

Royal Blind School Pupils Go For Gold at London 2012!

The London Paralympics are almost here and pupils at the Royal Blind School will be cheering on three former classmates as they enter the Olympic Stadium on August 29th. Libby Clegg, James Clegg and Lee Brunton, who all attended the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh, will represent Team GB in athletics, swimming and five-a-side football respectively. The Clegg siblings and Lee Brunton share the daily challenges that accompany having a visual impairment, but more importantly, they have all found ways of coping with and overcoming these challenges through sport.

Libby and James Clegg both live with a deteriorating eye condition called Stargardt's Macular Dystrophy. Libby started running soon after being diagnosed and made her mark on the international sports scene in the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, where she took silver in the 100 metre sprint. Currently ranked as the reigning World and European Champion in both the 100 and 200 metre sprints, Libby and her guide runner, Mikhail Higgins, have their sights set on gold in London.

James Clegg and Lee Brunton will be making their Paralympic debuts this year and already show great promise. James recently broke a twelve-year-old British record (formerly held by Ian Sharpe) during the Olympic trials and subsequently earned a silver medal in the MC 100 meter Butterfly at this year's British Swimming Championships.

Lee Brunton lost his sight completely at 13 years old as a result of an aggressive brain tumour that damaged his optic nerve. Lee discovered independence and blind football at the Royal Blind School, and was later recruited for the Blind Football Academy, where football training is integrated with academics.

All three Paralympic athletes have described their time at the Royal Blind School as being empowering and providing them with the confidence and self-determination needed to accomplish their future goals. Libby links her school experience to her success in sport saying, "For me, attending the school was inspirational and winning medals at the 2008 Paralympics and the 2010 World Championships was awesome." The Royal Blind School provides a specialist and holistic education that enables every pupil to fulfil his or her potential in all areas of life. "Libby, James and Lee were all great role models while at school," says Cari Mannion, Depute Head Teacher at the Royal Blind School. "All three demonstrated what people who are visually impaired CAN do. They work with determination and great spirit to do their very best – they have been, and continue to be, an inspiration to us all! We are all eagerly awaiting their performances at the Games."

Already outstanding ambassadors for sport, Libby, James and Lee also embody the fact that possibility and success are unlimited for an individual with a visually impairment. We will be holding our breath as they sprint, swim and score their way to victory this week.

Notes to editors

1. This story is for immediate use and the words and pictures are free to use.
2. The activities of Royal Blind, www.royalblind.org include: **The Royal Blind School, Braeside House, Scottish Braille Press, Forward Vision, and Kidscene.**