Stoke Mandeville and Apartheid

Background
In 1980 I joined a club called Manchester Disabled Athletes. The circumstances of my joining were somewhat unusual; I was walking through Moss Side one evening when a car pulled up, the window was wound down, a bearded face peered out and said: "excuse me, I hope you don't mind me asking, have you had polio?". I was a bit stunned by this, since not only had he noticed my limp in the fading light but he had rightly judged it to be a polio limp. Before I had time to take this in, the voice from the car went into a spiel about all these facilities available for disabled athletes and would I be interested.

As it happened I was interested, as I had been a regular swimmer and I thought it might be interesting to go along, little realising what it would all lead to. The man in the car turned out to be Neville, chairperson of the club, and it was solely through his intervention that I got involved in the "disabled world" at all. Subsequent conversations with other activists with disabilities, I've realised that the sequence of attitudes I've gone through has been mirrored by theirs. For example, ever since some gruesome encounters with a totally unsympathetic surgical appliances department as a teenager, I steered well clear of the medical profession. I also made sure I avoided other people with disabilities (especially limps) on the grounds it looked 'odd' to see two together. In short I wanted to 'pass' as normal. One of the interesting side-effects of all the publicity surrounding my withdrawal from this years Stoke Mandeville Games, has been that I have had to 'come out' as having a disability, though it still seems odd seeing yourself described in newspapers variously as "polio victim", "disabled swimmer" or "disabled athlete"

I became a regular at Manchester Disabled Athletes weekly sports meetings. The club is run by people with disabilities, it is held at a 'normal' sports centre, and everybody meets up in the bar after swimming, playing table tennis or basket-ball. This I thought was the usual form of organisation, only later did I find out that it was far more typical for organisations in this area to be organised for people with disabilities, not by them.

People at the club persuaded me to go down to the national games held at Stoke Mandeville in June '81. I was dubious about going on the grounds that I felt I wasn't disabled enough, which was ironic since I'd spent my life previously trying to minimise it. As it turned out I was allowed to compete as a category 6 (least disabled) in several swimming events, with my two main rivals co-incidentally having had polio in the same epidemic and being left with limps in the same leg.

I thoroughly enjoyed the week at Stoke, living in the huts with 50 or so men, most of whom were paraplegic, gave me some sort of understanding of the difficulties involved, and also a chance to talk to many people. On arriving back at Manchester I was informed that I had been selected for the internationals to be held at Stoke Mandeville in July. After some hesitation I agreed, though I was dubious about the conditions of acceptance that I had to sign, which contained clauses like:

"I agree to respect all out-of-bounds areas, for example, the opposite sex accommodation areas"

"I agree not to impart to the news media, television, radio or other bodies any information particularly in respect of the GB team performance the personal details of any team member or any matter bordering on any political, racial, religious, colour or creed, or issue any propaganda literature"

Subsequently I found out that this last clause had been inserted after Maggy Jones, a table tennis player had distributed leaflets about health care in South Africa at the European Paraplegic Championships held at Stoke Mandeville in Oct 1979. Her punishment for this 'crime' was to be thrown out of Stoke and banned from disabled sports for life. In the meantime Sir Ludwig Guttman and his successor as Director General, Joan Scruton, have been free to use the Games as a platform for their publicising of the 'wonderful' achievements of South African paraplegic sports.
South Africa and the Stoke Games

After I had decided to go to the internationals, I set about following the training programme given to me by the GB swimming coach. Though this was hard work, I enjoyed doing it, as I could see that even the world record for freestyle was not that far off, and this was the first time since I was a kid that I had been able to participate in competitive sports.

However, somewhere in the back of my mind I had a suspicion that a South African team might be taking part in the games. At first I tried to ignore this thought, but watching the BBC Panorama programme about South Africa made me realise that this was an issue which could not be ignored. Soon after I rang Stoke Mandeville, they confirmed that a South African team was coming, so I drafted a letter to Miss Scruton saying that I was withdrawing from the games.

At the same time I rang up Anti-apartheid in London to see if they had information on health care in South Africa. They assumed that I had seen one of their leaflets about South African participation in the games, because they had been trying to generate a campaign to stop them. They were quite surprised that I had 'dropped out of the blue' so to speak.

The next decision to make was whether to 'go public' or not. Anti-Apartheid wanted me to come down to a press conference in London to publicise their "Don't play with Apartheid" campaign leading up to a demonstration outside the Stoke Stadium on the opening day of the games on the 26th July. The issue was not of my making, nor had I been actively involved in Anti-apartheid before, but I decided that the issue was important enough, and that if my withdrawal could in any way help the campaign, then I had to get actively involved.

The Press Conference and Press reaction

Besides myself at the press conference there was also Sam Ramsamy (chairman of the South African Olympic Committee) and representatives from the health committee of Anti-apartheid and the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation. Given the media's fascination with personalities rather than issues, it was only to be expected that they would concentrate on me, the only person to have actually withdrawn from the games. Two photographers from the Morning Star and 'Newsline' took me down to some swimming baths in order to get some 'action pics' which subsequently appeared in their newspapers.

As well as these two newspapers, reports of this press conference appeared in the Guardian, the Times and Radio 4 news. Subsequently I gave interviews on London Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Manchester, Radio Oxford, and several press interviews. By this time I was getting pretty nerve-wracked about the whole thing.

**Disabled athlete in apartheid protest**

*By Nick Davies*

A disabled British athlete announced yesterday that he is withdrawing from the International Games for the Disabled at Stoke Mandeville in protest at the presence of a South African team from South Africa.

Bernard Leach, aged 34, who has represented Great Britain in five swimming events, urged other disabled sportsmen to follow his example. The games open at the Buckinghamshire Hospital on Sunday.

Mr. Leach is supported by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, who have asked the Sports Minister, Mr. Hector Monem, to stop the South Africans taking part, because their presence would breach the 1977 Glenegies Agreement.

He is also supported by the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee, whose chairman, Mr. Sam Ramsamy, said yesterday that Jamaica, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan would all stay away because of the South African team.

Mr. Mike Terry, executive secretary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, said it would be patronising to exclude disabled sportmen from the scope of the Glenegies Agreement.

Mr. Leach, who had pole as a child, said he had tried to ignore the possibility of South African participation, but a television programme on apartheid had changed his mind. "I realised I couldn't ignore it," he said. "If they were competing, I couldn't." He wrote to the games' organiser, Miss Joan Scruton: "No doubt I will be accused of bringing politics into sport, but simply by the fact that you invited an artificially mixed team from South Africa, you have brought politics into sport, by providing the South African government with wonderful propaganda. That, I want nothing to do with."

Mr. Leach said it had been impossible to contact other disabled sportsmen to warn them of the South Africans' involvement, because their names and addresses were held by the organisers. The Anti-Apartheid Movement plans to refer Miss Scruton to the United Nations for inclusion on the blacklist of sporting figures who maintain contact with South Africa.
Dear Ms Scruton,

Following the national championships at Stoke Mandeville earlier this year I was selected to compete for Great Britain in several swimming events in the forthcoming 1981 International Stoke Mandeville Games.

I was delighted to accept this invitation and have subsequently been following a rigorous training programme, swimming about 2000 metres per day. However, I have just found out to my dismay that a South African team will be participating in these games. I feel I have no option therefore but to withdraw from these games and register my individual protest in this fashion.

This action is not 'politically motivated' in the sense that I reached this conclusion totally on my own, though my opposition to apartheid was re-awakened by the recent BBC Panorama programme about South Africa. I would like to point out though that my trade union (NATFHE) is affiliated to anti-apartheid and that I am requesting the next committee meeting of my club, Manchester Disabled Athletes to discuss this issue.

I would also like to make it clear that I understand and sympathise with the difficulties of individual disabled South African athletes, both black and white, who face similar problems to those faced by disabled people everywhere. What I am against is that they will be representing South Africa, a country based on apartheid, a system which thrives on the vast inequalities between black and white.

No doubt I will be accused of bringing politics into sport, but simply by the fact that you invited an artificially 'mixed' team from South Africa means that you have brought politics into sport by providing the South African government with wonderful propaganda in the International Year of Disabled People. That, I want nothing to do with. However, if the organising committee changes its mind and excludes the South African team, I would of course be only too happy to participate in the Internationals.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Leach.
POLIO VICTIM Bernard Leach announced yesterday that he would boycott the International Stoke Mandeville games unless the South African team was excluded. Thirty-four-year-old Leach was selected to compete for Great Britain in several swimming events at the competition for disabled people, but when he heard that South Africa was sending a team he felt that he had 'no option' but to withdraw.

He explained at a press conference yesterday that a recent 'Panorama' programme had re-awakened his opposition to Apartheid: 'I was seeing people fighting for their freedom against overwhelming odds and I just felt that there was no way that I could lend support to the South African regime.'

He appealed to other disabled athletes to withdraw if South Africa takes part. The Anti-Apartheid Movement has called for a picket of the Stoke Mandeville Stadium next Sunday between 12 and 2p.m. in protest at the South African participation.
APARTHEID PROTEST BY SWIMMER

Mr. Bernard Letch, aged 34, a disabled swimmer, who decided to boycott the Commonwealth Games in protest against the South African regime, made his protest known at the Games. He is a member of the Commonwealth Olympic Committee (SNHOC) and joined the team from his home country, South Africa.

Mr. Letch's decision was supported by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain, led by Lena Brown, who called it a "political act." The Secretary-General of the movement, the Rev. E. P. Waweru, said that black South Africans, "are not satisfied, they've been deprived of the right to participate in local and international competitions.

The South African team was accompanied by Mr. Letch, who added, "The Commonwealth Games are not just a sporting event, they are a platform for the expression of political views. I have chosen to use this platform to voice my opposition to the apartheid regime in South Africa."

The British Olympic Association, which governs the British team, has condemned Mr. Letch's decision. They said, "Mr. Letch's actions are a threat to the integrity of the Games and the spirit of fair play."

Disabled British swimmer

Top Swimmer

For disabled

gueit Games
The Press and the Demonstration

One of the reasons for my nervousness was the realisation that whatever you say to the press you have no control over how they use it or present it. This became clear from the publicity about the demonstration at Stoke. Take for example the Daily Mail's headline front page on the day of the demo:

Blacklist threat at disabled 'Olympics'

BAN HITS GAMES OF HOPE

By ANDREW McEWEN

A WOMAN who has devoted her life to disabled people is the target today of an anti-apartheid campaign.

Miss Joan Scruton could be blacklisted from 70 countries for alleged apartheid sympathies.

Astonished Chairman Mr Sam Ramsamy said he would recommend her for the United Nations sporting blacklist unless she banned the South Africans—black and white—from the games.

Miss Scruton was hurt and astonished by the threat. She has worked for 37 years to build up the major sporting event for the disabled—and she thought she was actually helping the cause of South African blacks.

There are a lot of black people in the South African team and it must be good for them to take part in an international event like this,' she said.

Mr Ramsamy does not accept that the team should be chosen on merit. 'It's like having a race between two horses and keeping one of them in a comfortable stable and the other in the dark on a reduced diet. It's obvious which one is going to win,' he said.

No South African team should be allowed until blacks and whites in South Africa have the same facilities and opportunities.' Miss Scruton says she is personally against apartheid, her organisation specifically bans any kind of racism, and that the decision to include the South African team was taken by the 16-strong executive committee for the games.

Mr Ramsamy's complaint is that the notorious paraplegic games stemmed from Hitler's persecution of the Jews. Their founder, professor Sir Ludwig Guttmann, was a neuro-surgeon who helped other Jews escape abroad.
For me this Daily Mail article typifies a whole approach to people with disabilities which groups like the Union of the Physically impaired and the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities are having to fight against. Why for example should able bodied individuals who have made careers out of disability, like Joan Scruton, as of right be allocated halos? I'm not saying that there are not dedicated individuals working with people with disabilities, but as several media personalities have found to their benefit a 'caring image is very marketable.

Sam Ramsamay's comments are ridiculously warped by claiming that he 'does not accept that the team should be chosen on merit'. What he was saying was that no South African team could be truly selected on merit until the system of apartheid was eradicated. No mention was made in the article of the United Nations resolution which supports the severing of sporting links with South Africa or of the Gleneagles agreement between Commonwealth countries which is similarly worrisome.

Also deserving a mention are the mawkish headline "Games of Hope" and the last paragraph about Sir Ludwig Guttmann and his flight from Hitler's persecution of the Jews. This is true but it conveniently misses out Guttmann's subsequent paranoia over a communist takeover of the world, and his unbridled enthusiasm for the South African regime which he saw as a bulwark against communism.

The editorial 'Daily Mail Comment', continued in the same vein as their front page story:-

ANTO - APARTHEID campaigners are trying to blacklist the organiser of the 'Olympics for the Disabled' at Stoke Mandeville Hospital because she has allowed South Africans to participate. A demonstration is also planned. A demonstration it will certainly be of the ruthless fanaticism of the campaigners. There could hardly be a more unsuitable target for political hatred than disabled sportsmen striving to overcome terrible physical handicaps. What on earth does it matter where they come from? Their own suffering is at least as great, and as little deserved, as that of most black South Africans. These are individual men and women, who should be welcomed, helped and encouraged. To treat them as symbols and to attack them for their nationality is Fascism of the ugliest kind.
Notice the way in which comments which could quite justifiably be used against the South African regime, where the 70% of the population which is black don't even have the right to vote, are turned against the campaigners themselves..."ruthless fanaticism"..."Fascism of the ugliest kind". But in a twisted way the Mail actually gets something right. In talking about "disabled sportmen striving to overcome terrible physical handicaps" it then says "their own suffering is at least as great, and as little deserved, as that of most black South Africans". This comparison between the apartheid-based oppression of South African black people and the enforced segregation of people with disabilities everywhere is indeed a valid one.

The right wing nature of the British press is clearly demonstrated by the fact that only the Morning Star and Newsline, both with very small distribution, gave entirely favourable coverage to the demonstration. Even the Guardian in its best fence-sitting tradition, didn't send a reporter to the demo, but satisfied itself with repeating a quote from the letter I sent to Scrutton and 'even-handedly' included a quote from the South African team manager. It seems that even an issue dear to liberal hearts such as apartheid would not persuade the Guardian to come off the fence:-

**NEWS ROUND-UP**

**Black disabled sportsmen taking part in the 30th international Stoke Mandeville Games for the paralysed yesterday criticised anti-apartheid demonstrators seeking to disrupt the mini-Olympics, which start today, because of the presence of a South African team.**

Masoud Gazhiz, a swimmer in the 20-strong Sudanese team, said: "Politics and sport should be separate and it is wrong for these people to do this. We are not boycotting the games because Israel is taking part."

Five people opposed to apartheid distributed leaflets yesterday morning outside the games area, accusing the Stoke Mandeville authorities of "supporting apartheid."

They claimed the presence of the 36-strong South African team, which includes seven blacks, violated United Nations policy and perpetuated "segregated and inferior sporting facilities for black South Africans."

**Disabled games protest**

Anti-apartheid demonstrators were accused of being members of a racist organisation when they demonstrated outside Stoke Mandeville Hospital yesterday at the opening of the international games for the disabled.

The manager of the 34-strong South African team, which includes seven blacks, said: "The South African team is selected purely on a merit basis." Mr Peter Goldhawk described the demonstration as laughable.

"Our organisation and our team are non-racial. To demonstrate against us proves they only want conflict and are a racist organisation," he said.

The demonstrators picketing the Buckinghamshire hospital's new sports stadium wanted the South Africans banned from the games. They claimed that eight countries had withdrawn because of the team's presence.

Among the protesters was 34-year-old polio victim Bernard Leach, who had been selected to take part in five swimming events at the games. Mr Leach, the British disabled freestyle record holder, said: "When I discovered that South Africa was participating I wrote to the organisers, telling them I was withdrawing in protest."

"In his letter to Miss Joan Scrutton, the games' secretary general, Mr Leach said: "No doubt I will be accused of bringing politics into sport, but simply by the fact that you invited an artificially 'mixed' team from South Africa means that you have brought politics into sport by providing the South African Government with wonderful propaganda in the International Year of Disabled People. That I want nothing to do with."

The games and the new £1,500,000 sports village, named after the games' founder, Sir Ludwig Gutman, were officially opened yesterday by Lord Porritt, president of the British Paraplegic Sports Society.
As for the other newspapers, the Sunday Telegraph in its news round-up again tried to perpetuate the myth that you could keep politics and sport separate, despite the events in New Zealand that weekend when opponents of the Springboks tour managed to prevent a game being held. In a muddled leader editorial it managed to compare anti-apartheid campaigners with the Crusaders, anti-Vietnam demonstrators and "narrow minded bigots". It states that the aim should be peaceful change in South Africa, but what alternatives to the gun can it offer black South Africans if it won't even support cultural and sports boycotts?

THE cause of the blacks in South Africa will benefit little from the anti-Springbok demonstrations in New Zealand, whose campaign won an infamous victory last week. Apartheid involves much cruelty and injustice. But the true enemies of cruelty and injustices are kindness and tolerance, not hatred and fanaticism. Just as the Crusaders in the Middle Ages disgraced Christ's Cross by their indulgence in the sword, so do these New Zealand humanitarians disgrace their creed by indulgence in violence.

Yet that they care, any more than the anti-Vietnam war demonstrators cared about the fate of Vietnam. How many of those who rioted in favour of Ho Chi Minh now have qualms of guilt when they read about the genocide which that monster's victory "brought" in its wake? With the benefit of hindsight it is unequivocally clear that the moral indignation against the Vietnam war was profoundly ill-judged, since the American withdrawal did far more harm than good. Idealism is no excuse for irrational behaviour, and a mob on the rampage in a righteous cause is just as ugly as one bent on persecution.

How can intolerance ever promote tolerance? Take the case of Miss Joan Scruton, who arranges international games for the disabled and is now under threat of "blacklisting" because she allowed a South African team, which included blacks, to take part. Such narrow-minded bigotry merely feeds the evils which it claims to combat. When the antagonists of apartheid display the same vices as its champions, they blur the distinction between good and evil to the point where sensible people are provoked into saying "a plague on both your houses."

Our hope is that the Springbok team will be able to carry on, since a final victory for the demonstrators would be a victory for the very mindless fanaticism in which apartheid has its roots. The aim in South Africa must be peaceful change, achieved through agreement between the races. There is no other way forward which will not eventually lead backwards. Scenes of riotous tumult, such as are disgracing New Zealand, cannot possibly promote this outcome. Indeed, insofar as they are allowed to succeed in their objective they will have quite the opposite effect, convincing both black- and white-extremists that it is far more effective to "war, war" than "jaw jaw."

Doubtless those demonstrators feel proud of their day's work, just as their counterparts did during the Vietnam disturbances. Let us pray that its fruits never turn into a comparable harvest of death and destruction. The evil that men do lives, after them, especially when the evil does claim to be on the side of the angels.
The Daily Telegraph not unexpectedly comes out in favour of the pro-South African participation line, and dedicates half its column to quotes from Joan Scruton and friends. One interesting aspect was the supposed 'quote' from one spectator that "you don't realise what it is like being crippled or else you wouldn't be here". Even though it was mentioned elsewhere in the column that many of the protestors were themselves people with disabilities it left you with the feeling that the demo consisted of a lot of able bodied fanatics trying to stop people in wheelchairs from having a bit of fun.

Daily Telegraph July 27th '81

**UJ.«.
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GAMES FOR DISABLED

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**DISABLED** athletes from 40 countries including Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Sudan and South Africa, competed in total racial harmony on the opening day of the 30th International Paralympic Games at Stoke Mandeville, Bucks, yesterday.

The only discordant note came from a group of about 40 demonstrators, including several disabled, from the Anti-Apartheid Movement who objected to the South African team's participation.

They stood or sat in wheelchairs at the entrance to the Games village holding banners and distributing leaflets condemning apartheid in South Africa. They made no attempt to enter the Games area, after being warned by police and security guards that they would not be allowed in.

One woman who managed to get inside with banners was ejected out by police.

**Denied allegation**

The anti-apartheid demonstrators had gathered in support of a threat by Sanroc — South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee — to place the secretary general of the disabled games, Miss Joan Scruton, on the United Nations blacklist for aiding apartheid in sport by allowing South Africa to compete.

The action had been taken by Mr. Sam Ramsamy, South African born chairman of Sanroc, who had earlier accused Miss Scruton of "racial discrimination."

An unrepentant Miss Scruton, who had worked for 37 years to build up games for the disabled, strongly denied the allegation. "Stoke Mandeville is legendary, and to think that anyone who works there would be doing anything against humanity is inconceivable," she said.

"To say I am a racist is absolute nonsense. We do not support South Africa's policy of apartheid but we support the South African Association for the Disabled, who have broken down the barriers of apartheid in that country."

A statement by the committee of the Games federation said, in reply to the Sanroc claim: "The Games unite paralysed men and women from all parts of the world and cement friendship and understanding among nations without distinction of race, religion or politics. Teams are selected on merit, and the South African team competes by right and not by invitation."

The demonstrators, who stayed outside the arena for several hours, jeered at members of the 36-strong South African team, which included seven blacks, shouting "Out, Out" as they moved by in wheelchairs.

One spectator who refused to accept a leaflet from the demonstrators... told... them: "You don't realise what it is like being crippled or else you wouldn't be here. Competitors don't give a monkey about you or your policies."

Mr. Peter Goldbaw, South African team manager, said: "Our team was selected on a purely merit basis, irrespective of colour."
But pride of place for sheer mindless right wing gush must go to the Sunday Express, who gave pride of place to the nonsensical comments of a backwoods Tory MP, John Carlisle about 'red agitators' being financed by Moscow. This MP's attitude towards people with disabilities is perhaps best summed up with this quote: "I am utterly disgusted with SANROC's behaviour. It is like kicking a lame animal". Does that mean he would be in favour of having them painlessly put down instead?

**RED AGITATORS BEHIND DISABLED GAMES ROW—MP**

A PROTEST is to be made in Parliament this week about the "mean and despicable" threat by anti-apartheid campaigners to blacklist disabled games organiser Miss Joan Scruton in 70 countries.

Mr John Carlisle, Tory MP for Luton West, said that he intends to warn Sports Minister Mr Hector Monro that the group which issued the threat was financially aided by Communist "agitators" from behind the Iron Curtain.

The main target for his criticism was the London-based South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee.

But last night it was revealed that the British anti-apartheid movement, whose most prominent members is prospective Labour candidate Peter Hain, first proposed the action against Miss Scruton.

Shattered

Mr Hain, 31, the former Young Liberal leader and now Labour's man in Putney, West London, is holidaying on the Continent, but the movement's secretary, Mr Michael Terry, said: "I know Peter fully supports this blacklisting."

Miss Scruton, secretary-general of the International Games for the Disabled, which open at Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, today, was still shattered by the proposed recommendation to place her on the United Nation's sporting blacklist unless she barred the South Africans — black and white — from the games.

But despite the threat and the prospect of facing a hostile demonstration today, the woman who has spent most of her life helping the disabled said: "I refuse to give in to these bullies. There is no racial discrimination in the South African team. Seven of the 34 contestants are black."

Mr Carlisle said: "I am terribly appalled that this poor woman has been made the latest innocent victim of what has become a vicious vendetta."

It is mean and despicable that a group of left-wing troublemakers should try and disrupt these games, which are doing an enormous amount of good for the disabled people of the world."

The MP is to raise the issue during a debate he is mounting on the Glenaigles agreement on sport with South Africa in the Commons on Friday.

He said: "I am utterly disgusted with SANROC's behaviour. It is like kicking a lame animal."

Mr Carlisle added: "Their leaders are known to fraternise openly with the Russians and regularly attend conferences in Moscow. I intend to expose the fact that they are also largely funded by Eastern bloc countries."

"But most of all, I want to make it clear that they are extremists who, far from attempting to create racial harmony, are hell-bent on destroying it."

Observer

But SANROC's chairman, Mr Sam Ramsamy, a South African-born teacher living in London, dismissed the alleged Communist links as "pure fabrication."

He insisted that his group received all its finance from this country, most of it being provided by the World Council of Churches.

Mr Ramsamy admitted that he had been to Moscow, but purely as an approved observer at the Olympics with representatives from other sports organisations.

Mr Terry also defended their actions against Miss Scruton. He said: "By allowing South Africa to show off its team, she is helping to create the warped impression that the South African Government has a caring fair attitude towards the country's disabled."

"In this, the International Year of the Disabled, we cannot allow such an affront to go unchallenged."
I certainly have no regrets over the actions I took. In the last few weeks I have learnt a lot about the way the press works, and about attitudes in general towards people with disabilities. The demonstration at Stoke was worthwhile, because even though it didn't stop the games, we were able to talk to some competitors (notably the Swedish team) and argue our case and everybody inside was very much aware of the demo. The antics of the white South Africans who came out to taunt us and demonstrate their wheelchair machismo wasn't pleasant to watch, but was compensated by the new contacts made with people from both the two activist organisations 'the Union' and 'the Network'.

The fight doesn't end here, international games are held every year, we must make sure that next time an even more effective campaign be launched, until the South Africans find out that they will not be able to find a safe haven in any sport. Other related issues which need to be discussed is the media treatment of people with disabilities, the control by the able bodied of organisations related to disability, and the place of sport for people who are physically impaired (should there be segregated facilities as at Stoke or should the aim be to develop integrated facilities?).