

It felt like I was James Bond going on missions!

Film-maker Tom Mallion cycled around Britain to find out what London 2012 means to people. By Laurie Hanna

The London Olympics will not only bring elite athletes to our doorstep, it will also see a celebration of artistic excellence around the country.

Amateur film-maker Tom Mallion, 23, is just one of the thousands of people who will draw inspiration from the 2012 sporting spectacle and use it as a muse for their own creativity.

Talented Tom has been selected as a BT Storyteller and was sent on missions, just like 007, to get closer to the names behind the Games as July draws closer by making short films about them.

"I've made a series of films called 'Two Wheels Docs' which show me biking round parts of the UK to interview various people involved in the Games," he says.

"Basically I just get on my bike and head to wherever BT sends me - it's a bit like James Bond, I don't even know where I'm off to until a few days beforehand.

"It gives me the chance to get out there, meet people see how it's all coming together and get a feel from all different perspectives - athletes and members of the public - about exactly what next year means to them."

And Tom has met all sorts of people on his travels, which can be viewed at www.bt.com/storytellers or on YouTube.



OPPORTUNITY: Filming athlete Sally Gunnell

It's a chance for our country to really go for it

"I've met a lot of the Olympians and Paralympians as well, such as equestrian Lee Pearson. "He was really nice when I met him at his stables, which are in Staffordshire.

"I cheated on that one though - I got the train to Stoke-on-Trent and then cycled from there.

"I thought it would only be about a five-mile bike ride once I got off the train, but it was much closer to 15 miles so I was a little bit sweaty when I got there!"

The London 2012 Festival will bring some of the finest names in world arts and culture to the country, as the whole nation celebrates the Games.

Spread over four years, it is designed to give everyone in the UK the chance to be part of the London 2012 experience.

It aims to inspire creativity across all forms of culture, especially among young people.

The whole thing culminates in the London 2012 Festival, which is bringing leading artists from all over the world together from June 21 in the biggest ever festival to be held in the UK.

And Tom, who also works as a production assistant for a TV advertising agency, says that the infectious good mood is becoming more and more apparent as the countdown continues.

"I applied a few months

JOURNEY: Tom bikes to the BT events



ago to be a BT Storyteller and am really excited about the Games coming to London," he says.

"I absolutely love the buzz that it has created and getting caught up in it all has been fantastic.

"The whole London 2012 Festival will allow people to show their passion for all different aspects of the Games, and in my case get out there with a camera.

"Storytellers enables authors, writers, photographers - everyone really - to just express themselves and say what the Olympics means to them.

"Everybody is very excited. In the Olympic camp, it's all on target and going to plan. There will always be a few who grumble about things like the traffic, but I think it's going to be great.

"It is a wonderful opportunity for the whole country to get involved and really go for it.

"I started off doing a 'One Year To Go' film which took me to Trafalgar Square and a celebration event at the BT Tower.

ACTION: Tom is snapped at the BT Olympic Ball



"And working in TV advertising, we've definitely seen an increase in scripts that are linked to the Games in one way or another."

Award-winning Tom is originally from Gorseston in Norfolk but now he works in London.

Last year he followed the story of Dance Champions, an Olympic charity trying to get the nation more active through dance.

And as a budding athlete himself, he has high hopes for world champion triathlete Jonathan and Alistair Brownlee - the brothers tipped for GB glory at next year's Games.

"I'm a novice triathlete and really enjoy the three aspects of the sport which give it a real variety.

"It's a real challenge to try to master the three disciplines together," he says.

Recently I covered the red carpet at the BT British Olympic Ball and met past Olympians such as Sir Steve Redgrave, Colin Jackson, Jonathan Edwards and Sally Gunnell.

"And I met the Brownlee brothers at a recent BT event.

"They are such great guys and they're

really cool. I think they both really stood out for me.

"Considering that they are the number one and two athletes in the world at triathlon, they are fantastic - real assets to the country.

"I'll be hoping for a gold and silver for them at next year's Games."



BT'S THE OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES PARTNER FOR THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES. THE BT STORYTELLERS WRNS UPDATES AND ARTISTIC ENDOWMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO VIEW AND INTERACT WITH AT WWW.BT.COM/STORYTELLERS.

TOM IS JUST ONE OF A HUNDRED PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE UK WHO HAVE JOINED THE BT STORYTELLERS CAMPAIGN TO RECORD THE STORY OF THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES. THE BT STORYTELLERS COME FROM EVERY REGION OF THE COUNTRY AND THEY INCLUDE BLOGGERS, SOCIAL NETWORKERS, ARTISTS, WRITERS, POETS, GRAPHIC DESIGNERS, FILM-MAKERS, MUSICIANS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS. THANKS TO BT THEY ARE GETTING CLOSER TO THE GAMES THROUGH EXCLUSIVE EVENTS AND HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OUR ATHLETES

Ex-Olympic champion and BT ambassador Daley Thompson says:

It's great to see that people like Tom have been inspired by the Games to get more active and also more creative.

Tom's managed to come up with a unique idea that means he's out on his bike, keeping fit, while also making brilliant films that are helping document the excitement of athletes, and the nation as a whole, ahead of the Games.

Obviously, a great legacy for London 2012 would be that more people are inspired to take up a sport, improve their lifestyle and to stay fit and healthy.

This is something I feel very strongly about

and really see as one of the greatest outcomes we could have from the Games.

However, people like Tom, through his role as a BT Storyteller, are also showing that London 2012 isn't only about sport and is inspiring a huge amount of creativity across the country.

I would profess to not knowing as much about art and dance but am a big fan of music and am always open to learning about the stuff I don't know.

We've recently witnessed the launch of the programme for the London 2012 festival, which is the cultural element of next year's Olympic and Paralympic Games. It's great to see the

Games being used as a vehicle to bring people together from all over the world to celebrate not only sport but art and culture too.

London will absolutely host the best Games - the sporting competition and venues will be the first class and, all over the city, art-as will come alive with our street entertainment and music.

There is also BT's River of opening ceremony. I am pretty excited already - it will be one big party!

INSPIRED: Daley and Tom have high hopes for 2012

