



## The Eden Project hosts flying start to Queen's Baton Relay on last leg of journey to Commonwealth Games

Sporting stars, local heroes and 150 schoolchildren gave the Queen's Baton Relay a rousing send off at the Eden Project in Cornwall this morning (Monday July 4, 2022).

The Baton's tour of England got off to a flying start when it was carried down England's fastest zipwire over the top of the world-famous Biomes.

The Relay is on the final leg of its journey, a 25-day tour covering 2,500 miles across the length and breadth of England, visiting more than 180 communities and culminating at the Opening Ceremony for Birmingham 2022 on Thursday July 28.

The schoolchildren, from 24 local primary schools and Poltair School in St Austell, gathered to cheer and follow the Batonbearers as they made their way to a spectacular finale in the Rainforest Biome.

The Queen's Baton arrived at Eden at 6:30am, courtesy of a Royal Mail van driven by local postie and London 2012 Olympic Torch Bearer Dave Hoskin.

President of Commonwealth Games England and Olympic gold medallist **Denise Lewis OBE** received the Baton from Dave, handing it on to 18-year-old aspiring astronaut **Ollie Turrell**, the first of six Batonbearers selected to take it on its journey at Eden.

Ollie took to the skies, soaring over the top of Eden's Biomes on the Hangloose Skywire before delivering it to the second Batonbearer, World Champion swimmer **Ben Proud**.

Ben then delivered the Baton to Eden's Visitor Centre, where it was handed on to **Angela Emrys Jones**, the third Batonbearer.

From there, the Baton - made of copper, aluminium and brass - wound its way down through Eden, passing from Angela to **Doaa Shayea**, **David Withers** and

finally **David Croft** - the sixth Batonbearer - who carried it on its final destination – a tour of the Rainforest Biome.

Along the way, the six Batonbearers were joined by groups of the schoolchildren as part of the pupils' transition programme as they prepare to move on to Poltair School in September. The event was supported by Poltair staff and Active Cornwall.

**Denise Lewis OBE said:** “The atmosphere has been incredible today. It’s really a touchpoint because this is the final leg of the Queen’s Baton. The Relay will take place over 25 days on its journey into Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony, so it’s very exciting. Obviously, being from the West Midlands myself and President of Team England, I am just buzzing!

“Thankfully I didn’t have to go down the zipwire, which is a big relief! Ollie did a fantastic job – he didn’t drop the Baton and he was exhilarated to be part of it. You can see just how much this means to all the Batonbearers, to be part of something really unique and special. There’s a real sense of occasion.”

**Peter Stewart, Eden’s Chief Purpose Officer, said:** “It’s been a true honour to host the Birmingham 2022 Queen’s Baton Relay here at Eden today. The Relay is all about celebrating and bringing together a wide and diverse range of communities across the Commonwealth, which aligns perfectly with Eden’s mission.

“To be able to welcome so many Year Six students from local primary schools to be a part of what is a special day for them in so many ways has been the real icing on the cake.”

**Lee Adams, Head of Year 7 at Poltair School, said:** “What an amazing experience for these students on their transition day to Poltair School. All the children are currently at primary school, but to keep the legacy of sport going, Poltair School hosted the Cornwall School Games on Friday (July 1) and we’ve been privileged through Active Cornwall to have the opportunity to come to the Eden Project today to celebrate the Queen’s Baton Relay.”

This event marks the 16th official Queen’s Baton Relay, a tradition that began with the Cardiff 1958 Commonwealth Games. The journey brings together and celebrates communities across the Commonwealth during the build-up to the Games, spanning 11 days of showstopping sport from Thursday July 28.

When it arrives in Birmingham, the Baton will have journeyed for 294 days through 72 nations and territories, including Europe, Africa, Oceania, the Caribbean, the Americas, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England.

## **Eden's Batonbearers**

### **Ollie Turrell, 18, Hayle**

At age 15, Ollie spent three weeks of work experience at the Astronaut Training Centre in Germany with the European Space Agency (ESA) and SpaceX. He orchestrated a Zoom with Virgin Galactic's Chief Engineer and Pilot in California and Spaceport America and volunteered this summer with Spaceport Cornwall.

### **Ben Proud, 27, Plymouth**

Swimmer Ben recently won gold for Great Britain in the Men's 50m Freestyle at the World Championships in Budapest, Hungary. Born in London, and raised in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Ben has competed in two Olympic Games and currently holds the Commonwealth Games record in 50m Freestyle at 21:30.

### **Angela Emrys Jones, 46, Truro**

Angela is mum to three children, one of whom has Down syndrome and the founding member of the National Down Syndrome Policy Group, creating the Down Syndrome Bill supported by Dr Liam Fox MP. Angela has also published three books about parenting a child with Down syndrome and strives to change national perceptions.

### **Doaa Shayea, 24, Plymouth**

Athlete Doaa is a disability advocate and activist striving to disrupt the disability narrative, particularly how society expects a young, Muslim woman with a disability to look and behave. Doaa doesn't allow her wheelchair to define her, but rather views it as an asset to motivate people.

### **David Withers, 48, St Teath**

David has been fundraising every year since the age of 10. From skydiving, head-shaving and swimming the Channel for the Cornwall Air Ambulance, to fire-walking, abseiling and naked calendar for the MS society, there's little David won't do for charity. After the loss of his father in 2021, David is now an ambassador for the Mouth Cancer Foundation.

### **David Croft, 63, St Austell**

David is the founder of Haven For Others, providing respite to disabled people. As a quadriplegic wheelchair user, David uses his platform to raise awareness of accessibility in the hospitality sector. David was formerly a 2nd Dan black belt at karate, living in Bermuda, at the time of his accident in 1980 – occurring on the same day that he was picked to represent the island in the World Karate Championships.

The dates of when the Baton visits each region are:

- 4 July – 5 July: **South West**
- 6 July – 7 July: **South East**
- 8 July – 9 July: **East of England**
- 10 July – 11 July: **East Midlands**
- 12 July – 13 July: **Yorkshire and the Humber**
- 14 July – 15 July: **North East**
- 16 July – 17 July: **North West**
- 18 July – 28 July: **West Midlands**

**ENDS**

July 04, 2022

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