

Institution: Coventry University		
Unit of Assessment: 17 Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Paralympic history and development and its impact on the lives of disabled people in the wider society		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Ian Brittain	Assistant Professor	2010 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No.		

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Despite being the world's second largest multi-sport Games, the Paralympic Games are taken less seriously, receiving less media interest than the Olympic Games. Consequently, historical data about their development, and the role they have played in increasing understanding of the issues faced by disabled people in wider society, were discarded. This research addresses this gap, **informing and influencing** Paralympic organisations worldwide, **providing increased legitimacy** in disseminating information about the Games and athletes' achievements. This in turn has contributed towards **raising societal awareness of issues** around disability, disability sport and organisations supporting disability sport, **helping such organisations to operate more effectively.**

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Research by Brittain since 2010 has established a unique database on the development of the Paralympic Games that, through its use by national and international organisations, has significantly increased awareness of issues of disability in wider society. The research has been supported by grants totalling over £2 million (G1-G5).

Until recently the Paralympic Games received considerably less media and public interest than the Olympic Games. London 2012 was perhaps a turning point, throwing a global spotlight on the Paralympic Games, evidenced in packed stadia and significantly increased media exposure. Since this time, national and international organisations have recognised the power of this exposure and sought to use the Paralympic Games as a lens through which to increase awareness, not only of the Games and the athletes' achievements, but crucially their broader contribution in influencing and changing attitudes towards the wider community of disabled people. Lasting legacies in this respect are being created by such organisations through, for example, national museums and documentary films aiming to create awareness and widen participation. These initiatives draw considerably on Brittain's research, adding increased legitimacy through organisations being able to share with the public credible and accurate data.

Brittain's initial research into the history of the Paralympic Games discovered how little material existed; a reflection of the lack of importance afforded to the Games by society, and consequently athletes and National Paralympic Committees prior to London 2012. The research identified that (i) many organisations, including National Paralympic Committees and host city organisations, had discarded most of their original material, believing it would have no future importance; (ii) a lot of existing secondary material contained conflicting facts; e.g. number of countries that participated in a particular Games; and (iii) perhaps mirroring societal views of disabled people, many families of deceased Paralympians have thrown away material, including winners' medals, deeming them not worth keeping (R1).

To address these issues, subsequent research involved visits to previous host cities around the world, undertaking interviews with athletes, organisers and governmental bodies from these Games and purchasing relevant material from online auction sites. Material has also been gifted by Paralympians and officials who have taken part in the Games. This enabled a complete and accurate picture of the development of the Games to be developed (R2-R4).

The research, and the unique database it has generated, has several key outcomes: (i) Highlighting significant issues relating to the Paralympic movement that had not been elucidated before; for example, its role in challenging the apartheid movement in South Africa (R5). (ii) Filling a multitude of gaps in knowledge concerning the names and performances in Paralympic history. Brittain's research has identified the names of all but two of the Paralympians that have represented Great Britain since 1960, identifying 2,734 British athlete names covering all Paralympic Games, up from around 2,000 names previously. (iii) Correcting numerous pieces of information claimed as 'facts' in published work that were inaccurate or incorrect; such as the date of the very first Stoke Mandeville Games, or the number of countries which actually competed in the first two summer Paralympic Games.

These outcomes have led to: (i) new and original research in Paralympic legacy and how the Paralympic Games themselves have impacted the lives of disabled people in wider society (R6, G5); and (ii) the research being directly used by Paralympic organisations to achieve their awareness raising goals, through the provision of credible, accurate information used to inform their museums, films and other dissemination projects.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1. Brittain, I.S., Ramshaw, G. and Gammon, S. (2013). 'The marginalisation of Paralympic heritage'. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19 (2), 171-185. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.681679>.

R2. Brittain, I. (2018). 'Key Points in the History and Development of the Paralympic Games', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Paralympic Studies*. Eds Brittain, I. and AB. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 125-150. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47901-3_7.

R3. Brittain, I. (2016). *The Paralympic Games Explained*. 2nd edn. UK: Routledge (1st Edition 2009).

R4. Brittain, I. (2014). *From Stoke Mandeville to Sochi: A history of the summer and winter Paralympic Games*. Common Ground Publishing.

R5. Brittain, I. (2011). 'South Africa, Apartheid and the Paralympic Games'. *Sport in Society* 14 (9); 1167-1183. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2011.614773>.

R6. Brittain, I. and Beacom, A. (2016). 'Leveraging the London 2012 Paralympic Games: What legacy for people with disabilities?'. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 40 (6); 499-521. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0193723516655580>.

Grants

G1. Brittain, I. (PI) (2018 to 2019) *Building Japanese research capacity around disability studies and sport to positively impact the lives of people with disabilities - 2020 and beyond*. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC): ESRC-AHRC UK-Japan Social Sciences and Humanities Connections Grant, grant number: ES/S013792/1. Total grant amount: £44,467.29. Available from <https://qtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FS013792%2F1> [25 February 2021].

G2. Brittain, I. (Co-ordinator and CoPI) (2018 to 2022) *Addressing inequality, enhancing diversity and facilitating greater dialogue in the hosting of sporting mega events (EventRights)*. European Commission: H2020 Marie Curie Research Innovation and Staff Exchange (RISE), grant number: 823815. Total grant amount: €772,800.00 (£688,951.20). Available from <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/823815> [25 February 2021].

G3. Brittain, I. (Co-ordinator and CoPI) (2013 to 2017) *Managing the Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards Sustainable Legacies (CARNIVAL)*. European Union: FP7 Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES), grant number: 612614. Total grant amount:

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€852,600.00 (£714,223.02), funding to Coventry University: € 375,900.00 (£314,891.43). Available from <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/612614> [25 February 2021].

G4. Brittain, I. (2014 to 2016) *An investigation of the impact of multi-platform media coverage of the 2012 London Paralympic Games and the 2015 Toronto Parapan American Games upon perceptions of disability (LONTOR)*. European Commission: FP7 Marie Curie International Incoming Fellowship for Professor Jill Le Clair (Canada), grant number: 623864. Total grant amount: €299,558.40 (£236,726.03). Available from <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/198635-new-media-and-disabled-sport> [25 February 2021].

G5. Brittain, I. (2013 to 2015) *From the East End of London to the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro: The relevance and transferability of the social legacy programmes of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (LONRIO)*. European Commission: FP7 Marie Curie International Incoming Fellowship for Dr Leonardo Mataruna (Brazil), grant number 328402. Total grant amount: €299,558.40 (£253,950.63). Available from <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/182888-community-influence-of-london-2012-olympics> [25 February 2021].

The quality of the research is conveyed through its publication in top-ranking journals in field, its use by other researchers, and through the award of grants from international and national funders.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The growing importance of the Paralympic Games worldwide has led to an upsurge in interest with a variety of stakeholders to raise awareness and understanding amongst the public of both the Games' history and their objective of changing attitudes towards disability. This is evident in the rise in national and international organisations' endeavours to open museums, create documentary films and other approaches to enhancing awareness, engagement and involvement. This research (R1-R6) has created impact specifically in Paralympic organisations across three continents, including several National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), a National Paralympic Heritage Trust, and a media company working for the International Paralympic Committee. The research has helped to increase the legitimacy of these organisations and give credibility to their work to raise societal awareness of disability and disability sport globally.

The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) reflected how the research (R3, R4) provided increased authority and credibility to the story of US participation in the Paralympic Games in opening their Olympic and Paralympic Museum (July 2020). Such credibility is critical given that the museum was named Best New Attraction in 2020 in *USA TODAY's* 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards, and as such will attract increased public attention:

"Drawing on [the] research we have been able to confidently create and showcase compelling stories related to Paralympic sport throughout the museum. It has provided essential legitimacy, enabling us as an organisation to disseminate, with confidence, accurate content that raises awareness amongst our visitors" (S1).

Paralympics Australia stated that key findings of the research (R3, R4) formed a vital and continuing contribution to their Paralympics Australia History Project. The project is designed to capture and preserve the history of the Paralympic Movement in Australia, and in turn raise awareness of disability sport. The research has formed:

"An important contribution to building the 'written history', at the heart of our project. In addition, it has allowed us to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of the information, so that we are confident what we publish is of the highest calibre. By contributing to our 'written history' in this way, [the] research has enabled us, through our project, to fulfil our core aim of raising awareness of issues around disability sport in Australia" (S2).

Harder Than You Think Films, appointed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to produce a documentary (*Rising Phoenix*) about the history of the movement, reflected on how

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the research (R4) helped improve the legitimacy of their film and increased levels of understanding amongst a global audience:

“[The research] has ensured a higher level of understanding regarding the history and story of the Paralympic Games ... I have been ... confident that the information disseminated through the film is factually accurate, whilst at the same time ensuring that its content raises awareness of this fascinating and dynamic movement and the role it plays in highlighting the issues faced by disabled people within the wider society” (S3).

Rising Phoenix premiered on Netflix worldwide in August 2020 and by December had been viewed over 600,000 times. It is on the ‘long-list’ of documentary films for the British Independent Film Awards (November 2020).

In a similar vein, the CEO of the National Paralympic Heritage Trust (NPHT) in the UK states that the:

“Comprehensive body of research knowledge on the Paralympic Games and their forebears, the International Stoke Mandeville Games, has enabled us to compose historically accurate and factually complete exhibition scripts, in a field where there has, to date, been a paucity of information” (S4).

The importance of this legitimacy in raising societal awareness is reflected in that since opening in mid-2018, the NPHT Museum has been visited circa 137,000 times and its website approximately 40,000.

The research (R3, R4) is also supporting the National Paralympic Heritage Trust in awareness raising, through its outreach activities to educate and inspire future generations:

“[The] research and unparalleled knowledge with respect to the history of Paralympic and disability sport and their impact upon wider societal understanding ... have also been influential in shaping the content of our outreach programme and public tours. We regard our outreach programme as an important facility through which we can ‘enlighten and inspire future generations’ in line with our central rationale” (S4).

The CEO of the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) reaffirms the value of the research (R1, R3, R4) in terms of awareness raising, but also how it has helped the organisation directly through facilitating income generation:

“Since 2012, the research ... has provided IWAS with not only an invaluable income stream ... through the distribution of our photo and video catalogues, but also exposure and recognition to raise awareness of disability sport” (S5).

In 2020 IWAS, a registered UK Charity, gained nearly £2,000 in income from its archives, which might appear to be a small amount, but is increasingly important to IWAS as other income streams are squeezed by the current economic situation.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

S1. Chief Executive Officer and Exhibition Development Team Member, United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum (2020) *Impact of research upon the development of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum opening in 2020*. Testimonial letter to Coventry University.

S2. Facilitator, Australian Paralympic History Project, Paralympics Australia (2020) *Impact of research upon the Paralympics Australia History*. Testimonial letter to Coventry University.

S3. Head of Research, Harder Than You Think Films (HTYT Films) (2020) *Impact of research upon the ‘Harder than you Think [Rising Phoenix]’ Paralympic History documentary*. Testimonial letter to Coventry University.

S4. Chief Executive Officer, National Paralympic Heritage Trust (2020) *Impact of research upon the work of the National Paralympic Heritage*. Testimonial letter to Coventry University.

S5. Chief Executive Officer, International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) (2020) *Impact of research upon the work of the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS)*. Testimonial letter to Coventry University.