

# Dame Kelly Holmes

**Name:**

Dame Kelly Holmes

**Born:**

19th April 1970 in Pembury, Kent

**Childhood**

From a young age, Kelly was always a massive fan of sports and her favourite school subject, PE. Her mum and stepdad used to take her to compete in cross-country races all around the country and she says they were a massive part of her success. When she was 12, she joined Tonbridge Athletics Club, where she went on to win the English Schools 1500 metres in 1983 - beating all the best young female athletes in the country. Her hero was British middle distance runner Steve Ovett, who she saw win a gold medal in 800m in the 1980 Olympic Games. From that point, she always had two main aspirations in life; to join the British army and to be an Olympic champion. With great determination and commitment, she went on to accomplish both.

**Achievements**

Kelly served as a sergeant in the army for nine years before devoting herself to athletics full-time in 1997. By 2000, Kelly had qualified for the Olympic Games in Sydney and she made it to the 800 metres final. She made a determined bid to win the race by taking the lead on the last lap but was sadly overtaken in the final few metres, and went on to win a bronze medal. She celebrated her bronze position with her famously wide smile, but made a promise to herself that she would be back four years later for another attempt to fulfil her dream. In 2004, Kelly went to the Athens

**Olympic Games and Medals****2000 Sydney Games:**

1 bronze medal (800 metres)

**2004 Athens Games:**

2 gold medals (1,500 metres and 800 metres)



Olympic Games as one of the favourites to win the Women's 800 metres and 1,500 metres and she didn't disappoint. On 23rd August 2004, Kelly easily took her first Olympic gold in the 800 metres. Then, just five days later, she added the 1,500 metre gold to her medal haul. Subsequently, Kelly was given the honour of carrying the British flag at the closing ceremony of the games.

### **Life after the Olympics**

Relatively shortly after her Olympic success, in December 2005, Kelly announced her retirement from competitive athletics after the death of a close friend made her re-evaluate her life. She was quoted as saying, 'I have achieved everything I wanted to in my life and want to make the most of my life from now on- to relax and be myself'. Then just a week later, in the 2005 New Year's Honours List, Kelly was given the ultimate accolade from The Queen: a Damehood, which is why we now know her as Dame Kelly Holmes. She became President of Commonwealth Games England, and was one of the driving forces behind the successful British Olympic bid to hold the 2012 Olympic Games in London. More recently, she has set up the 'Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust' to bring together vulnerable young people with famous athletes, who act as mentors in their lives. Their mission is to inspire these teenagers to improve their skills, knowledge and self-belief through support from sporting champions. In recognition of all that she has, and continues, to achieve in sport, Kelly was awarded with the Mirror and TSB Pride of Sport Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

#### **Amazing Fact!**

You would never imagine it, but Kelly is actually an expert at driving trucks and still holds a heavy goods vehicle licence. In the Army, she was a lorry driver in the Women's Royal Army Corps!

# Dame Kelly Holmes Questions

Answer the following questions using full sentences that give as much detail as possible.

1. Why does Kelly say that her mum and stepdad were a massive part of her success as a young athlete?

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2. List Kelly's two main life ambitions.

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3. Which were the first Olympic Games that Kelly attended? What did she win there and how did she feel about her achievement?

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4. What honour was given to Kelly at the end of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games? Why was she chosen?

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5. Give two reasons why Kelly decided to retire from athletics in 2005.

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6. In the final paragraph, it says Kelly was given 'the ultimate accolade' from The Queen. Explain what this means. Use a dictionary if you need to.

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7. Why do you think that Kelly was chosen to be one of the driving forces behind securing the British Olympic bid to hold the 2012 Olympic Games in London?

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8. What are the main aims of the 'Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust'? Why do you think Kelly set up the charity?

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# Dame Kelly Holmes **Answers**

1. Why does Kelly say that her mum and stepdad were a massive part of her success as a young athlete?

**Her mum and stepdad used to take me her to compete in cross-country races all around the country.**

2. List Kelly's two main life ambitions.

**She always had two main aspirations in life; to join the British army and to be an Olympic champion.**

3. Which were the first Olympic Games that Kelly attended? What did she win there and how did she feel about her achievement?

**Kelly first went to the Olympic Games in 2000 in Sydney, where she won a bronze medal. She celebrated her bronze position with her famously wide smile, but made a promise to herself that she would be back four years later for another attempt to fulfil her dream.**

4. What honour was given to Kelly at the end of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games? Why was she chosen?

**Kelly was given the honour of carrying the British flag at the closing ceremony of the games. She was chosen because she had become a double Olympic champion in the 800 and 1,500 metres.**

5. Give two reasons why Kelly decided to retire from athletes in 2005.

**Pupils' responses may include; the death of a close friend made her re-evaluate her life, she had already achieved her main ambitions, she wanted to be herself and relax, and/or she wanted to the make the most of her life free from the commitments of athletics.**

6. In the final paragraph, it says Kelly was given 'the ultimate accolade' from The Queen. Explain what this means. Use a dictionary if you need to.

**'Ultimate accolade' means the top / most prestigious award that can be given from Her Majesty - a damehood or knighthood.**

7. Why do you think that Kelly was chosen to be one of the driving forces behind securing the British Olympic bid to hold the 2012 Olympic Games in London?

**Pupils' responses may include; she is a very recognisable figure from British athletics, she is a great role model for the country, she was passionate about bringing the games to Great Britain or / and she is a very determined character.**

8. What are the main aims of the 'Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust'? Why do you think Kelly set up the charity?

**The Trust aims to bring together vulnerable young people with famous athletes, who act as mentors in their lives. Their mission is to inspire these teenagers to improve their skills, knowledge and self belief through support from sporting champions.**

**Pupil's own response for the second part of the question, which may include- Kelly wants to give something back to her community; she knows that she's a positive role model for others or reference to her caring /determined character.**