



Olympic memories. Clockwise from top left: Richmond tennis star Oliver Golding with the Olympic Flame in Kew Gardens; Isleworth postbox painted gold in honour of double gold medallist and St Mary's, Strawberry Hill alumnus Mo Farah; the Men's Cycling Road Race comes through Richmond Park; World No1 Novak Djokovic at full stretch in the Olympic Tennis at Wimbledon; Andy Murray roars his way to gold on the hallowed grass; Moe Sbihi, another former St Mary's student, who secured a bronze in the Men's Eight Rowing at Eton Dorney

■ All images by Jack Lawson except postbox (Helene Parry) and Moe Sbihi



EDITOR'S BLOG



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AND so the circus is finally over and we can all get back to worrying about bread. Or lack thereof, to be precise, if the latest growth forecasts are up to speed. London wistfully lowers its colours; the great Olympic bandwagon rolls on.

It has, by near-universal consent, been a triumph. Rarely can a single event have so transformed the mood of a nation. One minute we're all busy cursing the jet stream and the consequential grey skies and rain – the lady who contacted me recently about the *Cloud Appreciation Society* needs to work on her timing – the next it's all medalmania and a veritable new dawn for mankind. Not since the relief of Mafeking has delirium so engulfed our shores.

But I worry. So spectacular has been the jolt to the collective psyche that it must surely have some detrimental long-term effects. Face it, folks: rushing home in Boltlike haste to catch the highlights of the musical dressage, or asking the neighbours round for an afternoon of tea and taekwondo, is simply not rational behaviour. Out there, loose, a whole army of overnight experts in skeet shooting, canoe slalom and synchronized platform diving is roaming our streets, without so much as a doctor's certificate to confirm that it poses no threat. It's like Care in the Community without the safeguards.

My own symptoms have been truly alarming. After years of sullen rage against the cycling fraternity – as a daily driver on busy roads, I tend towards the temperate view that the only good cyclist is a dead one – I suddenly found myself experiencing strange feelings of attachment towards the pedal stars of Team GB.

Even before the Games began, I could feel myself coming down with this disturbing velomalaise. I watched a documentary about Victoria Pendleton and became quite indignant at the way her fiancé had been forced out of her coaching team after the last Olympics in Beijing – falling in love with the athletes, apparently, is nowhere in the manual. I almost – but not quite – cried when she and Jessica Varnish were disqualified from the Team Sprint. When she won her gold in the Keirin, the old lip quivered again. Then she lost in her final event and I caved in completely.

And then, of course, there was the Road Race. Strange to recall that I spent a whole hour up on a ridge in Richmond Park watching policemen ride by on motorbikes, waiting for a pack of cyclists to speed past in the blink of an eye. Or that I came over all poetic after the Time Trial, waxing lyrical about how Bradley Wiggins had added another layer to the history of *Hampton Court*. In a ludicrous fit of vanity, I even wondered if a pair of Wiggo sideburns might lend a little *je ne sais quoi* to a fashionably thinning *homme d'un certain age*.

All very distressing. But there is hope. The other night, driving home after a long day at work, I was cut up on the inside by some aggressive character on a bike.

"*Bastardo!*" I yelled at the windscreen. "*Cycling swinehunt! Two-wheeled son of Beelzebub!*"

A huge wave of relief surged through me. At last I was back to normal.