

LIGHTWEIGHT WHEELCHAIRS

POWERCHAIRS

STAND UP WHEELCHAIRS

COMFORT WHEELCHAIRS

POWERDRIVES

WHEELCHAIR SEATING

PRESSURE AREA CARE

WALKING AIDS



SIT! Bengt Engström seating seminars and workshops

Gerald Simonds is presenting a series of free, one day seating seminars for professionals featuring **Bengt Engström**, world renowned physiotherapist in the field of ergonomics and the principles of seating. Having committed much of his life to seating and mobility for people with disabilities, Bengt Engström now specialises in educating professionals and other individuals on long term seating for wheelchair users, through his interactive and stimulating seminars which have taken him all over the world.

These unmissable seminars will include ergonomic principles in seating, practical biomechanics in analysing sitting positions, a review of active and inactive seating with focus on pressure relief and practical workshops exploring Vicair products and wheelchair seating and mobility

The seminars are taking place in Manchester, Nottingham and York. If you would like further details, please contact us on seminars@gerald-simonds.co.uk or call us FREE on 0800 220975



We presented the first of this year's Levo 'Benefits of Standing' seminars to a group of therapists and other professionals at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

BRINGING QUALITY TO LIFE

We are the leading national suppliers of high quality wheelchairs, wheelchair seating and other mobility solutions from the world's leading manufacturers. Our range includes wheelchairs, powerchairs, powerdrives, seating and pressure area care products and walking aids.

Our added value service begins with impartial advice on the right solution for individual needs, backed by expert assessments and no-obligation demonstrations. We then provide long term after sale and customer support.

In line with the BHTA industry Code of Practice we give advice, assess and adjust every wheelchair for every customer. Which is why we won't sell any assessable items on line. However, we are currently working on a very exciting new project that will give you direct access to a wide range of invaluable, quality products to make life easier at home and at leisure. Watch this space.

We'll be giving more details in the next issue of The Spokesman.

IT'S TIME YOU SPOKE UP!

We've always intended The Spokesman to be a dialogue, between us at Gerald Simonds and you, our current or future customers and friends. We see it as an opportunity for us to tell you about new developments in mobility and for you to tell us about how you use them. Or how they could be improved. Or what else you would like to see.

We want to hear from you, whatever you have to say. This is your part of The Spokesman and we want you to use it. You can contact us by writing to The Editor, Spokesman, Gerald Simonds Healthcare Ltd., FREEPOST, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 3BR or by emailing: spokesman@gerald-simonds.co.uk

LIGHTWEIGHT WHEELCHAIRS

POWERCHAIRS

STAND UP WHEELCHAIRS

COMFORT WHEELCHAIRS

POWERDRIVES

WHEELCHAIR SEATING

PRESSURE AREA CARE

WALKING AIDS

The SPOKESMAN

A SLICE OF HISTORY!

Welcome to a special edition of The Spokesman, marking the 25th anniversary of Gerald Simonds. Since the company was launched in 1983 we have grown to become the leading national supplier of high quality wheelchairs and a wide range of pressure relieving and positioning wheelchair cushions and mattresses.

To celebrate this significant milestone, we announced in the last issue a search to find the oldest item of equipment supplied by us since 1983 and still in regular use. We had an outstanding response and you can read about these amazing, long lasting wheelchairs and see the overall winner on page 3.

On page 4 you will find a fascinating article about the history of wheelchairs and Gerald Simonds' part in their development since the early eighties.

GET IN TOUCH

As this is a brief moment for looking back, we'd love to hear from you about your own experiences over the past 25 years. About how your life has changed, how aids to mobility have improved and what you would like to see in the future. You can write to:

The Editor, Spokesman, Gerald Simonds Healthcare Ltd., FREEPOST, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 3BR or by emailing: spokesman@gerald-simonds.co.uk.



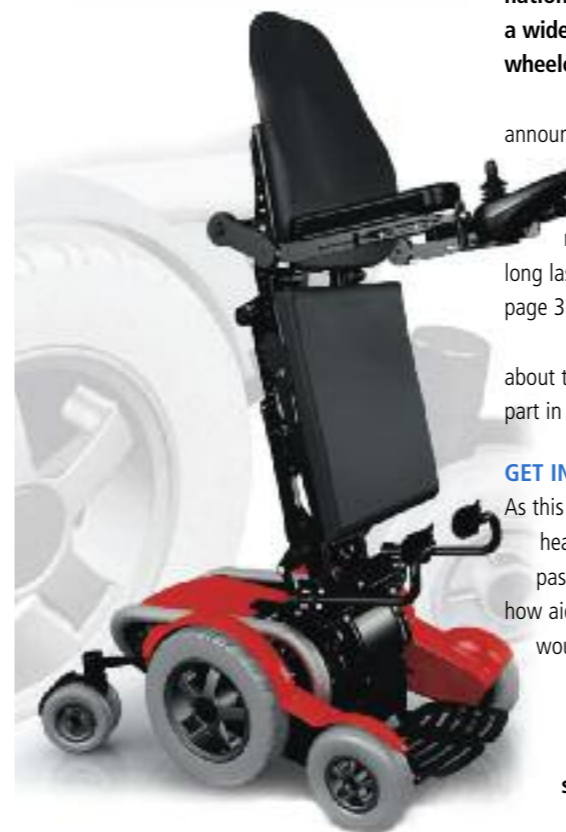
The message on our celebration cake says it all!

However as nostalgia isn't everything it used to be and, as we move into our second quarter century, we continue to look forward and introduce new and exciting models to our range. The outstanding new **Levo C3** really lets you stand out. It's an everyday, compact standing wheelchair with maximum on and off road manoeuvrability and four powered wheels that can take kerbs, ramps and rough ground in their stride. It's agile, easy to operate with an extremely efficient drive system and its compact design makes the C3 ideal for use in narrow spaces and for easy transport. The sitting and standing unit comes with a new Low Shear System with separately adjustable length for back and legs.

In this issue you can also read about the new **Jay 3 Back**, suitable for the active to the elderly. The fully crash tested Jay 3 uses versatile hardware which is simple to fit and easy to use. The Spine Align posture conforming system allows for optimum postural support ensuring maximum comfort. The new **Jay Easy** fluid pad or memory foam cushion offers moderate positioning and pressure relief at a very competitive price.

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Spokesman, with a brief trip down memory lane and, if we've stirred any memories for you, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

The new Levo C3 shows the way forward.



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



GERALD
SIMONDS

Gerald Simonds Healthcare Ltd.

9 March Place, Gatehouse Way
Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8UA

Tel: 01296 380200

email: info@gerald-simonds.co.uk

www.gerald-simonds.co.uk



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



STAND OUT WITH THE CROWD



The outstanding new **Levo C3** is an everyday compact standing wheelchair with maximum on and off road manoeuvrability. With four powered wheels the C3 takes kerbs, ramps and rough ground in its stride. It's compact, agile, easy to operate and has an extremely efficient drive system. In the seated position the centre wheel drive gives the smallest turn radius and the most efficient driving characteristics. The front wheel drive in standing position makes the C3 very safe to manoeuvre and, in both sitting and standing position, it turns easily around the user's centre of gravity. Compact design makes the C3 ideal for use in narrow spaces and for easy transportation. The Levo C3 quickly and

easily adapts to any individual body size and the new seating unit offers optimal biomechanics in all sitting and standing positions. It also enables mounting for individual back and seat systems with minimal seat height for easy transfer and table or desk accessibility. The sitting and standing unit comes with a new Low Shear System with separately adjustable length for back and legs.

With the new Levo C3 you simply push a button and you are in the middle of what's happening, with a safe, comfortable standing position. At work, at school, at home or at leisure the extraordinary new Levo C3 offers independence, mobility, integration, health and a completely new level of access.

BIGGER AND SHORTER

We've recently increased our range of Handicare products, adding the new **Handicare Cirrus XL 65/70** and **Handicare Emineo Short**. They both come with full 10 year warranties.

The Cirrus XL 65/70 is an extra wide comfort wheelchair, with unique functions and adaptability for users up to a maximum weight of 175kg (27.5 stone). It has an adjustable seat length and comes in a range of seat widths from 60 - 72cm. Cirrus XL 65/70 also has a wide range of headrests and accessories available and complies with the requirements for low servicing costs and easy re-use.



The **Emineo Comfort Short** is a new version of the Emineo for short leg users and narrow adults, with a seat width of 42cm and adjustable depth of 34 - 40cm. The Emineo Short's attractive, modern design is comfortable and provides good sitting stability, with height adjustable armrests and stepless back height adjustment of between 50 - 60cm. The Emineo Short is suitable for a maximum user weight of 135kg.



For more details of both models, contact us **FREE** on **0800 220975** or by email on: sales@gerald-simonds.co.uk

NEW CUSHIONS AND BACK FROM JAY

We are pleased to announce two new additions to our seating range - the **Jay 3 Back** and the **Jay Easy Cushion**.

JAY 3 BACK

From the active to the elderly, the fully crash tested **Jay@ J3 Back** features an extremely versatile mounting hardware package, flexible positioning system, and all-in-one package, dedicated to eliminating compromises such as: bars that interfere with the mounting hardware, backrest contours that fail to match the user or even back heights that are too tall or too short. The J3 Back is designed with a variety of contour depths, support heights and support shapes to fit almost every adult.

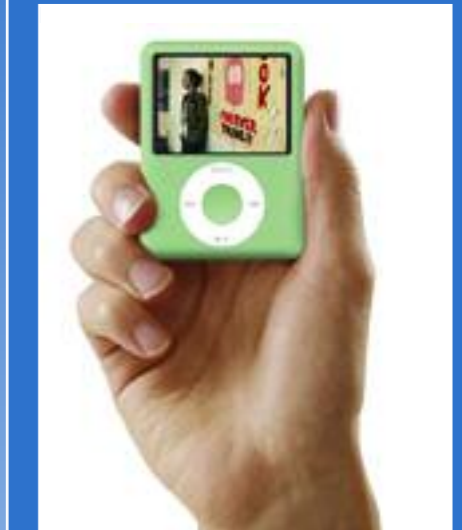
The Jay 3 Back's Spine Align posture conforming system allows for optimum postural support ensuring maximum user comfort. This incredible range eliminates compromises and guarantees a correct fit almost every time.



JAY EASY CUSHION

The **Jay@ Easy cushion** is an economical cushion that was developed primarily for clients requiring moderate positioning and pressure relief. It can be used with either a seat sling or a solid base and features a sacral notch, curved or flat base, lateral and medial thigh contours and comes with an integral Jay Flow fluid tripad for clients at high risk of skin breakdown.

The Jay Easy cushion comes in a range of widths and depths, with a weight capacity of 17 stone 12lb/ (113.6kg).



With this issue of **The Spokesman**, we aim to keep you informed with news of our latest products and developments. But, as always, we'd like to do more.

Our website, www.gerald-simonds.co.uk, is the complete source of the most current information about all our products, prices and special offers. What's more, if you visit our website, update your contact details and, if appropriate, complete our on-line customer satisfaction survey, you'll have a good chance of winning an amazing new iPod Nano.

Simply log on now and click on the 'Win an iPod' link, take a few moments to enter your details, and you'll be entered in the draw to win an iPod Nano. Which could be music to your ears.

END TO END ENDS EARLY

We wrote in the last issue of **The Spokesman** how Mary Laver from Newcastle upon Tyne, who has rheumatoid arthritis, planned to complete the End to End Challenge, travelling from Lands End to John o'Groats in an Alber Adventure, in aid of Arthritis Care. We supplied Mary with her Adventure, customised to her needs, and she duly set off from Lands End at 12 noon on Sunday June 1. Unfortunately events beyond Mary's control, including the onset of kidney stones, meant that she was unable to continue and the attempt was postponed until next year.



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



THE WHEELCHAIR COMES OF AGE.
Continued



Suddenly wheelchair users were empowered; they could function more normally in everyday life; transporting chairs in cars became easier, meaning leisure facilities, shops and workplaces became more accessible; career opportunities opened up. New standards in sport were set by disabled athletes. In the 1960s basketball players used ordinary wheelchairs, which weighed around 60lb, and wasted a lot of energy simply moving the unstable frame around the court.

"There was some initial resistance to the new chairs", says Gerald. "To begin with they were perceived as expensive compared to existing NHS chairs, but their clinical and ergonomic advantages were soon recognised as cost benefits. In fact real costs have gone down over the past 25 years. And they looked beautiful," Gerald continues, "they were stylish and sexy. The cosmetic appearance of a chair is hugely important.

For example, chairs like the new TiLite range look absolutely stunning" he enthuses. 'They're made in titanium, they're functionally right and they're aesthetically right. A wheelchair becomes a personal design statement like a car or a watch, or shoes or clothing.' In fact an early Quickie wheelchair featured in an exhibition of classic sports equipment held at London's Design Museum.

And as for the future? Gerald Simonds considers: "We will see chairs which require increasingly less energy to propel, offering lower rolling resistance, making them more ergonomically efficient. More power chairs such as the Alber Adventure, which dismantle in seconds and fit easily into a normal family car, which are already opening up access to the great outdoors. The change from minimal choice 25 years ago to today's highly specialised and flexible chairs has been extraordinary. But the Holy Grail remains to achieve the lightest weight whilst providing the necessary rigidity and durability."



THE GERALD SIMONDS TEAM

On a recent summer evening we held a barbecue to celebrate our 25th anniversary. The picture shows most of the current Gerald Simonds team, including Gerald himself (fifth from left in the back row)

Our oldest wheelchair. 25 years on and still going strong!

In the last issue of The Spokesman we set out to find the oldest wheelchair sold by Gerald Simonds since 1983 and still in working order. We had a very good response, with our finalists sending details of chairs supplied during the early days of the company.



Cliff Dugmore has a Swede Cross from July 1993, while Annette Holcroft from Milton Keynes wrote: 'I bought a Quickie GP from Gerald Simonds in 1991 and still use it everyday. You have supplied all my parts and servicing for all those 17 years.' Mrs J Jackson from Letchworth told us of her Quickie which is 'about 20 years old', and Howard Brunton from Somerset wrote 'I have a Quickie 2 bought from you in about 1989. It has had two bits of frame replacement, one in yellow . . . the rest being bronze/black. It makes it easy to recognise should I ever have the misfortune to have to travel by air again!'

1986 was obviously a good year as we heard from several readers who had bought chairs in that year. Gerry Hart from East Sussex wrote: I bought my Quickie

wheelchair in 1986. It's in daily use and in its time it has been on aircraft more times than I care to remember. It's been in the sea, been used as a shower chair on holiday, even been in the swimming pool once (drunk!) It's been to horse shows, across bumpy fields, chucked in and out of cars/horse trailers, all without ill effect.'

Michael Hervey-Murray told us 'I still use a Küschall Special purchased from yourselves in October 1986. Has a crack in one of the side frames which will not last for very long so looking for a replacement,' while Andrew Robertson from West Lothian (left) wrote of his Swede Champ 'it is as good as new when purchased from you in 1986.' Finally for that year, Jon Studd wrote from Arpinge, near Folkestone to tell us 'I have a Quickie II which I bought in May 1986 and still use it regularly when I go out on my horse and cart. It is nice and light and folds well to put on the top after I have transferred on board.'

We heard from Andrew Waller about his Swede 24 bought in 1985 and from Bill Cooper in Hook Norton who bought a Swede 24 from Gerald in 1984. Former wheelchair tennis champion Janet McMoran remembers Gerald measuring her for her new Quickie in 1984 when she was pregnant and wrote: 'I still use the chair in the house and garden and have worn out the 'bar' with my foot. I leave the chair in the garden (taking off the Jay back and cushion) in rain and snow.

These were all remarkable stories, but our winner had managed to outlast them all. Clive Ottley from Southend ordered his Swede 24 on 27th July 1983, making it one of earliest chairs sold by the company. Clive wrote: 'I have four chairs but spend most of my time in the Swede 24. It is looking a bit worn now as you can see from the photo (above right) but I still find it the most comfortable and practical of all of them.'

Gerald Simonds made a personal delivery of Clive's prize, an engraved silver dish detailing the remarkable 25 years his chair has been in service.

If you have a long serving piece of equipment supplied by Gerald Simonds, or a wheelchair that has seen a lot of life, please let us know.



Clive Ottley with his Swede 24, bought in 1983 and (below) with his silver dish marking our oldest wheelchair still in use.



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



THE WHEELCHAIR COMES OF AGE.

For the 450,000 wheelchair users in the UK, the past 25 years have seen the most significant advances ever in wheelchair design and manufacture.

The history of the wheelchair can actually be dated back to the sixteenth century when the first recognisable 'invalid's chair' was made for Phillip II of Spain. More than three hundred and fifty years later, in 1919, a US mining engineer, Herbert A. Everest, broke his back in a mining accident and lost the use of his legs. With the help of his friend, Harry C. Jennings Sr., a mechanical engineer, they created a tubular steel, foldable chair that was practical to use and easier to transport in the fast developing motorcar. The modern wheelchair had arrived.

For the first half of the twentieth century most disabled people in the UK had to buy wheelchairs privately or depend on charitable gifts and donations. However, in 1948 the newly established National Health Service assumed responsibility for the development, supply and distribution of wheelchairs. The Ministry Chair dominated the UK wheelchair market, with the Ministry Model 8, introduced in 1951 accounting for over 95 per cent of all prescription wheelchairs by the early 1960s.

Towards the end of the 1970s a radical change occurred in attitudes, and the increased social inclusion of disabled people changed both the meaning of, and the effects of, living with disability. At the same time the design and marketing strategies of new lightweight wheelchairs began to be based on their ability to deliver greater independence and quality of life for the user. Materials originally developed by the aerospace industry were lighter and stronger; seating systems allowed correct posture and increased comfort; both rigid and folding chairs began to fit more easily into the back of a standard car.

PIONEER

An early pioneer of the new generation, lightweight wheelchairs was Gerald Simonds, then based in Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire. Seeking a change of direction in the early 1980s after a career in aeronautical and automotive engineering, he came across the original Swede 24 wheelchair, one of the first lightweight rigid framed wheelchairs in production. With his engineering background Gerald became interested in how the application of aeronautical materials and techniques could serve the needs of disabled people and make their lives easier.

He contacted the manufacturers of the Swede 24, Enco Miljö in Sweden (the company that later became Etac) and eventually agreed to become UK distributor. He immediately found ready acceptance of this new generation of manual wheelchairs amongst the therapists and patients at nearby Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the world famous centre for treating spinal injuries.

"There was a big change happening around the late seventies and early eighties," says Gerald, "which became increasingly obvious at Stoke Mandeville. People with disabilities and their therapists were becoming disenchanted with the standard issue folding NHS chair. Anyone needing a wheelchair at that time would have been referred to their local wheelchair service and issued with a prescription for a heavy metal chair, fairly standard in size and appearance, with black or dark green upholstery. Nothing else was available. They were cumbersome and hard to manoeuvre", he recalls, "not at all nice to live with."

LUDWIG GUTTMAN

In 1948, Sir Ludwig Guttman, a neurologist working with Second World War veterans with spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, began using sport as part of the rehabilitation programmes of his patients. As a consequence, he set up a competition with other hospitals to coincide with the London Olympics in that year. Over the next decade Guttman's care plan was adopted by other spinal injury units in Britain and competition grew, leading directly to the development of the Annual World Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Games and, ultimately to the growth of the world-wide Paralympic movement.

In 1983, anticipating the demand for a new kind of wheelchair, Gerald established the business now known as Gerald Simonds Healthcare. He had a trade stand at that year's Stoke Mandeville International Games and again at the Paralympic Games held the following year.

The growth of sports therapy programmes both improved the physical function of disabled people and empowered

many active individuals who wanted to achieve more. This increased the demand for 'performance' wheelchairs, chairs that were strong, lightweight, stable and versatile, so chairs made of new materials such as aluminium, titanium and carbon fibre became more widely available.

NORTHERN LIGHT

Development of the new style, lightweight chairs had begun in the USA and soon spread to Sweden, long at the forefront of industrial design and where levels of health service funding made the new chairs economically viable. Many engineers who were themselves disabled found themselves in the vanguard of developing lighter weight, ergonomically designed chairs. Following an accident with a tractor, Bo Lindkvist went into partnership with Enco Miljö, a tubular furniture manufacturer, and developed the original Swede 24. Other chairs such as the original Quickie evolved from aircraft engineering, with its quick release wheel axle being developed directly from a wartime bomb release mechanism. This combination of improvements in design, led in big part by wheelchair users, and improved materials, which made chairs stronger and more flexible, coincided exactly with the new sense of self awareness of people with disabilities which was beginning to be felt strongly in the early 1980s.

"At the time, new features like rigid box frames, adjustable seating which fitted properly, quick release wheels which meant the chair could be easily stowed and carried in a normal car, were greeted with amazement," remembers Gerald, "but they soon became the standard." Increasingly rigid frames meant that less effort was wasted in moving the chairs, making them easier to propel. Therapists, carers and handlers quickly came to recognise the advantages of the new chairs which, with increased flexibility and 'custom build' quality allowed clients to sit in the optimal position and in greater comfort. "The NHS chairs with their saggy backs and saggy seats made users sit badly and aggravated their existing problems," says Gerald. "The new chairs meant they could sit in comfort, their bodily functions could work properly and pressure sores were reduced."



Sir Ludwig Guttman, founder of the Stoke Mandeville Games

"Anyone needing a wheelchair at that time would simply have gone to a doctor and received a prescription for a heavy metal chair"



The original Swede 24, one of the first lightweight rigid framed wheelchairs

Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR



Sole distributors: ALBER / ETAC / HANDICARE / LEVO / MAXGREPP / PROACTIV / TILITE / VICAIR

