Paralympic Voices project preserves Stoke Mandeville's legacy

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The project will aim to speak to a range of athletes who have competed during the past half a century. The resulting interviews will contribute to the larger 'Mandeville Legacy' project that forms part of the legacy of the Paralympic Games.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: "With the London Games imminent there will be renewed interest in the past history and achievements of paralympians. This project will provide testimonies and other information to help satisfy that demand while giving Stoke Mandeville due credit for setting the whole paralympic movement in motion."

In addition to recording sporting memories the project will also digitise historic film footage. The resulting audio-visual record will tell the story of Stoke Mandeville at exhibitions and in schools helping to promote the work of the National Spinal Injuries Centre and the sporting charities based at Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

Assisting the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS) with the 'Paralympic Voices' project will be WheelPower, the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS), and the National Spinal Injuries Centre.

The Paralympic movement grew from a small gathering of Second World War veterans in 1948 arranged by Dr. Ludwig Guttmann of the National Spinal Injuries Centre. Thereafter the games were held at Stoke Mandeville annually. The first official Paralympic Games was held, after the Olympic Games, in Rome in 1960.

Welcoming the HLF grant, Buckinghamshire County Council Leader Martin Tett, said: "This is really good news for a county that is proud to have given birth to the Paralympic movement. The 2012 Games are important not only to our national history but also our local heritage, and I'm pleased this project will help us to mark this milestone for generations to come."

Notes to editors

• Paralympic Voices will contribute to the Mandeville Legacy which is turn is part of Accentuate, the South East's Legacy Trust programme for 2012.

• The material gathered will be available through a dedicated website (www.mandevillelegacy.org.uk) ensuring that the stories of individual determination and achievement are available to a worldwide audience. It will also be available within the Paralympic collections to be held at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies as part of the Mandeville Legacy Trust.

Further information:

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