



Now the countdown really begins!

On Tuesday 15 March we celebrated 500 days to go until the opening ceremony, turn to page 2 to find out where the Herts 2012 team went and what we got up to.

This month has been very busy for the team, we have hosted workshops in schools, guided tours of the Lee Valley White Water Centre and Olympic Park, a reception at Hatfield House with district council leaders, a briefing with the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, an exhibition at Van Hage's Garden Centre in Ware to name but a few of our activities!

Next month we are all looking forward to the opening of the Lee Valley White Water Centre which opens to the public on Good Friday and gives locals the opportunity to ride the rapids before the professional athletes come to compete in 2012. Find out how you can book your place on page 5.

Don't forget you can get daily updates from us by following us on **Twitter @ReadyForWinners!**

The Herts 2012 Team

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Broxbourne celebrates it's 'Host Borough' status with flag raising event

A flag raising ceremony was held on Monday 14 March at the Broxbourne Council Offices, Bishops' College, Churchgate, Cheshunt to officially celebrate Broxbourne's role as a 'Host Borough' of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The canoe slalom competition at the London 2012 Games will be held at the new Lee Valley White Water Centre in Waltham Cross and local school children joined with politicians and representatives from the London Organising Committee of the Games (LOCOG) to take part in the ceremony.

Deputy Chairman of LOCOG, Sir Keith Mills said: "The Lee Valley White Water Centre is an exciting new Olympic venue that will see world class athletes competing there during the Games, but also deliver many benefits to the local community and the wider region beyond 2012. It is exciting to see the Host Borough flag flying in Broxbourne, a sign of exciting times to come next summer and beyond."

Leader of the Council, Councillor Mason commented: "I am tremendously proud that we now have the authority to fly the Host Borough flag from our Council Offices. We are now able to openly promote ourselves as a host borough for the London 2012 Games. Flying the flag today coincides with the landmark of only 500 days to go until the London 2012 Games begin."

Back row, left to right: Ben Wallis Churchgate Extended Schools Co-Ordinator, St Mary's pupils: Stephanie Hicks, Idris Bello, Yusef Bello, Skye Coleing-Lashley, Autumn Fowle, Alicia Miller; Cheshunt School, pupils: Stephan Chiakli, Benjamin Taylor, Abby Smith, Natalie Whittaker, Amber Walker. Front row Left to right: Deputy Chairman of LOCOG, Sir Keith Mills; Leader of Broxbourne Council, Councillor Paul Mason; Deputy Mayor of Broxbourne, Councillor Norman Aymes.





Hertfordshire celebrates 500 days to go!

Tuesday 15 March marked 500 days to go until the start of the London 2012 Olympic Games and the launch of tickets sales.

Schools around the county celebrated 500 days to go to with some London 2012-inspired activities. Our team headed to Turnford School in Broxbourne for a special 2012 photo opportunity with its students and to see pupils either row, run or swim 500 miles, they managed to finish their 500 miles task with two minutes to spare before the end of school at 2.58pm! We also popped in on Birchwood High School in Bishop's Stortford where they organised a cross-curricular day for the school with British sprinter Graham Hedman and local primary school Summercroft promoting London 2012, its sports and the Olympic and Paralympic Values. Graham won silver in the 4x400 relay at the 2006 European Championships.

We also celebrated at County Hall with an information stand and an ergo machine to give staff and visitors a flavour of the canoe slalom event that will be taking place in Hertfordshire during Gamestime. Lee Valley White Water Centre staff also joined us to generate even more excitement about their venue.

Tickets for the London 2012 Olympic Games are now on sale for the next six weeks, until 26 April 2011, enabling people to consider their options before making final choices and submitting their application. Tickets for oversubscribed sessions will be allocated via a ballot process. Visit the London 2012 ticketing site now ensure you don't miss out, www.tickets.london2012.com





Herts Coach Education Week and Coaching Conference

“Like leaving footprints in wet cement” was how keynote speaker and former NBA Hall of Fame inductee, John Amaechi, described the impact that sports coaches can have on the lives of young people, when he addressed over 100 coaches from across Hertfordshire at the recent Hertfordshire Coaching Conference.

In a punchy and provocative address, which set the tone for the rest of the day, Amaechi stressed the need for sport to recruit the very best people as coaches. These individuals have a responsibility in shaping the lives of their charges, in preparing them for life as citizens of the 21st century.

Amaechi, who runs his own sports academy for disadvantaged youngsters in inner city Manchester, and who stands 6 ft 9” in his stockinged feet, called on his own life experiences which have, he said, shaped his values.

“Few of us will coach the next Michael Jordan” he said “but each and every one of us who coaches young people, can have a profound influence on the way our young people develop and prepare for adult life. For many of those youngsters, the coach will be the only male figure in their lives. Get it right and in 30 years time a coach will be fondly remembered as an inspirational friend and mentor. Get it wrong and you’ll be remembered as some jerk!”

The fourth Annual Coaching Conference was a culmination of a week long programme of interactive workshops, lectures and formal coaching courses offered as part of the Annual Herts Coach Education Week.

The programme which attracted over 1,400 coaches to some 90 different sessions featuring 22 different sports is the biggest of its kind in the UK. Key themes of this year’s event were disability sport and leadership awards for young people.

Reflecting on the programme, Chairman of the Herts Sports Partnership, Grahame Bowles said “What we have achieved with limited resources has been fantastic. Over recent years, the cost of coach education has escalated and the time commitment required from an army of volunteers that make up the coaching workforce has greatly increased. This programme has offered a wide range of accessible and affordable development opportunities and we are indebted to all our funders for making this possible.”



Pictured with John Amaechi, keynote speaker at the 2011 Herts Coaching Conference are members of the Herts Sports Partnership team



Alison Mowbray inspires local businesses to go for their goals!

Athens Olympian Alison Mowbray inspired Hertfordshire businesses to recognise their goals and to 'win business gold' at an event at the Ramada Cromwell in Stevenage on Friday 11 March.

Alison urged the packed out room to not sit on their laurels but rather grab this once in a lifetime opportunity with both hands. She talked of her personal journey to winning silver in the Quad Scull rowing event in 2004 Games, almost choking with emotion towards the end and stressing that there was no time for 'what if' and regret in sport or in business.

The delegates from businesses across Hertfordshire also heard from Business Link about the London 2012 CompeteFor portal procurement system and how they can get themselves match fit for the Games. Rob Goldwater, Financial Director of the Ashley Wilde Group, who are a Hertfordshire firm benefiting from having won an Olympic Contract also addressed attendees and stressed the advantages his company

has gained from being involved in the Games.

There were also presentations from the Partnership on the wider Hertfordshire picture as well as information on Hertfordshire's 2012 venue the Lee Valley White Water Centre.



Herts 2012 Ambassador John Fuller, Lee Valley Senior Communications Officer Vicky Kington, Herts Talented Athlete Daniel Gardner, Olympian Alison Mowbray, Herts Talented Athlete Renee Hector and Leader of North Herts District Council, Councillor Lynda Needham

Two of Hertfordshire's Talented Young Athletes came along. Renee Hector a 15 year old discus thrower and 16 year -old pole vaulter Daniel Gardner spoke of their dedication to their sport and of their ambitions for the future.

The next Business Breakfast events will be held sometime in May and late-June, details will be released shortly so keep checking our website www.hertsisreadyforwinners.co.uk for more details.

Brand new London 2012 venue set to open for an early legacy of white water rafting

Lee Valley White Water Centre is preparing to open its doors to the public. The world class Centre is the only brand new London 2012 venue people can use and enjoy before the Games.

From Good Friday, 22 April 2011, thrill seekers will have a once in a lifetime opportunity to raft the white water rapids before the world's best athletes arrive.

Rafting tickets are on sale now at www.gowhitewater.co.uk with people already vying to be one of the first to experience adrenalin pumping rafting on the same course that will host five days of intense canoe slalom competition during the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Shaun Dawson, Chief Executive of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority said "Lee Valley White Water Centre will bring a bit of the Rockies to the UK and give rafters an unforgettable day out rafting wild rapids.

"The Centre is the best of its type anywhere in the world and we'll be giving people great days out at this brand new, custom built venue. Almost anyone can have a go rafting and we've already received massive interest from canoeists who want to test their skills on this hugely thrilling and demanding course."



The Centre's recently recruited raft guides are being personally trained by Paskell Blackwell, Captain of the Great Britain Senior Men's White Water Rafting Team, and Assistant Manager at the Centre. The highly skilled team will ensure visitors receive an unforgettable white water experience.

Lizzie Neave, World Cup bronze medalist and member of the GB Canoe Slalom team said "We're delighted to be able to train at this incredible venue – the team is extremely excited about what we can achieve here on home soil."

The Centre was built with legacy very much in mind. There are two separate courses - a 300m Olympic Standard Competition Course with a 5.5m drop and a 160m Legacy Loop, perfect for training and sports development.

Simon Ricketts, Lee Valley White Water Centre Manager, said:
"The beauty of white water rafting is that it is open to everyone. Nerves will definitely be put to the test as rafters take on the Olympic Standard Competition Course, navigating 300m of obstacles, drops, waves and fast flowing white water – enough to fill a 25m swimming pool in less than half a minute."



Lee Valley Regional Park's sports development programme will see schools, community groups and sports clubs from across the region enjoy access to the venue, alongside the sport's leading athletes.

In June and July hundreds of school children from boroughs and districts throughout London, Hertfordshire and Essex will experience white water rafting as part of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority's Education Pledge.

Lee Valley White Water Centre is on the northern edge of London, five minutes from the M25, near Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire and 40 minutes door to door by train from central London.

The Centre is one of four London 2012 venues Lee Valley Regional Park Authority will own and manage after the Games, together with Lee Valley VeloPark and Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centres. Lee Valley White Water Centre will join the other regional sports venues the Authority owns to create a chain of sporting excellence along the 26 mile long, 10,000 acre Lee Valley Regional Park.

Rafting tickets start from £49. To test your nerves and experience this world class venue visit www.gowhitewater.co.uk or call 08456 770 606 to buy your ticket.

Also in the news...

Earlier this month we also had the honour of being invited to one of the BCU's time trial events; which they were holding at Hatfield swim centre after the partnership managed to locate a pool of the correct proportions for them in the vicinity of the White Water Centre.



Olympian Fiona Pennie training in Hatfield Pool

Congratulations to local athletics stars!

Firstly congratulations to Jodie Williams for coming 4th in her senior international debut at the European Indoor Championships in Paris earlier this month and producing two personal bests running 7.21 seconds over 60m.

Also, good luck to Welwyn Wheeler Laura Trott who has been selected for the World Championships in the Netherlands later this month, we look very much forward to watching her compete!