



**Much Wenlock**  
TOWN COUNCIL



## **STOKE MANDEVILLE AND MUCH WENLOCK**

### **THE LINK**

**The town of Much Wenlock, Shropshire and the village of Stoke Mandeville, Bucks have a shared history of the Olympic and Paralympic Games through two men with a desire to improve the health and fitness of working class and disabled people.**

**Sir Ludwig Guttmann was a Jewish doctor who fled Nazi Germany just before the start of World War 2 and came to England. He was a founding father of organized physical activities for disabled people and in 1943 was asked by the British Government to establish the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville hospital. In 1945 he organized the first Stoke Mandeville Games for disabled people which later evolved into the Paralympic Games.**

**Dr. William Penny Brookes lived and worked in Much Wenlock, Shropshire where he established the Wenlock Olympian Society opening the doors for the working classes to enter competitive sport. Dr. Brookes is seen as the founding father of the International Olympic Movement which was set up in 1894.**

**In 1994 the President of the International Olympic Committee laid a wreath on the grave of Dr. Brookes saying, "I came to pay homage and tribute to Dr. Brookes, who really was the founder of the modern Olympic Games".**

**In 2011, just a year before the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games, Stoke Mandeville Parish Council contacted the Parish Council of Much Wenlock to try and cement our shared histories of this great event. So it was that in November 2011 a group of councillors and the headteacher from Stoke Mandeville Combined School travelled to Much Wenlock where we spent a wonderful day being hosted and shown round by Much Wenlock PC**

**Following on from this visit, Much Wenlock presented Stoke Mandeville with a small oak tree which is planted on the green in front of SM Combined School and will soon have a new plaque commemorating this event.**

**The mascots for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games got their names from the two places. Wenlock became the mascot for the 2012 Olympic Games and Mandeville the mascot for the Paralympics. A statue of Mandeville still stands outside the Olympic Lodge at the Guttmann Centre.**