



NEWS REPORT

Pictured Pictured above with The Prime Minister (Gordon Brown) & His wife Sarah, along with Laurie McMenemy, Dave Balmer head of delegation, 2 National Grid Staff members, 6, athletes representing London in the Leicester Special Olympics National Games 25th - 31st July- And next to the Prime Minister is our 2 gymnasts Philip Davis and Daniel Quick. Philip is standing 1st left and Daniel 2nd left to the Prime Minister.

On Friday 20th July 2009 the Special Olympics Torch Relay came to London for the final leg of its Great Britain tour before heading up to Leicester where the National Games are being held this year. As members of the London team we had the privilege of being part of the relay along with 6 other athletes from Wandsworth and from the South East region representing other sports.

It was an early start with everybody meeting outside City Hall near Tower Bridge in wet conditions for a few team photos with the torch. Also present was SOGB mascot Sollie the Lion along with celebrities, ex Football Manager Laurie McMenemy MBE (who is the current Chairman for Special Olympics GB) former Olympian Javelin thrower -Tessa Sanderson CBE, Steve Holliday chief Executive of National Grid & Police Sergeant Bob

Chandler. The BBC were also there along with the Radio Station LBC videoing and recording us the athletes and interviewing various members of staff.

Then we were whisked off on a London Tour Bus to take everybody over to Trafalgar Square where the Headquarters for National Grid an official partner of Special Olympics GB since 2007 and who have invested in their community by supporting the 2009 Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics. London is the sixth leg of the nationwide torch run, which will see the Special Olympics "*Flame of Hope*" travel through 45 towns and cities before lighting up the Opening Ceremony of Special Olympics National Summer Games which we will both be attending next Saturday. While we there, there were some more photos taken, this time alongside the staff from the National Grid. When this was over, Laurie McMenemy made a speech saying how proud he was to be part of the Special Olympics.

Then next door at Prezzo's for a spot of lunch (all expensed paid), and a chance to get to know each other before the next leg of the relay. After lunch we toured around London's Trafalgar Square, Saw Big Ben, Buckingham Palace The London Eye, and other well known places, but our high light of the day was undoubtedly going to Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister (Gordon Brown and his wife Sarah). Gordon Brown greeted us outside No.10 and was very enthusiastic about the Special Olympics and all the athletes there who were due to compete next week. After a photo shoot Gordon Brown took everyone inside and the group was shown around his home by tour guide Paul who showed us around including the Cabinet Room where weekly meetings are held between the Prime Minister and all the Cabinet Ministers and see upstairs where the Banqueting hall is which is used for State visits. We even got to meet Gordon's three children, one of which was three years old that day!

It was all very posh inside with big chandeliers and paintings hanging in the rooms and large, long, wooden dining tables. We were particularly fascinated by the photos of all the previous prime ministers hung on the wall at the side of the wide staircase, which is polished and cleaned everyday along with the rest of the house. After the tour we said goodbye, all thanked the president and some of his staff and headed out of the house. Everyone then got themselves sorted and agreed to meet up again in Leicester for the Special Olympics National Summer Games 2009.

We have the privilege of representing London at the Special Olympics National Summer Games being held in Leicester from 25th to 31st July this year when many athletes from all over the UK will be competing against each other. The Special Olympics GB is a charity, recognised as the third member of the Olympic family and is a separate organisation to the Paralympics. The National Summer Games Leicester 2009 is a major national sports event for people with learning disabilities. Over 1.2 million people in Great Britain have learning disabilities and 3000 of them will be athletes at the forthcoming Games. We have made a collage and is posted on the club notice board of just some of the many photographs we took that day to mark a truly wonderful day and one we will both remember for years to come.

On our return from the National Games we will be helping our coach Jackie Lewis run a Summer of Sport Scheme specifically aimed at young people with disabilities. We will be assisting in class and will be demonstrating some of the routines we competed in Leicester to encourage more people with disabilities to take up the sport of Gymnastics. The club has been awarded a grant through the London Development Agency - Play Sport London and will run a 3 day course from 11.00am - 1.00pm each day on 4th, 5th & 6th August. These sessions are free of charge for the first 24 applicants. For further information or to discuss suitability should contact the club on 020-8683-1885

Report by

Philip Davis (Aged 24) Daniel Quick (Aged 23)

Members of the GB National Disabilities Squad