

February 7, 2014

Updated: February 7, 2014 | 2:35 pm

Adjust Text Size

Golden honour: London celebrates 1948 Olympics medalist as Sochi games open



(<http://metronews.ca/author/howtomovetocanada/>) By Mike Donachie (<http://metronews.ca/author/howtomovetocanada/>)
Metro



Gripping his gold medal tightly, London's own Olympic treasure smiled modestly as he received a rare honour.

Friday was Andy Gilpin Day, his friends and fellow veterans declared as they shook hands and snapped pictures with the city's link to Olympic glory.

As the rest of the world focused on the [opening ceremony](http://metronews.ca/features/games-on-in-russia/934349/pseudo-lesbians-ballet-in-sochi-olympics-opening/) (<http://metronews.ca/features/games-on-in-russia/934349/pseudo-lesbians-ballet-in-sochi-olympics-opening/>) in Sochi (<http://metronews.ca/features/games-on-in-russia/>), a group of Londoners crammed into a building near the airport for lunch and to hear the stories about Gilpin, a 1948 Olympian.

He's 93 now, but his energy is still there.

"I played hockey until I was 70," he said. "I quit hockey because I got hurt, but it didn't stop me skating."

Back in 1948, Gilpin went all the way to St. Moritz, Switzerland, for the Olympics with the Canadian hockey team, who went on to win gold. As a reserve, he didn't get to play in the event but was still part of the team and awarded a medal.

Originally from Montreal, Gilpin's been a hockey fan all his life, playing since he was 5-years-old.

After playing Junior A hockey in Montreal and serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War, he was a member of the Ottawa RCAF Flyers when they were called on to represent Canada at the first post-war Winter Olympics.

"It was great," Gilpin said. "We had an opportunity to see all the Olympics, the whole Olympics. I loved it."

And he's full of stories about the event and the dozens of exhibition games that took the team around Europe before and after the Olympics.

There was a hockey match in a snowstorm that made it tough to see the puck. The players kept stopping to have the ice cleared.

Another time, a foul left a crowd in Czechoslovakia so angry that they threw snowballs at the Canadians. Gilpin has a thousand great

tales.

The 427 (London) Wing of the Royal Canadian Air Force Association planned Friday's special day for Gilpin, one of the group's most valued members, specifically to coincide to with the Sochi games.

"He's still independent," said friend and association member David White said about Giplin, a former avionics technician. "He skates on a regular basis at the age of 93. He plays golf still."

Gilpin, for the record, advises moderation and regular exercise if you want to live to be 93.

Olympian opinion

What does Andy Gilpin think about Canada's chances at grabbing medals this time around?

Well, he expects a better medal total than what Canadian athletes brought home in 1948. Back then, the total was three: gold in hockey, plus a gold and bronze in figure skating.

"I think they'll do very well," he said.

[More from London: \(http://metronews.ca/news/london/\)](http://metronews.ca/news/london/)

About

[About](http://metronews.ca/about/)
(<http://metronews.ca/about/>)

[Contact](http://metronews.ca/contact/)
(<http://metronews.ca/contact/>)

[Careers](http://metronews.ca/jobs/)
(<http://metronews.ca/jobs/>)

Connect

[Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/metrokitchener)
(<http://www.facebook.com/metrokitchener>)

[Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/metrokitchener)
(<http://www.twitter.com/metrokitchener>)

[Foursquare](http://www.foursquare.com/metronews)
(<http://www.foursquare.com/metronews>)

[Email](mailto:kitchener@metronews.ca)
(<mailto:kitchener@metronews.ca>)

Extra

[Social](http://metronews.ca/about/metro-on-social-media/)
(<http://metronews.ca/about/metro-on-social-media/>)

[Mobile](http://metronews.ca/mobile/)
(<http://metronews.ca/mobile/>)

Terms

[Advertising Terms](http://metronews.ca/advertising-terms/)
(<http://metronews.ca/advertising-terms/>)

[Terms and Conditions](http://metronews.ca/terms-and-conditions/)
(<http://metronews.ca/terms-and-conditions/>)

[Commenting Guidelines](http://metronews.ca/commenting-guidelines/)
(<http://metronews.ca/commenting-guidelines/>)

[Privacy Code](http://metronews.ca/privacy-code/)
(<http://metronews.ca/privacy-code/>)