

An interview with a Stratford resident

RENEE BURNETT

[Full Transcript]

Interviewer:

My name is Trisha McCauley. We are currently in East London. Today's date is the 5th of March 2022. I will be interviewing Renee Burnett. Her name is spelled R e n e e, Burnett, B u r n e t t. So, Renee, please introduce yourself and your age.

Renee: Hello, I'm Renee Burnett, and I am 23 years old.

Interviewer: Could you just tell me a little bit about your memories of the Olympics?

Renee: So, when the Olympics was happening, I was in secondary school. So, I believe I was around 12 or 13. And I remember when the Westfield and the Olympic Stadium was being built, it was really amazing to see as I didn't think the Olympics would ever come to Stratford. But seeing it being built and going to Westfield for the first time was really amazing because it had so many floors and so many shops that I hadn't even seen, or were just used to went like when I was going to Oxford Street. And then also seeing the Olympic Stadium and thinking about all the athletes that would be coming and just thinking like, "The whole world is going to see Stratford on the TV. And oh, just like I live there," which was really amazing. So, it was really cool.

Interviewer: So, you was at school at that time. What was it like?

Renee: So, in school, we spoke about it, but not as much as some other schools did. And so, for us, we had the Canadian athletes that were staying at our school. So, what we had to do was we had to sort out the classrooms for them. And so, we pushed all the tables and chairs back. We also got to try different sports that would be taking place during the Olympics as well. So, we did hockey, javelin, and shuttle pod, which was fun.

Interviewer: So, what was your favourite sport?

Renee: Hockey. Because I used to like really like the hockey sticks. And I remember there was one time I was playing and I got a goal, and I was really happy about it. And trying to hit the shuttlecock was really fun. The putt I mean. So, yeah, it was good.

Interviewer: So, did you go to the Olympics at all? Did you see any events?

Renee: Yeah. So, I went to the Paralympics, which was amazing. I went to see the Aquatics. And there was swimming that I saw, which was the main sport, which was really cool. There was the Aquatic Center had so many levels to it. So, there was so many seats. And I got to sit at the top, which was really fun. And it was kind of scary, because it was so big, and just looking down and athletes looked so tiny. And I remember there was one of the athletes that had a foul swim. And instead of everyone telling him to stop, we all cheered for him to keep going, which was fun. And what was even more amazing was the fact that he was from Barbados as well, which is also part of my heritage. So, it was quite amazing to see a Bajan swimmer swimming, which was really fun. So, I enjoyed it.

Interviewer: So, what was your favourite memory of the Olympics?

Renee: So, one of my favourite memories was when I was walking in Stratford centre and I accidentally bumped into one of the athletes because I wasn't paying attention. And it was really amazing, because that was the first time I was actually so close to an athlete throughout the whole 2 weeks it was being taken, throughout those whole 2 weeks. So, actually seeing an athlete close up was really amazing, because it just made everything look so real. And it was like, "Well, yeah, the Olympics is here in Stratford." Like, you would never think the Olympics would be in Stratford. And the fact that everyone from all different countries has come to my area to like see the Olympics is just really cool.

Interviewer: So, do you think the Olympics was a good thing for the area?

Renee: Yes, I believe so. It has most definitely brought more, I'd say, opportunities. So, now we have a really big park that we can go and visit. The Velodrome is open, so we can like go and use those areas. I remember I have been to the copper box, which is really nice inside. I did some (what's it called?) basketball in there, which I liked. And also, during the summertime, I enjoy going to the park and sitting down and just like reminiscing of the area. And yeah, like even now, I still see tourists going there and taking pictures at Westfields and going to Olympic Stadium and taking photos. So, I really like it. I think it was a really good thing that happened.

Interviewer: Is there anything negative that you felt with the Olympics and the building of the park?

Renee: Not necessarily. I think now that there's so many buildings in the park itself, like it's just made the park very windy, especially during the summertime. So, when the wind is blowing, you just get chills, and I just don't like that. But apart from that, like I think it's fine. Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Renee: Not that I can think of.

Interviewer: Okay, well, thank you, Renee. That's really interesting hearing your thoughts, especially as a young person. Thank you very much.