

## He told me: “Tomorrow I will come back and show you my medal!”

### Interview with one of our alumni, Kay Pearce who shares her story of volunteering at the 2022 Commonwealth Games

#### What year did you graduate and where are you practicing now?

“I graduated in 2001 with a BSc (Hons) MSc (Chiropractic) and since then have been practising in Wiltshire, opening my own clinic in Westbury in 2003. I went back to AECC in 2014 to do a PgDip in Medical Ultrasound.”

#### How did you get involved initially in the Commonwealth Games?

“An invite to apply to volunteer at the Commonwealth Games was sent out by the Sports Faculty of the Royal College of Chiropractors last Autumn. As with most of the large multisport events there was a recruitment process with initial application followed by interview stages. I had volunteered at the 2012 Paralympics and 2017 IAAF Athletics World Championship so I have previous experience of these large events. I have also been a Chiropractor at smaller events such as British Masters Athletics meets and the Tug of War World Championships.”

#### What does a typical day look like for you at 2022 Commonwealth Games?

“Over 20 Chiropractors were part of the Medical Services team at the Games. Our role was to assess, diagnose, refer on and/or treat athletes for a wide range of musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. We were stationed at various locations across the West Midlands with a focus on the three Athlete Villages where the Clinics were located. Other AECC Alumni had roles as Sonographers or “Field of Play” responders - to be first on scene at event venues if accidents or injuries occurred.

“Chiropractors were involved for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth Games following the multidisciplinary physical therapies provision at the Olympic games in 2012. It has since become standard for athletes to have access to a diverse range of regulated, musculoskeletal medical services.

“Booking systems are rarely a feature of these events. It is usually the case that someone in each role is on standby from early morning to late evening with any volunteer typically on duty for either the late or the early shift. That means it can go from very quiet - in which case we often spend time getting to know other professionals and sharing CPD opportunities, to frantic - with a whole team descending on us and asking for treatment at the same time!

“The availability of the services is the most eye-opening experience. An athlete could come in, be assessed within minutes, referred for an x-ray with results back in an instant. Then if appropriate, have an MRI scan in the car park with Radiologists reading the images by the time the athlete gets back to the clinic! Advice and, or treatment then starts immediately! If only that could happen in the real world!

“I was at the Birmingham and NEC Villages but mostly the NEC. The sports there were Badminton, Netball, Table Tennis, Boxing and Weightlifting. I had the most encounters with Weightlifters who it would seem tend to insist on continuing with competition even through painful injuries! Their injuries mostly involved hands, elbows and knees. I saw several badminton players with non-serious lumbar complaints for routine treatments rather than help with injuries.”



## **Which type of athletes and sports profession do you support at 2022 Commonwealth Games?**

"I can't name names but I scanned and treated one Athlete who was able to reassure that he had a mild condition affecting his knee: one that some light manual therapy and corrective exercises could help. He was worried as a family member had been found to have a much more significant injury which stopped them competing. Just this information alone boosted his confidence so much he told me "Tomorrow I will come back and show you my medal". Unfortunately I had finished my last shift that night ... but I was thrilled to tune in the next day to watch him win a Gold medal from the comfort of my sofa!"

"All of the above brings together what made the best moments of my 2022 Commonwealth Games experience!"

## **What's the most rewarding thing about your work?**

"Representing Chiropractic! Raising awareness amongst Physiotherapists, Osteopaths and Sports Doctors of our skill set, ability and level of training. And showing the Athletes why we have a valued place in the Medical Services team. Many Athletes com in and ask for a Chiropractor, but for many others it is their first experience."

## **What is your fondest memory of AECC?**

"It might be the crazy Physiology experiment on kidney function in which we had to drink Vodka (at 10 am in the morning) and a litre of Saline and then monitor our urine output. Or, it could be the night the Toggler's Arms had to empty for the holidays and was selling beer at 50p a pint. But I think it was actually my flatmate chasing down the Postman somewhere on his round in Southborne on results day (emails were minimal then) and reading them out to my other flatmate and still very good friend Donna Strachan through the toilet door!

"Attached pictures (with permission) of Jeremy Lalrinnunga - Gold Weightlifting Athlete, "the badge cap", together with fellow Chiropractors, and a couple of me exploring the villages."

