOCOG team as the 'best community content' of all the cities.



The torch restarted its journey in the early hours of Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June from Leeds Town Hall for the launch of the Olympic Torch relay through the city centre. The countdown began with a speech from the Lord Mayor and a performance of classic film soundtracks by the City of Leeds Youth Orchestra. With the torch lit, torchbearer Michael Healey, the founder of the acclaimed Kids Saturday Bike Club was cheered by crowds as he descended the Leeds Town Hall steps to the famous Chariots of Fire theme tune, as golden streamers filled the sky.

The torch then headed through County Arcade, Leeds Bridge and the Royal Armouries and onto the John Charles Centre for Sport stadium where 2000 school children from over 100 schools were gathered to greet it.



Photo: Lizzie Coombes

*"It was brilliantly organised and just one of those precious times with children and other schools that can never be forgotten. Our photos say it all!" (Cath, Parklands Primary School)*

The youngsters who had brought their own torches and banners raised the roof with their shouting and cheers as torchbearer Hannah Harris a design student and charity fundraiser completed the circuit of the athletics track. Elsewhere, communities threw parties that catered for every generation:

*"We had an amazing morning with Corpus Christi Brass Band playing and our balloon release looked wonderful in the morning sky. Our aim to have someone from all ages went well – we had a baby of 4 weeks and a resident of 104 years together with a good number of people in between." (Debbie, Sunnyview House, Beeston, 25<sup>th</sup> June)*

The torch then travelled on through Beeston and past Elland Road on to Morley where it left the city, being met along the way by large crowds continuing to line the route waiting to see it. Over 300 volunteers also worked as Leeds Ambassadors to help liaise with the crowds at the roadside. Many reported on a unique experience:

*"What a fantastic community event! I and my fellow volunteers around the Stainbeck Road/Potternewton Lane area yesterday met some fantastic people – it was great to see so many people from diverse backgrounds getting together and cheering together. (Fiona, Torch Ambassador, 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> June)*

*"Just wanted to say a BIG thank you for allowing me to be a Torch Ambassador in Wetherby, Harehills and Morley. It was a brilliant experience and brought the people of Leeds together as one." (Mark, Torch Ambassador, 19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> June)*

All along its 17-mile journey through Leeds over the three days, there was the excitement of meeting Princess Beatrice at Harewood House; for others, the chance of being photographed with the Torch. For a select few, of course, there was the once-in-a-lifetime chance of carrying the Flame. But most people will remember the Olympic Torch relay for the way in which it brought their community together and kindled the spirit of the Games on their doorstep.



Photo: Lizzie Coombes

## Civic send off for Leeds' athletes

Our Leeds athletes bidding for glory at the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games were given a special send-off at Civic Hall. Athletes and coaches from Leeds and those based in the city who will be part of Team Great Britain were honoured at a ceremony hosted by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Ann Castle.



*Lord Mayor of Leeds Cllr Ann Castle (front row in centre) with Leeds athletes and coaches.*

**Back row (left to right):** David Stone MBE, Sarah Barrow, Malcolm Brown, Edwin Jongejans, Adrian Hinchliffe, Alicia Blagg

**Front row (left to right):** Rebecca Gallantree, Claire Cashmore, Cllr Castle, Hannah Starling, Jack Laugher, Nicola Adams

The athletes who attended included Leeds boxing star Nicola Adams, who is targeting an Olympic gold medal in the flyweight category and diving stars Alicia Blagg, Hannah Starling, Jack Laugher, Sarah Barrow and Rebecca Gallantree who make up five of the 12-strong Team GB diving team for London.

In 15-year-old Alicia Blagg from Woodlesford and 17-year-old Hannah Starling from Alwoodley, Leeds has its first-ever homegrown Olympic divers, and they will join another 'young gun' in 17-year-old Jack Laugher from Harrogate who will be looking to show the form which saw him break his own British record at the Olympic trials in Sheffield.

Their clubmate Sarah Barrow will be aiming to repeat the success which saw her and 10-metre synchronised platform partner Tonia Couch claim a historic first-ever bronze medal for Britain in the FINA World Cup event at the Olympic Park Aquatics Centre in February, while at the age of 27 Rebecca Gallantree is the most experienced of the Leeds quintet as she prepares for a second consecutive Olympic Games appearance.

Also attending the reception were City of Leeds senior diving coach Adrian Hinchliffe and diving age group coach Edwin Jongejans who will be part of the Team GB Olympic coaching team. Leeds' triathlon superstars Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee were unfortunately unable to attend as they were at a pre-Games training camp in Switzerland, but their coach Malcolm Brown who is also Team GB Triathlon Olympic Performance Manager attended.

Looking ahead to the London 2012 Paralympic Games which take place from Wednesday 29 August to Sunday 9 September, Leeds-based David Stone MBE and Claire Cashmore were also honoured for their selections to the Team GB squad.

David emerged as one of the stars of the Beijing Paralympics in 2008, winning two cycling gold medals while swimmer Claire will be competing in her third successive Paralympic Games and aiming to add to her total of three bronze medals from Athens in 2004 and Beijing.

The names of all those other athletes and coaches representing Leeds and Great Britain at the Olympics and Paralympics who were unable to attend due to training commitments were also read out at the reception to mark their selections.

Leeds' involvement in the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games has developed from having six athletes and support staff at the 2004 Games in Athens, to 10 in Beijing in 2008, and now a total of 30 heading for London.

For more information on how Leeds is getting involved in the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, visit [www.leedsgold.co.uk](http://www.leedsgold.co.uk)

## Chinese athletes in Leeds

China's Olympic athletes arrived in Leeds at their pre-Games training camp. Approximately 220 athletes, coaches and support staff are based in Leeds over the coming four weeks as the sporting superpower which led the medals table at the 2008 Beijing Games completes its preparations for the world's greatest sporting event.

Members of the China swimming team were put through their paces at the Aquatics Centre at the John Charles Centre for Sport after arriving in Leeds over the weekend.

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*China swimming star Chen Qian and colleagues at the Aquatics Centre at the John Charles Centre for Sport in Leeds*

They included leading trio Lu Ying, Li Xuanxu and Chen Qian who all claimed medals in the 2011 FINA World Championships and will all be targeting more success in London. For 18-year-old Li Xuanxu this will be her second Olympic Games after competing in Beijing in 2008 at the age of just 14.



The swimmers will be joined in Leeds between now and Wednesday 8 August by athletes in seven other sports - table tennis, fencing, Taekwondo, track and field athletics, boxing, hockey, and canoe slalom.

Of these, table tennis, fencing and Taekwondo are at the University of Leeds; track and field athletics at Leeds Metropolitan University; boxing at Bradford College; hockey at Wakefield Hockey Club, and canoe slalom which, also part of the official Leeds camp, based at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham.

As well as the direct financial benefits of hosting the China team which is likely to be approximately £250,000,

the deal is also expected to provide a major long-term boost to trade, commerce and tourism as well as strengthening cultural ties between Leeds, Yorkshire, the UK and China. The recently-launched Leeds Gold Business programme is intended to harness the opportunities that hosting the Chinese Olympic athletes in Leeds presents.

Leeds is also hosting pre-Games training for the Netherlands swimming squad at the Aquatics Centre at the John Charles Centre for Sport from July 15-23, including reigning Olympic and world champion Ranomi Kromowidjojo (women's 4x100 metre freestyle relay).

The Canada wheelchair rugby team is heading to Leeds to train at The University of Leeds from 13-20 August before competing in the London 2012 Paralympic Games which take place from Wednesday 29 August to Sunday 9 September.

To add to the welcome for the visiting Olympic and Paralympic teams, Leeds City Council has produced special flowerbed displays around the city based on the colours of their national flags.

Leeds Kirkgate Market marked the athletes from China arriving in Leeds with a special celebration. Themed around Chinese cuisine with a series of tours, demonstrations and tastings at The Source.

## Royal visit



The sun shone as the Queen and Prince Philip arrived in Leeds last Thursday. It was a sparkling occasion with flags, flowers and smiling faces - sure to be a highlight of 2012.

Young people were at the heart of performances and at the forefront of the crowds as the day also marked the launch of 'Child Friendly Leeds' - the city's plan to make Leeds a place where children are valued, supported, enjoy growing up, and look forward to a bright future.

At Leeds Arena, Little London Primary School sang in Swahili and aerialist Deborah Sanderson of Urban Angels Circus performed a breathtaking descent to symbolise the 'topping out'. The Queen beamed at the 'Good Old Days' entertainment from the City Varieties Music Hall's Youth Theatre, and then greeted and chatted with the crowds on Briggate, as 700 children from schools across the city joined the mass community choir to sing Rainbow Nation. The Duke tapped his feet to more songs by the choir, who were accompanied by Leeds College of Music's Jazz Band - a special reprise of the performance they all gave at the Torch Celebration Event.

## Leeds Gold Ambassador Nicola Adams



### Credentials:

Class: Flyweight

Date of Birth: 26th October 1982

Weight: 51kg

Club: Haringey Police Community Club

Home Town: Leeds

Career Achievements:

Gold - 2011 Women's European

Championships

Gold - 2011 EU Women's Championships

Silver – 2008 and 2010 AIBA Women's

World Championships

Our very own Leeds Gold Ambassador, Nicola Adams will be part of the Women's Boxing team making its debut at London 2012. The London Games will be the first time women's boxing has been showcased with three events taking place - women's Fly, women's Middle and women's Light. So does this make Adams and her teammates feminist pioneers?

***"I suppose we are pioneers" says Adams, "We're putting ourselves in history and it's an extraordinary achievement and it's so nice to be living the dream."***

In 2007 Nicola was the first ever English female to earn a medal in a major tournament when she picked up the silver in the European Championships in Denmark, and in 2008 she was the first English woman to earn a medal in the AIBA Women's World Championships in Ningbo, China, when she narrowly missed out on gold to the Polish world number one, Karolina Michalczuk.

Flyweight, Adams is from Leeds and when she's not training in Sheffield she boxes for the Haringey Police Community Club and at the famous Brendon Ingle gym. Nicola started boxing at the age of twelve and had her first bout a year later.

In March 2010 she was selected to represent Great Britain on the GB women's squad, training towards London 2012, and in September 2010 she picked up another AIBA Women's World Championships silver medal, this time losing out to Chinese boxer Cancan Ren.

In October 2011 she became Britain's first female European boxing champion and this year beat the world champion Cancan Ren, in the Stranja tournament in Bulgaria.

Nicola is one of four Leeds Gold ambassadors, who are working to ensure Leeds benefits from the Olympics and to spread the word about the city's sporting credentials.



## All Hands on Deck

In July two narrow boats sailed their way around the canals of Kirkstall, Bramley and Rodley.

Captained by artists the boats become temporary arts venues providing cultural inspiration for anyone who happened to hop on board.

Hundreds of people from the area took part in the project including residents groups, families, and retired groups from West Leeds.



The boats hosted a range of activities from local choirs, visual artists, photographers, conservationists and record clubs. Needless to say they weathered a few storms over the weekend but had a few moments of glorious sunshine in between times.

[www.leedsinspired.co.uk](http://www.leedsinspired.co.uk)

## Leeds Loves Sport



The Leeds Loves Sport festival finished its three week programme of events celebrating sport in the city early this month. The festival, which took place from 18 June – 9 July aimed to inspire and challenge local individuals and businesses to connect with the London 2012 Olympics and to get active in this season of sport.

The festival included a wide programme of events with international fixtures for spectators and activities for those wanting to participate.

There were also opportunities to find out about the huge range of quality local facilities, teams and venues in Leeds. The festival kicked off to a great start with the arrival of the Olympic Torch in the city, and local community events like the 'Torch Relay at East End Park' attracted 5000 spectators, with 2000 staying to get involved with the follow-up 'Torch in the Park' event.

Despite the rainy weather, festival events were well attended, ranging from elite fixtures like Yorkshire CCC vs Lancashire Lightning, Leeds Rhinos vs Castleford Tigers and Jane Tomlinson's Asda Foundation Run For All Leeds 10K through to local community events like the Free Family Sports Days in local parks and 'Have a Go' pop-up games on Briggate. Some of the special offers set up in honour of the festival are still available, including the big splash at Leeds leisure centres – for more information visit [leedslovesport.com](http://leedslovesport.com). The Leeds Loves sport festival benefited from funding from Leeds Inspired.

## London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

**Good luck to all our Leeds athletes! Show your support by watching them compete either from the comfort of your own home or at the big screen on Millennium Square.**

Qualified Athlete	Discipline	Recent history	Date competing
Sarah Barrow	Diving - 10m synchronised platform	Sarah continued her good form with impressive performances at the recent diving championships in Sheffield, putting in Olympic medal standard scores on the synchronised dive with partner Tonia Couch.	31 July
Jack Laugher	Diving -3m springboard	Aged 17 Jack's performance at the Sheffield championships saw him take the British champion crown. He heads into the Games having made a successful transition to senior competition over the last 12 months and recently improved upon his personal best.	6 & 7 August
Alicia Blagg	Diving -3m synchro	Just 16, Alicia heads to London already having gained experience of international competition finishing 4 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> at the 2010 Dehli Commonwealth Games. Alicia won gold at the recent British championship and finished fifth at the Europeans.	29 July
Rebecca Gallantree	Diving -3m synchro and 3m springboard	Rebecca, 27 already has Olympic experience competing in Beijing 2008. Rebecca looks to improve on her fantastic top 10 performances at the European championships this May.	29 July and 3 to 5 August
Hannah Starling	Diving - 3m springboard	Hannah makes her Olympic debut having impressed at her debuts at both the World and European Championships. Hannah won Bronze at the recent British championships and is constantly improving her performance as we gear up for London 2012	3 to 5 August

Qualified Athlete	Discipline	Recent history	Date competing
Lizzie Armitstead	Cycling	The Otley born racer is a cycling success story within Team GB. A silver medal winner from the Commonwealth Games 2010 Lizzie will head into the London games with confidence.	29 July & 1 August
David Stone MBE	Disability cycling	David is already a double gold medal winner from Beijing 2008 and will be keen to defend his titles on home soil this summer. He is in great form heading into the Games, having finished 4 <sup>th</sup> in the road race and 2 <sup>nd</sup> in the time trial at last year's World Championships.	5 & 7 September
Claire Cashmore	Disability swimming	Claire is bronze medal holder from Beijing 2008 and 2 gold and 2 silver from the 2009 World Championships in Rio. Claire holds the world record for 100 IM (short course) as well as the team world record for the 4 x100 medley relay (long and short course).	30 August
Alistair Brownlee	Triathlon	World Champion in both 2009 and 2011 and ranked world number 1 Alistair has worked hard to come back from a recent injury scare to be ready to take on the best in Hyde Park this summer.	7 August
Jonny Brownlee	Triathlon	Competing alongside his brother, Jonny has had a fantastic lead in to the Games coming first in both the Madrid and San Diego World Triathlon series this May. We will watch eagerly as the brothers battle it out for position.	7 August
Nicola Adams	51kg flyweight category	European champion 2011 and double world championship silver medallist.	5-9 August
Laura Weightman	1500m	Competing at her first Olympics, Geordie born Laura trains at Leeds Met and is under the expert guidance of Steve Cram. Laura secured her qualification and became national champion at the recent Aviva trials, after being nurtured through the 'On camp with Kelly' scheme set up by former Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes	6, 8 & 10 August
David Webb	Athletics - Marathon	Dave trains and lives in Leeds where he works as a chartered accountant. He was selected to represent Team GB as one of three men in the marathon after an impressive finish at the South Korea World Championships. Dave did not compete in April's London marathon in order to focus on the Olympics	12 August
Johanna Jackson	Athletics -20km racewalk	The reigning commonwealth champion in the 20km racewalk Jo has her sights firmly on a top 8 place this summer. Jo trains at Leeds Metropolitan University and has Olympic experience from Beijing 2008	11 August

Qualified Athlete	Discipline	Recent history	Date competing
Hannah Cockroft	Wheelchair sprinting	As the world record holder over four distances Hannah has been training well for this summer. Hannah is originally from Halifax and trains in Leeds. She is currently in London for the Paralympic Team GB launch.	31 August
Debbie Flood	Rowing - Women's quadruple scull	After gaining silver medals in both Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 Debbie is aiming to go one better this year. Debbie is originally from Guiseley and now trains in Berkshire where she will complete her Olympic preparations.	28 & 30 July, 1 August
Micah Richards	Football	The Manchester City superstar, originally from Leeds, is topping off a fantastic season as Premier League champion by being selected as one of the three players over 23 picked by Stuart Pearce to represent Team GB.	26 July – 7 & 11 August
Adam Scholefield	Water polo	The Leeds lad has successfully made it to the Team GB squad as one of Britain's top centre forwards and is currently in Dublin at a holding camp. Adam plays for a Hungarian club side and is used to international competition.	29 July & 12 August
Ed Scott	Water polo	Ed is valued for his goalkeeping role and helped the team achieve a best ever fourth place at the 2009 European B Nations trophy event.	29 July & 12 August
Natasha Perdue	69 kg Weightlifting	Natasha makes her Olympic debut this summer following in the footsteps of her late father Terry. Natasha is originally from Swansea but now lives and trains in Leeds and, until very recently, worked here at the council.	1 August
Jack Oliver	77kg Weightlifting	Jack achieved a personal best at last year's World Weightlifting Championships in Paris and is in fine form heading into the Games. Jack trains at the Leeds Met High Performance Centre.	1 August
Gareth Evans	69kg Weightlifting	Gareth is making his Olympic debut, after coming third in the Commonwealth Championships in South Africa. He began lifting aged 12 in Scotland and has gone on to perform consistently well, training at the Leeds Met High Performance Centre.	31 July
Ali Jawad	Paralympic 56kg powerlifting	The former World and European junior champion, this is Ali's second Paralympics. He used to compete in Judo as well but is now concentrating solely on his lifting.	31 August