

PRESS RELEASE – 18th Oct 2011

**OLYMPIC GEORGE WALKS THE RED CARPET AT THE BFI
LONDON FILM FESTIVAL.**

***‘No sponsorship, one kidney, tuberculosis, a broken back.
All set for the 1948 Olympics.’***

...that was George Weedon, self taught athlete and member of the British team at the London ‘austerity’ games, and now the subject of a new film which premieres at the BFI London Film Festival next week.

Suffering numerous setbacks through ill health Georges desire to still ‘Walk tall’ won him a place on the UK team - where he introduced the splits and the wearing of shorts to international gymnastics, even though he didn’t win any gold medals!



George (on the far left) with the Olympic team.

Now 91, but still able to spin on his back to the astonishment of onlookers, limber George is a living example of how good posture and a positive attitude can make our later lives less limiting.

The self styled ‘silly old sod’ has never given up, and now wants to use his time in the film festival spotlight to inspire others.

“You don’t need expensive gym equipment to keep fit. You just need things in the home and to keep challenging yourself.” says George - and a work out video may be next.



George at 85.

The film focuses on George's views about physical posture, but also paints a portrait of an amazing man and his positive attitude towards life - and Leytonstone based, first time director Kate Sullivan's film is as quirky and home made as George's improvised gym equipment.

"George couldn't afford dumbbells so he used baked bean tins for weight training." says Kate. "And I couldn't afford state of the art 'blue screen' effects. So our blue screen was George's cagoul hung over his walking stick!"

But inspite of a budget that wouldn't pay for one Olympic medal. Kate's affectionate and life affirming mix of live action, animation, true life story and hints for better posture has made the critics sit up in their seats.

The British Gynastic Association called it *'Fantastic. What a lovely piece of Art'* and it was short listed for Film London's Best of Borough Film Awards, where the jury, made up of producer Stephen Woolley, the BFI Film Fund's Chris Collins and critic Fionnuala Halligan, picked the film out for a special mention.

Now it's bound for the London Film Festival and, Kate hopes, a new lease of life for George as a unlikely keep fit guru.



George today.

"I love coaching and still do it whenever I can" says George, "I'm not another old duffer bemoaning the modern world, but do think that slumping over computers and games consuls needs to be balanced with other activities or our kids will grow up a bit wonky!"

"Although ninety at the time of filming George still radiated all the elegance, poise and grace of a gymnast" adds Kate "So we're hoping this film may lead to other opportunities for him to spread his message of exercise and good posture, especially to O.A.P's and children.

George Weedon hopes to the pass the torch on to a new generation – so it's only appropriate that he and Kate may be passing the Olympic one next year.

This unusual partnership of keep fit fanatic and up and coming young film maker have been shortlisted to carry the real Olympic torch in 2012.



Walk Tall

A portrait of 1948 Olympic gymnast, George Weedon

DuP Ewan Mulligan Sound Recordist Ian Painter Sound Design Roland Heep Executive Producer Anton Califano Produced by Lucy McDermott Directed, animated and edited by Kate Sullivan

*'Walk Tall' will be shown at the BFI London Film Festival on **24th October** at 9pm, screening in NFT 1 at BFI Southbank, as part of a programme devoted to emerging London talent.*

George will be attending the LFF screening to see his film on the big screen for the first time and would be very happy to meet the press.

*For further information please go to **walktallfilm.com** where a full electronic press kit can be found or contact Kate Sullivan on **07788 738828** or **kate@katesullivan.co.uk***

*'Walk Tall' was supported and funded by **Film London**, through its grassroots short film-making scheme the **London Borough Film Fund Challenge**, as part of their ongoing commitment to new film making in the capital.*