Date: **23.03.2022**
Interviewer: **Di**
Interviewee: **Izabela**

Izabela, who lives locally near to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, shares her view of the Park and how she came to know about it.

Interviewer
Hi, we are here at the London Stadium on the 23rd of March 2022 and it's Di interviewing Izabela. Hi, Izabela. So, you said you know the Park, when did you first become aware of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park?

Interviewee
It was probably from a young age because like I said, I came in 2011, and so it was probably like a big deal like this new Park being built, and the fact that it was like a big arena, and I was into West Ham - I don't know why I just was [laughs] and so my Dad was like “let me take you to this Park in Stratford” and I think that's my first became aware, this lady, she came to show me the London Stadium specifically, so and then we just walked around for a bit.

Interviewer
So, are you a West Ham supporter?

Interviewee
I was, as a child but I don't think I am now.

Interviewer
OK so did you ever go into the West Ham Shop?

Interviewee
Yes, [laughs] because we wanted to look at the merchandise.

Interviewer
Did you buy anything?

Interviewee
No, but we looked. No actually, my Dad did give me a West Ham scarf once.

Interviewer
Is there anywhere else on the Park that you've been?

Interviewee
Yeah, I've been in the far end, I don’t know which one, I have no clue! The part next to the tickets for the big red thing?

Interviewer
Yeah, the ArcelorMittal Orbit.

Interviewee
I've been in there, too.

Interviewer
You've been in there, what did you think?

Interviewee
Yeah, it’s cool. You know, I was too scared of heights at the time, but that was really cool. Seeing the Park in a 360 view.

Interviewer
So, did you go on both levels of the viewing platform, or just one or…?

Interviewee
Yeah both.

Interviewer
And which bit did you find the most surprising looking down?

Interviewee
I don’t know really, I think, I guess like just the amount because, you know, once you're a little person, everything seems so small when you go up there everything’s just so much to look at, obviously, also the river, because I think it’s quite interesting to have a river in the middle of a Park.

Interviewer
So, are you aware that there's a river and a canal in the Park?

Interviewee
No.

Interviewer
Have you been on the river in any of the boats or the pedalos?

Interviewee
I think me and my Dad went on the pedalos once.

Interviewee
What did you think of it?

Interviewee
It was so much fun, you know, watching the water glisten, and paddling. Looking at Stratford from below is so great.

Interviewer
So, you've got two levels in the Park, have you been and walked down on the lower level or just always on the upper level?

Interviewee
Is that where the stairs go down? Sometimes I go there and, just to sit there to think or to listen to music.

Interviewer
Is it a good place to sit and think?

Interviewee
It's so beautiful, I think, because especially if you pick the right place, you get to watch the river go by, you get to watch the boats go by, there are buildings to look at, there's people. I think overall it's really quite surprising.

Interviewer
Do you think people would be surprised there were so many quiet areas in a busy Park?

Interviewee
Yeah, absolutely. I think compared to Westfield Stratford City, for example, Westfield is so busy, so crowded, so loud, so to have a quiet Park is very nice, opposite.

Interviewer
Now, when we were talking before you said so about skating along the Greenway…

Interviewee
I learned, I wanted to learn to skate, so I got a skateboard, and I used to live right next to the Greenway at the time and so the Greenway was the best place to learn, because it had the nice ground, and it was straight, and I could just go, and so I used to skate for like, you know, a couple days and I'd always going to one point and turn back, and so one day, I was like "let me see where this really leads to" you know, I want to find the end and quite like exploring so I was like "let me find the end" and so I skated all the way to the end, and I ended up in the Olympic Park.

Interviewer
So, have you skated around in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park?

Interviewee
No, unfortunately, I think the ground is too rough to skate on.

Interviewer
OK so it’s the wrong surface, and the Greenway has the right surface?

Interviewee
The Greenway’s the right surface.

Interviewer
Would you do that again?

Interviewee
Oh, I do it all the time, sometimes when I want to go to Westfield Stratford City and I have time to kill, I'll skate here instead of getting the bus.

Interviewer
Have you been to the skateboarding event at the Park? There was one.

Interviewee
No, I'm not cool enough for that! [laughs]

Interviewer
Do you use any of the venues, or have you ever been to the gyms or to the London Aquatics Center to swim?

Interviewee
Actually, I went to the London Aquatics Center at one point, because I used to swim too when I was little, so we switched centers and then I used to swim here for a bit.

Interviewer
What did you think of it?

Interviewee
The water was so deep, it was honestly, so weird. I felt like I was, I was going to drown but that was really nice.

Interviewer
What’s the best bit about the London Aquatics Center?

Interviewee
Honestly, I think how open it is because the center I used to go to before in Newham, it's very like, boxed in, you know, whereas the [London] Aquatics Centre, it was like, so open on the inside and there's glass everywhere, and it's really cool.

Interviewer
So, is there anything that surprised you about the Park, generally?

Interviewee
The rock-climbing walls, yeah, on the, on the little, the play area. I think the play area, it was the best part. I was gobsmacked the first time I saw it.

Interviewer
So, you've been on the climbing walls? What did you think of that?

Interviewee
I had to take one specific route because I couldn't climb any of the others, and I never conquered the second wall without help, but I think it was fun. That was like a time where initially every weekend I'd go and just climb.

Interviewer
So that's a good place that you would recommend for people to go and visit?

Interviewee
Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer
OK, have you got any funny stories about the Park, apart from skating on the Greenway? Anything funny that's happened, or surprising, or…?

Interviewee
No, I don't think so. I think, um, watching children running around in the Fountains, that is always funny, because sometimes if they get surprised by where the water's coming, so watching their faces as they get splashed, and I think running around in them yourself, you know?

Interviewer
Do you do that?

Interviewee
No, I think maybe I did once when I was a kid, but not any more, no.

Interviewer
You're never too old! So, what's your favourite part of the Park, would you say, and why would that be?

Interviewee
Going to have to go with the play area, simply because there's so much to do, and you never have to be a child to do them. I think that like, again, the rock climbing and the swings, you know the… isn't there like a swinging bench somewhere?

Interviewer
Yes. In the Great British Garden maybe? There is a swing seat there.

Interviewee
So I think it's just in a weird way, like interactive, because it's more than just the bench. It's like the swing or there's like, something to play on, and you don't have to be a child to play on it, so all ages.

Interviewer
So, the Park is for all ages, yeah? What do you see the Park being like in another 10 years, because obviously it's 10 years since the Games, over what do you see the Park being like in another 10 years?

Interviewee
I think the London Stadium will still be here, I think it's very cool, and that there would be more people. I don't know, really. I think again, the little area next to the ArcelorMittal Orbit thing is like a blank area, I think maybe that will be filled, maybe something, like, permanent may stay there.

Interviewer
So do you think that you'll still be using the Park in 10 years' time?

Interviewee
Oh yeah, definitely! If I'm in London, definitely.

Interviewer
Then what are you most looking forward to just generally, here, anything, any new buildings, any new things that are happening?

Interviewee
Anything new they build that's open to the community, you know, to the public. Really excited, my Dad, he's very excited about these kinds of things. He always takes me to the Orbital, I think it's called?

Interviewer
The ArcelorMittal Orbit, yeah.

Interviewee
The first time it opened up he was like "let's go! It's going to be, like, so much fun… It's so great… It's up there…" yes, again, anything that's open to the public I think is exciting.

Interviewer
I think that's everything. Thank you ever so much, Izabela, that's been great.

Interviewee
Thank you.