

## **Introduction**

### **SIR LUDWIG GUTTMANN**

ON looking through the tributes paid to Sir Ludwig Guttman in this Journal on his eightieth birthday certain words are repeated by many writers—world leader in paraplegia, missionary zest, his combination of compassion and imagination, his driving force and energy—but the word that appears most frequently is vision. When you consider the depressing fate of paraplegics a mere 35 years ago you realise how much is owed to the courage and vision of this dynamic man. The foundation of the National Spinal Injuries Centre in 1944, of the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1948 leading to the International Olympiad for Paraplegics, these facts are history; but Sir Ludwig would be the first to admit that it is the future that counts and he has taken care of that by training staff from many and varied countries, by travelling abroad and encouraging those struggling to follow his precepts in distant parts of the world, and by fostering the exchange of ideas. I was delighted when he received the honour of a knighthood for his outstanding work.

When I was approached in 1962 with a view to launching a new journal I had to take a firm grip and not allow myself to succumb to the temptation provided by two excellent dinners accompanied by enthusiastic and persuasive talk. I knew the wonderful work Ludwig Guttman had done at Stoke Mandeville and I admired his energy but I was responsible to others if the journal was unsuccessful; it was not unknown for a good journal with excellent material to founder. Yet if valuable articles were written there was no doubt that they would appeal to many specialties—neurology, neurosurgery, urology, orthopaedics—and I have always considered that medical publishers must be prepared to take a risk on occasion if by so doing they can be of service to the medical profession and to humanity. Moreover the idea had the support of Phillip Harris, David Band and Ian Lawson Dick amongst many others who already represented a variety of specialists so, while fully cognisant of the risks we were taking, I agreed to initiate this exciting project. In the event, with the good name of Sir Ludwig and the centre at Stoke Mandeville, we felt that we could not go wrong and how right we were. With its international Editorial Board and the excellence of its content it has helped to disseminate the knowledge and the enthusiasm garnered throughout the world.

In 1969 I referred Sir Ludwig to Psalm Number 92, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.' I apologise to him; he can never grow old. Rather do the words of the prophet Joel come to mind, 'Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions'. Throughout his long life Sir Ludwig has seen the visions and had the courage and the tenacity of purpose to build the inspiration as well as the medical skill required in the treatment of paraplegics. We salute him on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

THE PUBLISHER