By Joshua

**Paralympics History**

As you probably already know, the Paralympic winter games ended only 10 days ago. As the Paralympics only started a couple of miles down the road, in Stoke Mandeville, I was intrigued to find out more.

To start off with, people with artificial legs and other body parts could take part in the normal Olympics. The first athlete to do so was George Eyser, in 1904. He had one artificial leg.

The Paralympics started as the Stoke Mandeville Games which took place in 1948 as a demonstration during the London Olympic Games. There were only 16 patients from 2 UK Spinal Injuries Units from the UK. They were past war soldiers from Britain who had spinal cord injuries. The creator was Sir Ludwig Guttmann. His aim was to create a sports competition for people with disabilities that would be like the Olympics. 4 years later, they were held again but this time, Dutch war soldiers joined the British, making it the first international competition of its kind.

Interested by this history, I interviewed Ollie Moore who is the Education and Communications Manager at Wheel Power. The charity who runs Stoke Mandeville Stadium (originally called the Guttmann – renamed after Sir Ludwig Guttmann), the birthplace of the Paralympics.

He said – when asked if any Paralympians trained at Stoke Mandeville Stadium – For the Sochi Paralympics, nobody trained at the Stadium but for the London 2012 Paralympics, “many British paralympians trained at Stoke Mandeville Stadium including some other countries such as Azerbaijan, Finland, Iceland, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.”

When asked what he thought of the recent winter games, he replied saying that “it was brilliant, a huge success for the Paralympics GB Team claiming many medals, including their first ever gold at the Games.”

Thanks to Ollie for that Interview.

Looking to the future, the Paralympics are going to grow in size. In the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Summer Paralympics, there are going to be approximately 4,350 athletes from more than 160 countries taking part. Of that number 1,650 will be women which is a 9.9% increase from the last summer Paralympics. Also 2 new sports will be added. These sports are the Triathlon and canoeing. The future looks great for the future paralympians.