



Losing the Marshes

a story of what happens when the Olympics comes to town.



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Documentary Film 2x 52minutes series

Produced & Directed By Kym Oeser

Hackney Wick and the fabled Hackney Marshes, although bedevilled with rising crime and poor public perception, the media dubbing it 'the murder mile', this year will be thrust to the forefront of global awareness. The Olympic Games and the attendant juggernaut of its needs will threaten an area rich in history and loved by its community and visitors from the rest of London.

Hackney has its own unique qualities, a wealth of community projects and a history of great significance and symmetry with today and the prescience for the behemoth of the Olympics, steadily rolling into view.



I spent two years filming between September 2007-September 2009, returning February 2012. I followed many local community projects from the 'Hackney Marsh User Group', run by volunteers to maintain the natural wildlife of the area,

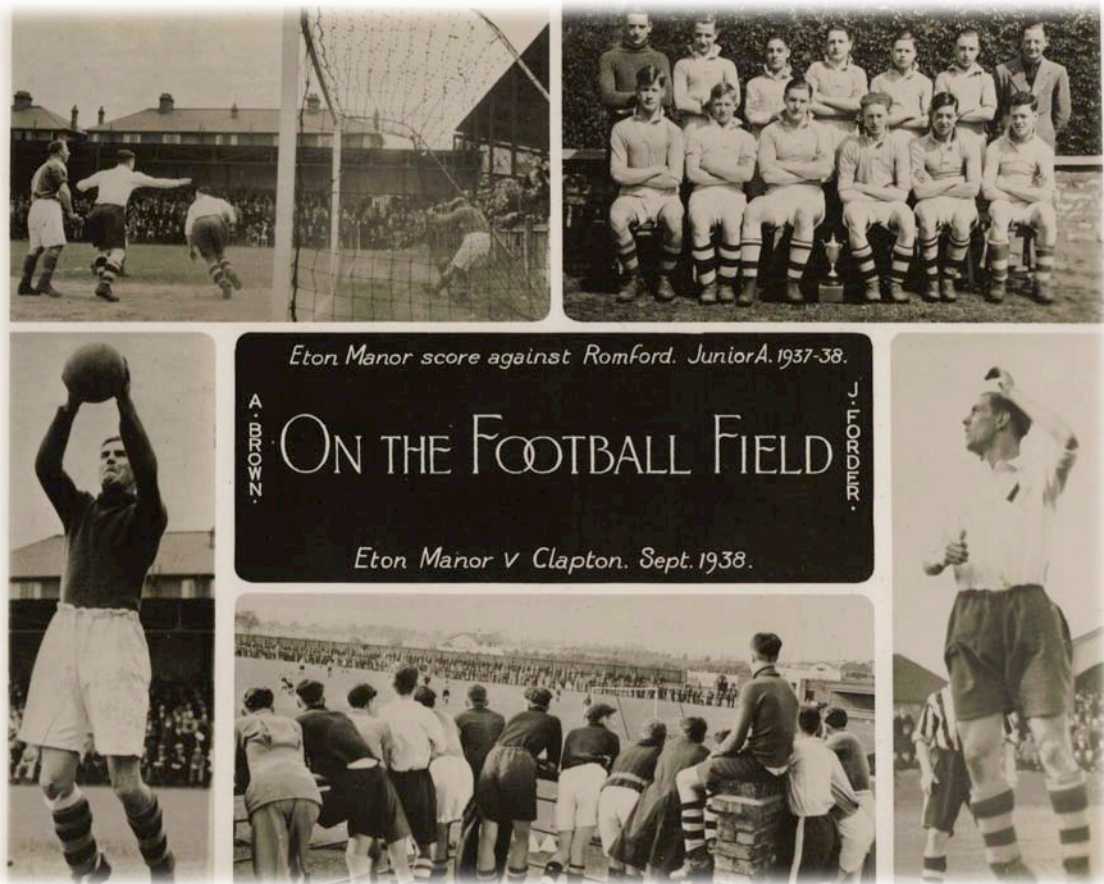


to 'Clapton Rangers' a football team from Clapton Park Estate, set up to combat and provide an antidote to the rising crime rate by the estates local residence.



These are a couple of the many projects I filmed; a continuation of, the first community project, the Eton College Mission from the

1880's which persuaded the college to buy Hackney Marshes as public land for recreational space in 1892, the Mission then split in 1907 and the Eton Manor Boys Club was created, an extraordinary story of four Etonian philanthropists, one being Arthur Villiers, who set up the club to provide sporting facilities in the Hackney and Leyton area. The Olympic stadium is now built on what were the grounds of the Eton Manor Boys Club.



The original philosophy of this club and the Eton Mission, has continued with the local community projects which mirror the Olympic philosophy of:

"The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play."



So often large projects like the Olympic Games ignore and are ignorant of the smaller more inclusive projects existing in areas inhabited by huge Olympic venues. The rationale that it is "for the greater good" is often quoted. These ignore the cohesive effect that small unique projects, not run for profit, have in defining and unifying an area. Space is a vital issue in urban societies especially in London where real-estate prices are so high. With the games facilities only 3minutes by train to Liverpool Street station this area is of great interest to developers.



With the Olympic bill rising by the day, reports in the media claiming costs have escalated over £12billion and could rise even more, and an Olympic stadium that could become a white elephant, the question is, what will be the legacy of the Olympic games and what will be lost locally because of the games.

No one knows what will happen after the games. What the final bill will be, and how a country that is already crippled by debt will pay for it.

I became involved in the area at a crucial time when the largest changes were wrought. I followed local residents trying to improve their lives, saw how they fought for their area in the shadow of what globally is the largest sporting event. They worry about what will be left of their area, '**Losing the Marshes**' asks, does anyone care?

