

LONDON, THE OLYMPICS AND THE ROAD TO 2012

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Most books on the Olympics will feature accounts of the great moments and stars, repeating oft told tales of Olympic mythology. Our new book (*Understanding the Olympics*, Routledge) offers an understanding of the Olympic movement in its broader social and historical context. It provides ways of understanding the politics, the economics and the cultures within which the Olympic Games was forged and within which it grew to become the pre-eminent mega-event. We hope it will answer the basic questions that someone who wants to understand the Olympic Games will ask. That we are both from London and that the next Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games are to be held there is one reason, but not the only one, why we have collaborated in writing this book. As social and cultural analysts we have been observing and commenting on sporting cultures for around 30 years, and we wanted to explore the continuing fascination with the Olympic Games, neither as a celebration nor a condemnation but as a critical reflection. In particular we wanted to examine aspects of the Games that, we suspect, many other books will neglect. The following is based on the first chapter of *Understanding the Olympics* and attempts to explain the background to the London 2012 Olympic Games.

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Introduction

On 6th July 2005, on a hot humid night in Singapore, the IOC was about to announce the result of a two-year battle between candidate cities to stage the Olympic Games. It was 8.49pm, just after mid-day in London. The envelope was opened, and IOC President Jacques Rogge announced the winner. In the final round of voting, London had beaten Paris by 54 votes to 50. For much of the race Paris had been strong favourites. It had been a long contest – and the bookmakers odds favoured Paris right to the end, but the IOC had voted and London was to stage the 2012 Olympic Games. London will be staging the Olympic Games for the third time, the first city to do so. As well as identifying some basic aspects of 2012 this paper briefly examines the background to the London bid to stage the games, and previous unsuccessful British bids.

London 2012: Some Basic Questions

Wild celebrations broke out amongst the London delegation in the hall, and in Trafalgar Square, whilst the Paris delegation was in despair, with recrimination and bitterness to follow. The London delegation partied on into the night. Meanwhile, in the UK four young British-Asians were making their final preparations. Many of the London delegation in Singapore would, in late morning, have been emerging from sleep as the four youths began their final London-bound journeys at dawn. Just 21 hours after the triumphant Singapore victory was announced, in London, four bombs exploded – three, all around 8.50am, in tube trains and one almost an hour later, on a bus, all within a mile or so of Kings Cross, on the northern edge of central London. London's Olympic success dominated the news for less than a day. It made for a sombre start to the journey towards 2012. It was also a salutary reminder that security and risk management would be significant elements in the costs of staging the Games.

Who is running the Games? There are two main organisations involved – the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA). LOCOG are responsible for running the Games, while the ODA are responsible for the provision of the infrastructure. More recently, an additional body, the Olympic Park Legacy Company, has been established, charged with the responsibility of organising the use or disposal of Olympic facilities after the Games are over. The National Olympic Committee, in the case of the UK, the British Olympic Association (BOA) develops the bid to stage the games, helping to establish a bidding team, but once the bid is

successful, it is necessary to establish an Organising Committee who must also represent the interests of the host city and country.

How much will it cost? It has become conventional to split Olympic finances into two elements – the cost of running the games and the cost of providing the facilities. The budget for running the games is based on an assumption that a share of television and sponsorship income from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), ticket sales, local sponsorship and merchandising will cover running costs. The original bid specified total public funding of £3.4bn, made up of £1.5bn from the National Lottery, £625m from the London council tax (provided by an Olympic levy of 38p per week), £250m from London Development Agency, and £1bn from the Treasury (*The Guardian* 16/03/07).

However in 2007 it emerged that the actual budget had soared to £9.3bn. This is made up as follows: £2.375bn from original 2012 Games funding package (Lottery money and the London Council Tax.) and in additional sums: £4.9bn central Government departments, an additional £700m from the National Lottery, an additional £300m from the London Mayor (not from Council Tax, but from reserves and LDA profits on land sales, post Olympics) and £1.044bn committed by central government specifically for regeneration and legacy (*Evening Standard* 15/3/07).

Where does this money go? £5.3bn goes to the Olympic Delivery Authority £2.2bn into a contingency fund, £840m for tax and VAT, £600m for security and £390m invested in training elite athletes and the cost of the Paralympics (*The Guardian* 16/03/07). Since construction began, a substantial portion of the contingency fund has been utilised or earmarked for use. The Olympic Delivery Authority commission project management teams who in turn sub-contract work to builders. The major tasks are the preparation of the site, and the construction of the main stadium, the aquatic centre, a range of smaller stadia, the Olympic Village, the media centre and the Broadcasting Centre. At time of writing, at the end of 2010, the project is ahead of schedule and under budget.

How do these costs compare with previous Games? A quick answer might be - four times as much as Sydney 2000, almost twice as much as Athens 2004, but a third that of Beijing 2008. However, it can be difficult to compare costs (See Preuss 2004). Every Olympic Games has its own accounting conventions, circumstances vary from country to country,

exchange rates and varying levels of inflation complicate the calculations. The extent to which Olympic-related infrastructural costs are included or excluded varies from games to games. Typically, Governments will try and minimise the apparent costs by ensuring some of the expenditure is hidden in general Government budgets. It is clear, though, that there has been a steady rise, above inflation, since the Second World War, with some aberrations to this general pattern.

It is widely agreed that spending in Montreal in 1976 spiralled out of control and that the main stadium cost far too much. In the case of Los Angeles (1984), once the citizens voted not to allow any public finance by the city, the private committee charged with running the Games were under great pressure to limit expenditure. As a result, very little was invested in new facilities. There appears to have been some significant city support in the form of transport, security and other services that were not accounted for in the Olympic costs, which may therefore have been kept artificially low. The estimate for Beijing, by contrast, appears to include significant general infrastructural costs, such as transportation projects, which, in previous Games have not been included. So the figures need to be treated with caution.

How did London come to get awarded the Games? The Olympic Games are awarded by the IOC, in a secret ballot of its 100+ members. Candidate cities have to announce their intention around nine years in advance of the proposed year of staging the games. There follows a period of developing and submitting detailed proposals, official inspections and assessments, lobbying and campaigning, culminating in a presentation at an IOC session, seven years before the proposed Games, at which the vote is taken. London last staged the Games in 1948 and, since 1980, there have been several attempts to bring the Olympic Games to the UK again. Indeed the UK is only the second nation to be awarded a third Olympic Games, and London is the first city to stage a third Games. Over the years, 16 of the 28 Games awarded have been in Europe, and as yet Africa has not staged an Olympic Games, although in the wake of the successful World Cup of 2010, a South African Olympic bid will have a strong chance.

Olympics bids do not just happen – nor, these days are they are they simply the product of the desire of the NOC to stage the Games, important a catalyst though that is. Running an Olympic bid is a lengthy and expensive operation, which requires the co-operation and

active support of both national and city governments. Obtaining such support requires delicate diplomacy and extensive lobbying. In the process, typically, a variety of separate interest groups with divergent agendas are drawn together. Staging an Olympic Games requires extensive public investment in infrastructure. It is increasingly hard to justify this expenditure simply on the grounds of hosting a fifteen-day event, however global its appeal. So claims for long-term legacy have to be developed.

Governments and political parties may be attracted to the grandeur and high visibility, and to the potential cohesive impact on the unity and enthusiasm of the people as a whole. Urban planners may perceive an Olympic project, even if the bid is ultimately unsuccessful, as a means of uncorking funding for strategic projects – new road and rail links, industrial development and housing developments. Architects will be attracted by the possibility of commission for iconic stadia and other buildings. Builders, and associated contractors will see the potential for large contracts. Local politicians will sense an opportunity for new parks and sporting facilities, and for local employment. Most significantly, the establishment of new transport infrastructure and the high profile of the Olympic project attract associated development – speculative housing, industrial development and shopping malls. A well-managed Olympic bid will endeavour to bring together, sometimes in a teeth-gritting harmony, all these elements.

It was not always thus. After Athens in 1896, the next three Olympics were staged as adjuncts to International Exhibitions, and trade fairs. It was not until the 1920s that the profile of the event began to grow. Governments began to perceive the Games as a display of national prowess – most notoriously in the “Nazi” Olympics in 1936, a public display of Aryan supremacy and German power. In the cold war era the Olympics became a symbolic battle ground in the Cold War. The spread of television from the 1960s onwards escalated the public visibility of the Games and produced an ever-rising revenue stream. However, the costs of the Games too began growing. The Montreal Games in 1976 went so far over budget that the citizens were paying off the costs until the end of the century. Cities became reluctant to mount bids, and in the late 1970s the only bidders to stage the 1984 Games were Los Angeles and Teheran. The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 in an Islamic revolution brought an end to Iran’s bid, leaving Los Angeles as the only bidder. The citizens of Los Angeles were so concerned about potential costs they voted to deny the Games public money. Faced with no alternative

bidder, the IOC was forced to accept the supposedly private Games, to be run by a private not-for-profit organising committee. It became vital for this committee, who would be personally liable for any losses, to minimise expenditure and tap new forms of revenue.

Los Angeles produced a myth – that Olympic Games could break even, and even make a small surplus (the IOC disapprove of the word 'profit'). In fact there was extensive hidden public support in the form of transport infrastructure, policing and security. No Games since 1984 has successfully broken even, if the full costs are properly accounted for. The presentation of Olympic Games accounts systematically separates the cost of running the games and the infrastructural costs involved in preparing for the Games. The accounts can show that the share of television rights payments, sponsorship revenue, ticket sales and other marketing received by the Organising Committee covers the cost of staging the Games. It does not however cover the costs, generally much larger, of building stadia, and associated facilities, which must be borne by the hosting city and country. It is this consideration that has prompted careful thought and debate in countries proposing to bid to stage an Olympic Games. Decisions have to be taken as to whether such expenditure can be justified.

British Olympic Bids

London staged the 1908 Games, stepping in at relatively short notice after Italy withdrew. After the Second World War, London once again took up the challenge of staging a Games at short notice. In the context of war devastation, rationing, and general shortages, the 1948 Olympics were staged as economically as possible, and have subsequently been dubbed the 'austerity games'. The UK did not again contemplate campaigning to stage the Games until the late 1970s. An abortive London bid to stage the 1988 Games presaged a series of failed bids, before eventual success in 2005. Horace Cutler became conservative leader of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1977 and was a precursor of the shift rightwards that culminated in the general election victory of the Conservative Party led by Margaret Thatcher in 1979. It was reported in 1978 that London might bid for the Games and that a £60,000 feasibility study was to be commissioned. Meanwhile, several members of the athletics club, the Raneleigh Harriers, had competed in the 1978 New York City Marathon and were amazed at its large scale. Ex-athletes Chris Brasher and John Disley decided to see the New York Marathon for themselves. They did some training

and entered the 1979 race. Impressed, Brasher wondered “whether London could stage such a festival”.ⁱ

By October 1979 Cutler had presented his feasibility study. The cheap option, costed at £545m, was based on using Wembley as the main stadium, whilst the more expensive £1.2bn (£4.5bn at 2009 prices) proposal involved a new stadium in Docklands. In the event a formal bid was never made, probably because Cutler discovered he would not obtain Government support. It did, however, prompt him to support the London Marathon.ⁱⁱ In early 1980 *The Observer* editor Donald Treford got Brasher and Disley together with the relevant authorities – the Greater London Council (GLC), the police, the City of London, the Amateur Athletics Association and the London Tourist Board. GLC leader Sir Horace Cutler, insisted “You should never ask the ratepayers to bail you out. Not a penny from the GLC.” So the organisers needed sponsorship for the projected £75,000 budget, and agency West Nally signed up Gillette as title sponsors for three years.ⁱⁱⁱ In 1981 Labour won the GLC elections, and the left wing Ken Livingstone became the leader, introducing radical policies, and using the council as a platform to attack the Conservative government. This infuriated Margaret Thatcher, and after an unsuccessful attempt to block Labour’s Fares Fair London Transport policy, and a failure to win the council back in 1985, the Conservative Government abolished the GLC. It was a profoundly anti-democratic act, which left London without a single strategic authority, and ill equipped to manage any centralised planning, far less manage an Olympic Games.

The mythologising of the Los Angeles Games ‘surplus’ attracted far greater enthusiasm for bidding around the world. In the mid 1980s, six cities (Paris, Birmingham, Belgrade, Brisbane, Barcelona and Amsterdam) entered the race to stage the 1992 Olympic Games. Birmingham won the UK right to bid in competition with Manchester and London. The Birmingham bid was led by the Labour MP and former Minister for Sport, Denis Howell, probably the best Minister for Sport the UK has had and certainly one of the few British political figures with some credibility in the world of international sport governance. The central appeal of Birmingham’s bid was the compact main site, at the National Exhibition Centre, with excellent transport connections, easy access between venues and the Village, and straightforward security. Olympic insiders, though, were convinced that Barcelona would win, recognising the power and influence of IOC President Jean Antonio Samaranch, who was from Barcelona.

The intense competition meant that budgets for bidding rose dramatically, with the cities spending an average of \$10m each. Lavish receptions were hosted, IOC members were showered with expensive gifts and free travel, and the culture that later led to IOC members being expelled for accepting inducements and bribes for votes began to take hold. In the event the Games, as widely predicted, were awarded to Barcelona. The Paris bid was well prepared and brilliantly presented but had some technical shortcomings. The Paris presentation was by far and away the best, utilising a well-made video and Jacques Chirac, Mayor of Paris who made a brilliant speech. Birmingham's presentation, by contrast, was over elaborate, with too many voices speaking and rather over fussily standing to say one line and then sitting again.^{iv}

In the sophisticated aristocratic world of the IOC, where utilising bid team members who speak a range of languages is a distinct advantage, Birmingham's bid appeared provincial, its members rather out of their depth at times. In the competition to wine, dine and shower gifts on IOC members, other cities were more profligate. The rather lukewarm support from the British Government (the official letter authorising the bid was signed, not by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher but by Environment Minister Kenneth Baker) did not help Birmingham. At the IOC vote the Government was represented by Minister for Sport, Richard Tracey. The British Minister for Sport has always been a low status role, and Tracey had not been in the post long enough to have become familiar in IOC circles. Thatcher herself was unpopular with many for her support for maintaining sporting links with South Africa, and 21 of the 47 Commonwealth countries boycotted the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh in protest at such links. (See Bateman and Douglas 1986; and Hill 1992: 101). British logistical support for an American bombing raid on Libya put an end to any hope Birmingham had of picking up any votes from Middle Eastern IOC members (Howell 1990: 326). Amsterdam's chances were undermined by a well-organised anti-Olympic Games protest movement, whose systematic demonstrations targeting IOC members, had considerable impact.

Birmingham had developed a strategy of attracting trade fairs and conventions and sporting events, but by 1993, under a new left wing leadership, had become sceptical and cynical with one councillor commenting that she "wouldn't spend ten pounds on the Olympics".^v The IOC, concerned at the negative publicity given to the lavish gifts, and the

persistent rumours of corruption, instituted a set of regulations to govern the campaigning process, but they were neither rigorous in style, nor effectively policed, as the Salt Lake City corruption scandal subsequently illustrated.

The British candidate to host 1996 and 2000 was Manchester, whose bidding team was led by Bob Scott. Scott was a flamboyant theatre entrepreneur who had been head of the 69 Theatre Company and established the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. In 1985 he set up the Manchester Olympic Bid Committee, losing out to Birmingham as the British bid for 1992. Scott had huge enthusiasm and commitment, a broad cultural hinterland, and a gift for salesmanship, and for almost a decade devoted his life to the bids. In contrast to the municipal council orientation of the Birmingham bid, Scott built a bid around strong support from the business community, concentrating on those with roots in the north-west. He was also successful at winning the support of the relevant Urban Development Corporation. Privately, Scott expected the first bid to be unsuccessful, but felt that a good attempt would provide a platform for a serious chance second time around. Manchester ran a well-researched and well-targeted lobbying campaign, and Scott's own energy and charisma helped give the team a focus and a sense of purpose.^{vi} He was able to develop a good rapport with Sir Arthur Gold, of the BOA; and also secured a much stronger commitment from the Government with Mrs Thatcher writing a long letter to IOC President Samaranch in support (Hill 1992:113-4). The bid cost a modest £3m and may well have been worth it in promoting the image of Manchester on the world stage. Indeed some cities may nowadays take the view that the best value to be obtained from the Olympic Games lies in bidding but not winning, and thus gaining some promotional value without taking on the enormous costs of major developments.

Manchester had to compete with two dramatically different but strongly supported bids, in the approach to the IOC Session of 1990. The traditionalists favoured Athens, and the emotion and romance of marking the centenary of the first Modern Olympic Games by returning to Greece. The modernizers supported Atlanta, the home of Coca Cola and Ted Turner's CNN, which seemed to epitomise the way that the Games had become dependent on corporate capitalism sponsorship and television revenue. Athens should have won, of course, but the strong conviction of the Athens bidding team that they were the only logical choice antagonized some IOC members, who perceived this as arrogance. A whispering campaign casting doubts on Greek efficiency combined with powerful but

shadowy forces behind the scenes, to win the day for Atlanta. Subsequent disappointment with Atlanta combined with guilt to ensure Athens got their Games in 2004.

Soon after the awarding of the Games to Atlanta, it emerged that a London bid for 2000, led by Seb Coe, was planned. However, a rival London group emerged and only under pressure from the British Olympic Association (BOA) could they agree to merge; too late however, for the BOA, who elected to stick with Manchester for a second time. The second Manchester bid was launched in March 1992, with a budget of £5m. The new conservative Prime Minister, John Major, offered more enthusiastic support than Mrs Thatcher had done, and central government contributed £2m to the campaign, whilst 24 companies contributed another £2m. The local council took a clearer line in stressing that the bid had to be linked to regeneration, especially in the eastern part of Manchester, and this in turn helped win the support of Environment Minister Michael Heseltine. Manchester's proposed budget for the Games themselves was £973m, of which 40% would be spent on the Olympic village (Hill 1994).

But even Scott knew he was fighting with a handicap, as he subsequently acknowledged - "I was aware that I was not leading the first XI," he said. "The international world thinks London when they think Great Britain. If you put up Manchester or any other city other than London, however sound the bid, you cannot get over the fact that you are not London. The world then comes to the conclusion that Britain has decided to send out its second XI and is not taking the competition seriously. I found myself between a rock a hard place." (*Daily Telegraph* 26/5/03). Once again, Manchester found itself trailing two front runners, Beijing and Sydney, who fought a very close battle, Sydney winning by the odd vote, after most experts pronounced it too close to call. The experience gained during these two Olympic bids fed into Manchester's successful bid to stage the 2002 Commonwealth Games, headed by Scott. It became very clear during the 1990s that the IOC could only be attracted to the UK by a London bid

A London Bid?

The London bid for 2012 has its roots in the 1990s. The failure of Birmingham and Manchester to attract significant support had forced the sports community to recognise that it was London or nothing. It was becoming recognised in the UK that of British cities

only London was likely to be favoured by the IOC, yet BOA had three times chosen other British cities to bid. The emergence of the bid, and its success has to be seen in political context. The issue of a London-wide authority, development strategies for East London and the Thames estuary region, and the development of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link were all relevant factors.

The eastern inner city boroughs of London were socially deprived areas, with poor transport links and extensive derelict sites that formerly housed industry, docks, and railway sidings. The Government began redeveloping the docklands during the 1980s, establishing the Docklands Development Corporation, a mechanism for eliminating local authority planning processes in order to speed development. In the early 1990s, the then Environment Minister Michael Heseltine launched the Thames Gateway Scheme, one of the most ambitious regional regeneration programmes in Europe. Since 1997 the Labour Government has continued to support the Thames Gateway scheme.^{vii} One of the biggest sites in the area, in Stratford contained a railway yard, largely disused, a range of light industry, much of it derelict, and a complex network of canals, streams, sewer pipes and other waterways. The Channel Tunnel had opened in 1994, and three years earlier it had been announced that a Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the high speed line from London to the Tunnel, would be built, running through Stratford, to terminate at St Pancras. The sheer scale of this project encouraged confidence in the ability of the UK to deliver major engineering projects and the fact that it could include a station on the Olympic site itself was subsequently to prove an asset to the London bid.^{viii} According to Gavin Poynter (2005), the CTRL provided an important catalyst for other improvements in road and rail infrastructure. By 1995 the Thames Gateway Task Force had drawn up plans for 30,000 new homes and 50,000 new jobs being established in the Thames Corridor by 2021.

A major obstacle to a convincing London bid was the absence of a strategic city wide authority, since Thatcher abolished the GLC in 1986^{ix}, after finding that the leftist administration led by Labour's Ken Livingstone, was a very public thorn in her side. But it soon became clear that a major world city like London, could not be run effectively by 30 local boroughs, and that some form of central strategic authority was needed. The question could only be raised meaningfully in Parliament once Thatcher had resigned as Conservative party leader. In a parliamentary debate on the Governance of London, in 1991, Labour MP Bryan Gould proclaimed that "Londoners know that it is nonsense that

our city, uniquely, has no city-wide voice, no one capable of taking a strategic view of the needs and interests that we share as Londoners or of the future that should be ours...They know, for example, that London's ill-fated Olympic bid could not be taken seriously as long as there was no one to speak for London." Labour MP Kate Hoey argued that London had been unable to compete equally with Manchester and Birmingham to get BOA support because of the absence of a "person or group who could sign the contract with the British Olympic Association" and asserted that the Labour party's proposal to recreate a streamlined Greater London authority was the way forward to that. Even the high Tory MP Rhodes Boyson insisted that "there must be a voice for London. Whether that is achieved by bringing together the various boroughs or in some other way, we need a voice for London. ...Perhaps there should be an elected mayor working with the boroughs."^x Despite these views, the Conservative Party remained hostile to anything resembling a revived GLC and it was not until the Labour Party regained power in 1997, that the policy of encouraging the establishment of city Mayors with real authority put the re-introduction of a London authority back on the agenda. London finally regained a form of central strategic body in 2000 with the creation of the Greater London Authority.^{xi}

In 2000, despite being the candidate favoured by Labour Party members, Ken Livingstone was denied the right to run as Labour candidate for Mayor by an ad hoc voting system designed by Labour Party managers to prevent him winning. Livingstone announced he would run as an independent, and despite expulsion from the Labour Party, was duly elected Mayor. With a new authority and Mayor in place many of the objections to a London bid had been addressed.

Meanwhile, following unsuccessful bids by Birmingham and Manchester for the 1992, 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games the BOA spent time with the voting constituency of the IOC and received the very clear message that 'only when you return to the table with London will we believe that you are serious about hosting a future Olympic Games'. The British Olympic Association (BOA) decided in 1997 that if there was to be another UK bid, it would have to come from London (*Daily Telegraph* 26/5/03). The BOA commissioned a feasibility study, developed a strategy, and mounted a lobbying campaign. The feasibility study, conducted by David Luckes, did not appear until 2001, but was a comprehensive analysis, running to 165,000 words and 395 pages.^{xii} In early 2001 the BOA team presented the feasibility study to the then Secretary of State (Chris Smith),

Minister for Sport (Kate Hoey) and London Mayor Ken Livingstone. At that stage the BOA had proposed sites in the West and East of London as options for the Olympic site. But the Mayor insisted that the East London option was the most viable because of the regeneration opportunity that it created. *The Times* (12/3/01) declared that east end regeneration would be central to a London bid for 2012.

The Government, however, was yet to be convinced of the merits of the bid, and the possibility that it could be successful. But in May 2001 they agreed to come together with the BOA and the Mayor to form a stakeholder group that would explore the concept further. In late 2001 the group commissioned Insignia Richard Ellis to confirm land availability and Arup to undertake a cost benefit analysis of the bid itself and the staging of the Olympic Games.^{xiii} Later that year the whole project almost collapsed after a Government decision not to proceed with the Pickett's Lock Athletics stadium forced UK Athletics to withdraw from its commitment to stage the 2005 World Athletics Championships. (*The Times* 10/10/01). The British reputation was badly damaged in international sporting circles. By late 2001 the BOA and Livingstone agreed that a Wembley site was impractical and that a stadium and village could be built close together and near good transport links, in Stratford (*Daily Telegraph* 9/10/03).

From the outset the media were heavily involved in attempts to shape public opinion around the bid process. It was the *Daily Telegraph's* then sports editor David Welch who brought the British Olympic Association's decision to bid with London for the Games to wider public attention ('London Must Bid', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 July, 2003). He launched a sustained and partisan campaign through the *Daily Telegraph* to back the London bid. Welch and his sports team including the current BBC Sports Editor Mihir Bose were relentless in selling the merits of a London Games to a largely apathetic public and lobbying politicians to get onside by backing the London proposal.

Indeed such was the link between the paper and the bid team that as the process evolved the Director of Communications for the London 2012 bid, Mike Lee recognized that steps needed to be taken to cultivate other newspapers, as the links with the *Telegraph* were leading to some disquiet among sections of the print media (Lee, 2006: 28). By way of contrast another sports journalist Oliver Holt - the award winning sportswriter of the *Daily Mirror* - had penned an extended essay into why London would not win the bid, by

systematically identifying the misplaced political and economic myths that were surrounding the London bid in 2005 (Holt, 2005).

Arup presented its findings in May 2002 based upon a specimen bid in East London. Their conclusions were encouraging but the Government continued to worry about the vast scale of the project. A decision was delayed until after the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, where concerns about financing (particularly the huge drain on the public purse) and organisation continued right up until the Opening Ceremony. Manchester was, however, seen as a success, both abroad and at home, and once again demonstrated the UK's ability to deliver major events. The resultant feel-good factor made an impact and media interest in a London bid increased.

The Daily Telegraph became a committed lobbyist for a London bid. The attitude of the *Evening Standard* towards the Games has oscillated during the last eight years. In 2002 an *Evening Standard* editorial (07/08/02) commented that an Olympic bid would need "wholehearted Government backing" and that the "Government must not be penny-pinching if it genuinely intends to support a serious bid for the Olympics." It declared that, "A city of London's size and confidence should not shirk the challenge of attempting to host the biggest sporting event in the world."

Despite extensive lobbying from the BOA, and the media, the Government remained split on the subject, and unwilling to commit. In the wake of the destruction of the world trade centre in September 2001, and the invasion of Afghanistan, hawks in the USA were pressing hard for an invasion of Afghanistan, a plan in which British Prime Minister acquiesced. In February 2003, the British Cabinet agreed to delay a decision on the Olympic bid until after the war in Iraq had commenced. The final agreement and submission of the bid was delayed by six months by the build up to the Iraq War.

Finally, on May 15th 2003, the Minister for Culture, Tessa Jowell announced that the government would back the London bid. £2.375 billion was allocated to pay for the staging of the 2012 Games in London. These costs would be met by business, the London Development Agency (LDA) and the government. London Mayor Ken Livingstone agreed with Tessa Jowell, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport that, each London household would pay an average £20 a year Olympic tax from 2006-2007 for a maximum

of 10 years (*Daily Telegraph* 9/10/03). The *Evening Standard* editorial (15/5/04) proclaimed that this was “a vote of confidence in London as a world city” whilst referring to “reservations” amongst Londoners. The eventual budget rose to around £10 billion and it has become clear that the initial calculations were inadequately worked out, for example, omitting to take into account large sums of VAT tax that would be due. There is always a political pressure to scale down initial budgets in order to secure approval, and this would certainly appear to have occurred in the case of London.

Conclusion

As we write this in January 2011 the Olympic Park and its facilities are taking visible shape, and are still on time and to budget. The volunteer recruit programme has been launched, the online ticketing system is registering people, and leaders have been recruited to direct the ceremonies. In 2010 the General Election resulted in the defeat of the Labour Party and establishment of a Conservative-led coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party. The coalition immediately implemented a programme of massive cuts in public expenditure, but of course it is largely too late for any significant sums to be saved by cutting the Olympic programme. The cuts to local authority expenditure and to sport budgets will inevitably have an impact on support for the legacy of the 2012 Games. However, if the economies of the world are emerging from recession, the London Olympic Games may be perfectly timed to contribute to a feel-good factor, possibly to the benefit of the current British Government.

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ⁱⁱⁱ *London Marathon History*, from www.virginlondonmarathon.com accessed 29/09/09

^{iv} These presentations were observed by Whannel, who was in the hall during the IOC Session, working for a television company on a documentary about the Games.

^v Renaissance that never was: Birmingham's new leader snubs prestige building projects, Nick Cohen, *The Independent*, 10/10/93
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/renaissance-that-never-was-birminghams-new-leader-snubs-prestige-building-projects-1509856.html>
accessed 30/6/10

^{vi} Whannel recalls him, during an International Olympic Academy event in Olympia, in 1992, briefly commandeering a small electric vehicle, which was retailing fruit and vegetables, to broadcast through its tannoy speaker the strident clarion call "Vote for Manchester!"

^{vii} The Economics of the Olympics Bid, Gavin Poynter, *Rising East Online*, No. 1, January 2005

^{viii} It must be acknowledged, however, that the CTRL line was only completed fifteen years after the Tunnel was opened, whereas the French high speed link, ready when the tunnel opened, was only one part of a whole network of modern high-speed rail routes built for the ultra fast TGV (Train Grande-Vitesse). Stratford International station was conceived, planned and built as an international station, with passport and customs, at which some Eurostar trains would stop. However, in 2010 it became clear that Eurostar would not be even contemplating opening this station until all building work was complete. There may well be questions about the economic case for a separate international station only a few minutes from the St Pancras terminal.

^{ix} As a result of the Local Government Act of 1985

^x Government of London, House of Commons Debate 05 June 1991 vol 192 cc285-338
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1991/jun/05/government-of-london>
accessed 29/09/09

^{xi} As a result of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

^{xii} <http://www.olympics.org.uk>

^{xiii} <http://www.olympics.org.uk>