

LINK



Autumn 1972 5p

The Journal of The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (A.S.B.A.H.)



a fairy story with a happy ending

Once upon a time there was a little roo  called Kanga. He hopped to the edge of the wood  where he saw a big house . He looked into the house and saw there were lots of nurses  with children, the nurses were saying that one of their biggest problems was incontinence.

Kanga  did not know what this meant so he asked and they told him that it made the children  very sore and caused the nurses lots of work. Kanga had some clever friends who worked in a hospital laboratory  so he asked them to help.

Next week he came back to the house  with some special pants  he had invented. When the nurses tried them on the children they were very pleased  because they were very comfortable and easy to change.

Kanga's friends  are now working on other problems to help children — but if you would like to know more about the pants that Kanga's friends invented please write to Kanga at...

LEWIS WOOLF GRIPTIGHT LTD.
Pershore, Worcs WR10 2HW.



LINK



AUTUMN

Vol. 1 No. 24

The Journal of **The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (A.S.B.A.H.)**

Chairman: Mr. R. B. ZACHARY, F.R.C.S.
Honorary Treasurer: Mr. E. S. GOWER.
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Cover

Jeremy Stovell (right)
at the Albert Hall Concert.

EDITORIAL:

The dog days of August have been stirred as far as the Association is concerned by active reporting of conflicting views on the treatment and care of spina bifida. We deplore the pain and anxiety which some of the short and incomplete reports have caused both parents and young people. Two things are clear: the Association, and this includes the work of *Link*, is concerned with the care of everyone who has spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus whether they are hours old or reaching three score years and ten (as we rejoice to say some known to us are). Secondly, "they" say there is no such thing as bad publicity, and so the spotlight which has been turned on us will as far as the

general public is concerned have been of benefit. Congratulations to the many parents, and better still young people, who wrote to the newspapers with their personal experience of the positive contribution they are able to make to the life of the community and of their many interests.

As the Association reaches the end of its sixth year, still quite youthful of course though with fewer growing pains, we are encouraged by Sir Keith Joseph's promise to speak at the Annual General Meeting. A report will be included in our next issue.

The end of the summer holidays feels like the beginning of a new year, so success to your efforts in the season ahead!

LONDON SPINA BIFIDA SURVEY

under the auspices of the

Greater London Council

By **BERNADETTE SPAIN**

As a result of improvements in surgical and nursing techniques over the past ten years, more and more children with spina bifida are surviving to school age, many with severe physical handicaps. This research project was started some years ago because the Medical Advisors' Department, which is responsible for the provision of special education with the Inner London Education Authority, became aware of the fact that there would be more children with spina bifida needing special education in the future. The aim of the research is to provide accurate data on the number of children surviving and on the percentage of children with physical or other handicaps. The information gathered is designed to help in the planning of education and other local authority services. The Department of Health and Social Security helps to finance the study, and it is carried out with the co-operation of the local authorities and the treatment hospitals.

We have undertaken a number of different studies, but the main one is a longitudinal survey of children with spina bifida or encephalocoele, born in London between 1967 and 1969. Each child in this survey was seen at the age of a year and his progress assessed to see if his development was slow or abnormal in any way. The mother was interviewed to find out what treatment the child had received during the year, what problems had arisen and whether help was available for the family. The children are being seen every year, around the time of their birthdays, so that we shall have quite full information on each child's progress. The parents have been exceptionally helpful in allowing us to visit. We explained to them that this is a research project which might not help their child in any way, but that it should produce information which would help children in the future. We have really been delighted with the co-operation we have received, and we are very grateful to the families in the survey, and of course to the children as well.

There are about 160 children in the study who are now aged 4 and 5 years. About one third of the sample are fairly average in

development both mentally and physically, or have only a minor handicap, such as a squint or below the knee calipers, and should certainly be able to manage in normal schools. The rest will require special educational facilities of some kind because of either physical or learning handicaps.

In addition to the obvious educational problems which are presented by children with poor mobility or incontinence, we have found that many children have slow or rather odd development in other ways, which will probably cause problems with schooling. We are looking at the development of these children in some detail, and we hope to produce information which will help teachers to recognise if a child has a particular problem which might make it harder for him to learn. For example, we have found that many hydrocephalic children are rather clumsy and awkward in using their hands, which might perhaps mean that they will be slow at learning to use a pencil, or to write. If teachers are aware of this they can give such a child special help.

We are also thinking about how future parents might be advised in child management in the early years to help to minimise such difficulties. We are involved in a study which is being carried out in one of the main hospitals, where a group of mothers of newborn children are being given special advice about what toys will best benefit their children, what stages a normal baby should be reaching at different ages and how to ensure that the handicapped child is not missing out in some way because of his physical disability. If this proves successful, then this advice may be made available generally. We hope therefore that the information we are gathering can be used not only to give accurate statistics about a number of children with various types of handicap, but that it will also be used to help to prevent some of these handicaps from arising.

Pre-Schooling

About one-third of the three-year-olds in our study were already in pre-school or play groups of some kind. Of the remainder about half of

the mothers would have liked the child to attend. It seems to us to be very important that all children with physical handicaps be given the opportunity for schooling as early as possible, and that three-year-olds should be offered the option of pre-school if the parents wish it. Handicapped children do inevitably lead a more restricted life than do normal children, and therefore need extra educational facilities if their progress is not to be hampered by this. It is also important for the mother to have some time away from her handicapped child. Normal children are beginning to be independent by three or four, to play in the garden without an adult present, go to tea at a friend's house, etc. A handicapped child often spends all his day at his mother's side. Unless she has a close friend or relative whom she trusts, many mothers are unwilling to leave the child at all during the day, and this can be a strain. The child on the other hand is also tied. For example, he can't easily go off by himself if he feels annoyed with his mother, as his brothers and sisters can. It is often a great relief to both the mother and the child if

they can regularly spend some time apart, and we hope the provision of pre-school places will be extended as a result of our study.

Community Help

We have also asked parents about what help they have received from health visitors and family doctors, and whether they are receiving any special services such as incontinence pads or the Attendance Allowance. We are trying to see how effective these services are and what improvements need to be made. Our impression is that parents often do not get much support outside hospital. Some health visitors and general practitioners are very concerned and interested, and in that case they can be a great help to anxious parents. We should like to ensure that every family has someone close at hand who is knowledgeable and interested in the spina bifida child, who can give practical help and advice, and with whom parents can discuss the child's progress in a more tranquil

continued on p. 14



We should like to acknowledge the help of Tatchbury Mount Hospital, and voluntary work of the members of Southampton and District Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association to make this Trolley.

All enquiries to:—Mrs. K. Charrett,
2 Marchwood Road, SOUTHAMPTON.
Telephone enquiries: TOTTON 3365
(Mr. Mortimer)

THE SHASBAH TROLLEY FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

PATENT APPLIED FOR IN
U.K., Commonwealth Countries, U.S.A., Canada.

This Trolley was designed by Mr. Ken Charrett of Southampton for his daughter who was born with Spina Bifida. It was soon found that here was a chair that would enable a child paralysed from the waist down, to become mobile.

The Trolley weighing only 14lb. is strongly constructed, completely manoeuvrable and easily propelled by the child. Due to the low centre of gravity and rear caster action it is virtually impossible to be overturned.

The Trolley is finished with foam upholstered durable vinyl and comes in a wide range of attractive colours, this is to give the child the impression it has a toy. The child soon learns to use the Trolley, which adds much happiness to the child's life.

Standard Model for children one to five years old cost £7.50p plus postage 55p approx. **Large Model** for children five to ten years old cost £10.50p carriage 75p approx. in United Kingdom. Overseas prices on application.

Produced by the

**Southampton and District Spina Bifida
and Hydrocephalus Association**

TOYS AND HOBBIES

by Olwen Nettles

Writing this in our so-called "High Summer" I have not got the heart to call this article "Toys and Hobbies for Christmas". But I am sure that by the time you get your *Link* you will be beginning to think about Christmas presents and what there will be both to interest and please your child.

Before I start, I would like to say that as my children are past the toy stage, I was horrified at some of the prices being asked and am only thankful that toys do not figure largely in my budget. Perhaps some of you with younger families are more accustomed to today's prices. I have tried to tell you about a selection of price ranges and interests, as I know only too well that *nothing* suits everyone.

I am not mentioning mobility toys as such, because all that are available have appeared before in *Link*. There is nothing really new except the address to which to write for the "Minibug" which now is: Denys Fisher Toys Ltd., Thorp Arch Estate, Wetherby, Yorks.

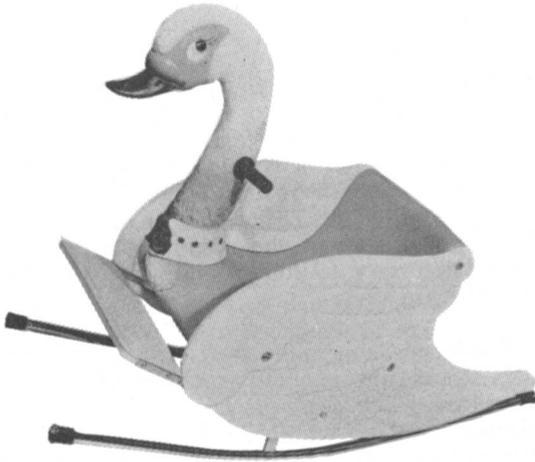
The Doodlebug—never very satisfactory—has been discontinued, but the Whizz-Bang is still available from the Worcestershire Association, and, of course, we can still get the Eldon Poweride car at a reduced price.

I have just been to a reception at Hamley's Toy Shop to introduce their new stock of toys for the Christmas market, and while I realise that many of you cannot get to shop in London, most of the toys will be available all over the country. I went only to find toys that would give both pleasure and help to our Spina Bifida children, and make no apologies for putting pleasure first. Toys are meant to be enjoyed and a child who has been denied pleasurable toys and has only been given toys to help or educate him has missed an essential part of growing-up. If toys can give pleasure and unobtrusively educate at the same time, so much the better. Into this category come some of the Palitoy range of dolls. One that especially caught my eye was the one with an outside wrist watch. When the hands of this watch are turned to any time, and a string in the back of the doll pulled, the doll speaks the time. What more painless way can there be to learn to tell

the time? This firm also has a doll that pours tea endlessly (there is a closed circuit of water going into the teapot, from there to the cup, through a small hole in the base of the cup, and back to the teapot); a doll that irons, uses a carpet sweeper and feather brush; and dolls that stand and do acrobatics. The last two could be an encouragement to any girl to do her exercises and learn to walk. I also saw the "Copy-cat" doll who writes anything that the child writes, a sure encouragement in writing dexterity, while giving pleasure.

For smaller children, there are baby walkers of the sit-in kind of all descriptions. For our children with weak legs these walkers are often a 'must' to help them to sit up and pull themselves around the house by any means. The walkers and rockers made by 'Canova' are worth looking for. These are in bright colours and in the shape of various animals, all of which have soft heads so that if the child drops forward he cannot hurt himself. The bodies of the animals are made in moulded plastic and have a backrest and sides, and some are covered in a fur fabric. In the Duck and Swan the wings form chair-arms so that the child is very safe.





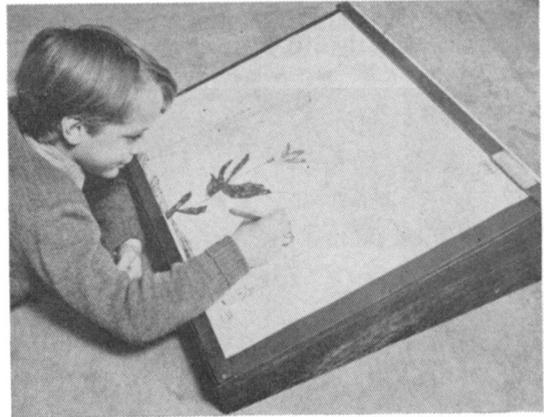
There are also rocking horses which have back rests and straps. Another firm make a baby walker to look like a car, with steering wheel and dashboard. Most of these are in the £5-£10 range. There are baby walkers for dolls too, to give encouragement.

Of absolutely no therapeutic use, but very fascinating, is a row of toy soldiers who walk along while playing a march. The child holds the baton used by the drum-major, and a touch of this on the pennant on the drum will alter the direction of the march. Price £5.30p. Another in this category too comes the Matchbox firm's 'Cascade'. This consists of an automatic spiral tower, three tightly stretched drums, and a collector all arranged on a platform to form a continuous circuit. Ballbearings are raised by the spiral, released from the top, bounce from one drum to another into the collector and back through a channel to start again. It is fun to play singly or in a group and costs £3.70p.

Puppets

For all children, big or small, puppets are always interesting. Glove puppets suit smaller children, while as they get a bit older string puppets are more challenging. For the ten year olds and over, there are some very interesting ventriloquist dolls made by Pelham Puppets. There are about five different ones, cost £4 which would be especially useful for anyone who was temporarily immobilised. They are manipulated by the hands, one going into the sleeve of the puppet while the other one works the facial expression and they could be the source of endless amusement.

Ian Barclay Ltd. are being helpful to our Association and giving us discount. Some of their toys are very suitable and one of these is a Scribble Board. This is made at an angle rather like a desk-top, and legs can be added to make it just that. On its own it is very suitable for children who prefer to—or have to—lie on their tummies; when as a desk it can encourage standing and balance while writing or drawing. It is designed to take a roll of the cheap lining wallpaper to provide a continuous supply. The price is about £4 in the shops, less with our discount.



For Bigger Boys

Children who have had an Eldon Car, but have grown too big for it may be interested in a Turbo-Jet car that is bigger than the Eldon and would probably fit a child up to about 7 or 8 years, but whether it is worth the £27.45p it costs is not for me to say.

There are, of course, construction kits of all sorts. Ian Barclay Ltd. have one called the RENNKIT '42' which is simple, it interlocks, and has wheels to make the models mobile. Like most kits, it encourages the use of the imagination and can be added to at any time. The cost is about £1.95p.

Higher up in the price, and age scale, is the Braun Electronic Kit at £12.95p. For boys interested in electronics this could be an excellent introduction. In the kit is a book illustrating the principles and carrying the reader through simple experiments to the more complicated. Follow-on kits are available.

Still dearer, but very enthralling, are the radio-controlled cars. The price varies according to the type of car, but they start at £20.22p. They work from batteries and would be ideal

for boys who are immobilized. The operator works the control box, and by using the switches on this he has full control of the progress of the car over a wide range.

For Bigger Girls

For girls who like to play 'House' Ian Barclay Ltd. have three 'Dolls Rooms'. There is a kitchen, bedroom, and sitting room, and each is composed of a wooden case about 24 in. by 24 in. by 6 in. when closed. This case opens to a right angle and exposes two sides—both fitted—of a room. Some of the furniture folds away, and there are 'real' windows and doors. The price is nearly £10, but we can get discount.



There are kits for making doll's houses and Noah's Arks starting at under £1. These are made of strong cardboard, and if you cannot see them in your locality may be obtained from:—Maureen Roffey Designs, 109 Jermyn Street, London, S.W.1.

"Yesterday's Dollies" are kits containing a 10 inch doll, with felt, accessories, and instructions to make them into period dolls. There are a number of different designs, and they cost around £1.25p to £1.35p each.

The above is by no means a comprehensive selection of toys that are available, but may give some idea of what to look for when you go shopping.

If you care to write for a catalogue of toys, Hamleys of 200-202 Regent Street, London W1R 5DF, will send you one. This should give you an idea of what is available, and if you cannot get them locally, the shop has a mail order department. The inside cover gives details of this and the cost of carriage and also of discounts on large orders.

Hobbies

Now our children are growing up I have been looking for activities for the older child and teenager, and some of the hobbies available today, as well as being most interesting, may easily prove to be a source of pocket money or provide articles readily saleable at Local Association events. There are a number of firms that provide all the equipment and accessories necessary to follow almost any hobby, but here are a few.

Lapidary. This is the craft of making jewel-like stones out of pretty pebbles picked up anywhere. The firm provides a kit with an electric tumbler for smoothing and polishing the stones, the various grits and polishing powders needed, a selection of stones, and full instructions, for £11.55p. Cheaper for 35p is a hand polishing kit of grits and instructions to do the whole work by hand—but plenty of elbow grease is needed! These stones can then be made up into costume jewellery of endless variety.

Candle Making. I have not tried this but it looks fairly simple and fascinating. Cheaper, the kit to start this hobby costs £1.99p including the wax, and other necessities as well as dyes, wick, scent, and instructions.

Enamelcraft is a kit for enamelling without heat on various surfaces—metal, wood, glass, etc. The initial box is £2.50p and contains all the essentials. Once one is proficient at this, one can take the hobby a lot further and start enamelling with heat, when one invests in a small oven and other refinements.

Plasticraft. This enables various objects to be set in plastic to form attractive paperweights, brooches, and all manner of articles. The price is again £2.50p.

I have asked for a quantity of leaflets from the firm, Allcraft, about all the above, so please write to me if you are interested.

Fineart Fabricrayons. These crayons bring the art of fabric painting within the reach of anyone who has a gift in this sphere. A set of eight coloured crayons and instructions costs 49p and is a means of bringing individuality into clothing and household fabrics made of synthetic materials. They are not recommended for natural fibres.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Warwickshire

Send news of increased interest and support for the Association. At recent meetings talks have been given by Mr. D. R. Gray, Headmaster of a Birmingham Special School and by Mr. A. B. M. Currie, a consultant surgeon. As schooling and treatment are such vital issues, it goes without saying that these meetings were very valuable. A new venture was an evening meeting on "tips and problems" and this proved an ideal opportunity for the exchange of information and ideas and is likely to be repeated.

A June outing to the Twycross Zoo was a great success with the children, who rated it the best meeting to date. Even the sun came out!

The latest plan which is arousing great enthusiasm is the proposed purchase of a holiday bungalow in North Wales, which the Association hope will be built and ready for use for next summer.

Nottingham & District

Write in their news letter of a visit by 100 children and parents to the Circus, where the youngsters were presented with popcorn by Mrs. Chipperfield, and the Honorary Treasurer, Mr. Keith Ashby, had the double thrill of entering the ring and receiving a cheque for £1,100 which was raised by a sponsored pony ride. Nottingham members have also paid a visit to Sheffield, where Dr. Lorber conducted a very interesting tour of the Congenital Anomalies Research Unit.

Sussex

In addition to local news, have asked if any lady members will look out wigs, so that they can be remodelled and added to the loan equipment pool for use when children have to be shaved for "valve" surgery. They feel this should help to eliminate the distress this sometimes causes.

Sussex have more than 25 different items in their Equipment Library. Their own social workers are able to recommend what will be helpful.

Bristol

Are to be congratulated on the success of their Draw with its prize of a Minicar, which raised the grand net profit of £832.30p.

Kent

The Kent Association had quite an extensive general post at their Annual Meeting. Mr. S. Hudson retired from the Chair after nine years, and Mr. G. Claris relinquished the post of Honorary Secretary, to which he has devoted much time and energy for a number of years. Both were warmly thanked for all they had done. *Link* joins in this and in wishing success to Mr. D. Paul and Mr. J. Brookson, who have succeeded to these two offices respectively.

Southampton

Mr. Mortimer, Chairman, has sent news of a sponsored walk organised at Pennington Junior School. 300 children raised £397 for the benefit of school sporting activities. The special feature to *Link* readers is the part played by 7-year-old Sandra Cole, who covered two laps by pushing her wheel chair or using her sticks. Sandra is a first-former who has spina bifida and was described by the Headmaster as "a very determined young madam". Congratulations to Pennington School and to Sandra for her participation.

South Wales

The Barry branch, which has only recently been formed, write that they were greatly pleased and encouraged when Mr. Clarry Hall, the father of a 2-year-old spina bifida child, raised £900 for them by a sponsored walk along the North-South Wales border known as Offa's Dyke (168 miles) from Prestatyn to Chepstow. It took Mr. Hall five days and six hours. Our picture shows him cheerful, if glad to have his feet up!

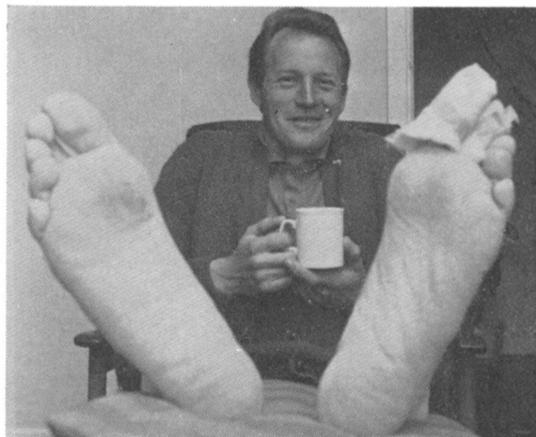


Photo: Western Mail & Echo Ltd.

Members Confer in London . . .

Together with about 150 others, *Link* was present on the 2nd July, 1972, at the Conference on "Education and Opportunity for the Spina Bifida Child" organised by the Greater London Liaison Committee, at St. Mary's College of Education, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. The College made a splendid venue for the occasion with meeting rooms of historic interest, superb catering and entertainment arranged for the children of many of the delegates. We were glad to express our thanks to the Principal, the Very Rev. T. P. Cashin, when he kindly paid a visit to one of the sessions.

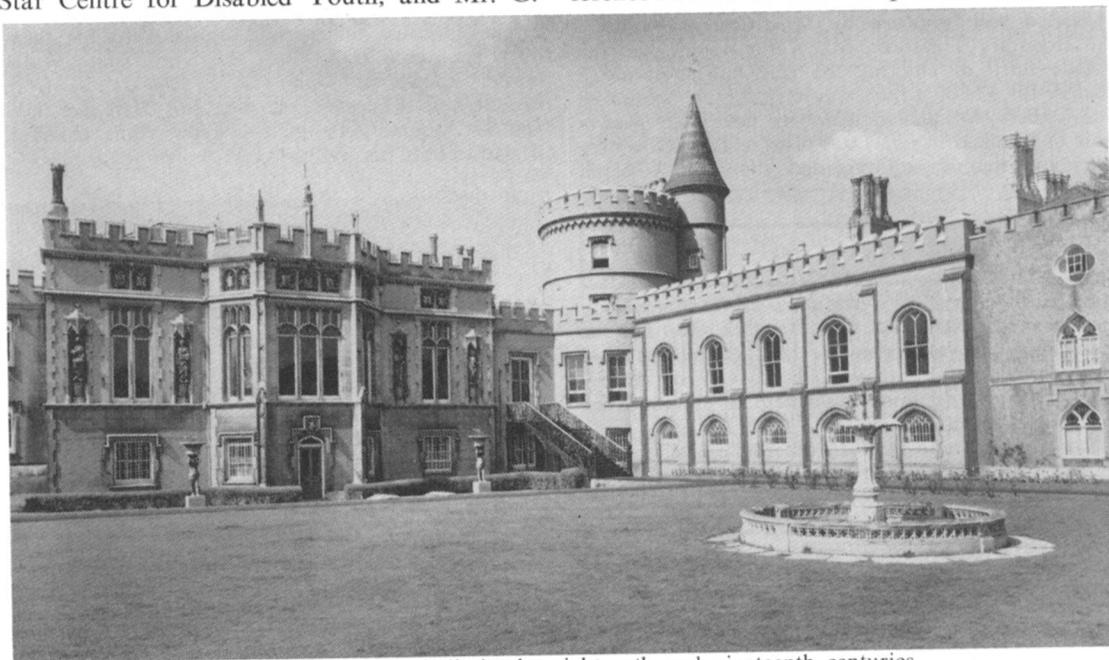
The Conference was opened by Mr. R. W. Lazell, Chairman of the Greater London Liaison Committee, who introduced the first speaker, Miss M. T. McBride, H.M.I. (Department of Education and Science) who has for many years given special attention to the handicapped school child. She detailed the different kinds of provision likely to be suitable for our children and also explained methods of assessment and choice. She gave information about new developments and also shared her ideas on improvements which were still needed.

After lunch Mr. Allen Field, of the National Star Centre for Disabled Youth, and Mr. G.

Higgon, of Martindale School, Hounslow spoke, respectively, on "Residential Schools" and "Special Schools". Each described the provisions, the advantages and disadvantages of these educational environments and told us of their experience in meeting the needs of individual young people.

The last speaker was Miss Elizabeth Anderson, a Research Officer, of the Institute of Education, University of London, whose subject was "Provision for Handicapped Children in Ordinary Schools". From her talk we were able to understand that it is not a simple matter to decide when children can benefit from education in ordinary schools, as many factors are involved. Miss Anderson spoke of her visit to Scandinavia where special classes are attached to ordinary schools to cater for children with physical and learning difficulties. Such arrangements are already in operation in this country and she felt there was scope for the extension of this scheme on an area basis.

To close the Conference there was a 'Brains Trust' with a panel consisting of Miss Anderson, Miss Oughtred, Mr. Field and Mr. Higgon. There were many questions for the panel showing how greatly the subject of the Conference had interested those present.



St. Mary's College built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

... and in Newcastle

It was with the greatest interest that I visited Newcastle on Saturday, 27th May, 1972, to attend a conference organised by the North East Association on "A Realistic Appraisal of the Attitude of the Family to the Handicapped Child". My journey was rewarded by the pleasure of meeting members of the Local Association and in the valuable knowledge obtained during the day from the official speakers and leisure time contacts.

The venue was the Prudhoe Hospital and about eighty people, members of our Association and others professionally interested, enjoyed the arrangements on which the officers of the North East Association are to be congratulated.

The Chairman, Dr. J. Richardson, opened the proceedings and introduced the first speaker, Mrs. J. O. Shield, a Principal Social Worker. Her subject was "The Attitude of Family, Friends and Specialists to the Handicapped Child". Numerous problems facing parents were outlined and the speaker, from a wide experience, explained how solutions were found and made recommendations for improvements in relations between the statutory services and families.

The next speaker, Dr. D. Gardner-Medwin, on the subject "What we all would like to know—and some answers", enumerated many of the questions parents asked doctors. He explained that the complexity of the conditions, and the stress under which parents were when asking them, contributed to the difficulty they all found in giving answers which were positive and readily understood. He outlined advances in the field of genetics and genetic counselling and told how to obtain advice.

After a good lunch we had a valuable and informative talk by Miss G. A. Jenkins on "Educational opportunities and the right choice for every child". The speaker stressed that the personal requirements of each child need to be met and asked all concerned to be realistic. She gave details of the wide range of facilities for assessment, education and training, which were available to meet individual needs.

The last speaker was Dr. J. A. Fraser whose subject was "The family and the subnormal".

He emphasised that ideally the family is the unit of care and attention. We were given a great deal of information on the normal reaction to stress and practical guidance which should help when such strain occurs.

There was a quality of response from the delegates which reflected the value they placed on all they had heard and the regard they felt for the wisdom behind the contributions made by members of the panel.

This same high standard was maintained by Mr. D. H. Lee, Chairman of the North East Association, in his summary of the day's proceedings and in his expression of thanks and appreciation to the speakers..

H.D.M.

Other local Associations, either alone or joining with a neighbouring one, may like to follow these leads by organising a conference on a subject of concern about current or future needs.
Editor.

Distress Pennant



A striking dayglo plastic emblem with its plea for help is being manufactured by the Teesside Spastics Society. It will answer a long felt need by inva-car drivers and other disabled motorists. Cost £1 from Spastic Work Centre, Acklam Road, Middlesborough, Teesside.

Appliances and equipment

by Olwen Nettles

Please name *Link* when contacting the firms mentioned.

The Shoe Guard Plastic

The price of the Shoe Guard Plastic Kit, which many of you have found useful, has now risen from £1 to £1.15p. Postage on one pack is 32p but on two is 37p. This material does not deteriorate, so it may be a good idea for individuals or Associations to buy two packs at once, so saving on postage. To those readers who have not met this product, it is a do-it-yourself repair kit for the uppers of shoes, which some of our children seem to wear out very quickly. It is said to be very good—but one word of warning—do not throw the residue left after the job is finished down the sink or w.c. It dries a hard lump and will block the pipes.

The Polly Chair

The photograph (opposite) shows Robby Jones sitting in a POLLY CHAIR. These chairs are made in Manchester and consist of a pear-shaped bag made from tough, washable poly-urethane coated cloth, and filled with expanded polystyrene granules. We are trying to find whether these granules can be bought elsewhere, as it is obviously much easier to transport the chairs empty.

They are made in 3 sizes—small, medium and large and cost respectively £5 full, £3.50p empty, £8 full and £6 empty, and £14 full and £10.50p empty, but I have been told that the small one may be hardly worth while as the medium one is comfortable for even a small baby and will be useful longer. There are six colours—cream, mustard, red, green, purple and black.

These chairs are extremely comfortable, mould to whatever shape is needed and are very steady. Unlike airfilled chairs they do not tip over and a child well placed in one of these will be safe. They are supplied with or without loops for attaching a harness. For further information please write to Mrs. C. M. Lewis, 3 Manchester Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester 21.

Kanga Pants

Those of you who are members of Associations that I have visited may have seen my sample pair of Kanga Pants. To those who have not seen them, these are a new idea for urine incontinence. The pants are made from similar material to the Marathon nappies and there is an outside waterproof pouch which holds the pad. The pants are said to be very comfortable to wear and keep dry—thus preventing soreness. The pad is filled with material that is claimed to eliminate odour almost completely. The

pad can be changed by the wearer himself or by someone else, and there is no need to undress. They are available by post from Lewis Woolf Griptight Ltd., Wye, Near Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 12HW, or I have leaflets giving details of an introductory offer.



Thistle Tricycle

Those parents who have been lucky enough to buy one of these may be pleased to know that the firm now make a padding for the leg rests. These are available from the firm for about 50p per pair. Please write to the firm for information. For those awaiting delivery of the Tricycle, these pads are now standard.

Unfortunately, there is a waiting list for the tricycle. I have visited the firm to discuss their problems and hope to go again in a month or two. After this I *might* have better news about their availability. I will write to all Secretaries if and when this news is given to me. In the meantime please be patient, and any particulars may be obtained from me, not the firm.

Dycem Plastics

Many of you may know this firm. They make non-slip trays and place mats. These place mats are very useful to anchor plates to the table as they are non-skid on both sides. They are made of a plastic material and are ideal for babies or anyone with weak hands who finds it difficult both to hold cutlery and stop the plate from moving. I have been advised that the larger of these mats is ideal for stopping small or very disabled children from slipping down in their chairs. We all know how such children tend to get lower and lower in baby chairs and push chairs and even a harness does not prevent this, but these mats help to keep the child in a good position. This firm also produces a one handled nonslip tray which is especially useful for adolescents and adults who have to walk with sticks or other aids. For further particulars write to Dycem Plastics, Chapter Street, Portland Square, Bristol 2.

New design push-chair

I have just been to a demonstration of Christmas toys and there I saw a very interesting, absolutely new, child's push chair. It is something like the Baby Buggy in that it folds with a one handed action and can be easily carried, but it looks to me to have overcome some of the faults of the Baby Buggy. As it is so new I have not been able to test it but am in contact with the firm and hope to be able to tell you more about it in the next issue of *Link*. It is called the Triolite and you may be lucky and see one in your local pram shops. The price should be about £9. The photograph shows one ready for use. If anyone *does* buy one would they let me know what they think of it?



The Appeal Secretary writes :

I am afraid the weather has not been kind to those of you who organised summer fetes, etc. to boost funds. I know how disappointing it can be, to have prepared for large crowds and then to find that the weather is only fit for ducks. But we can't blame anyone for our weather and it does give us something to talk about!

The widely varied ways in which supporters of ASBAH raise money for National funds is quite intriguing. Four boys, on a "sponsored rock", rocked the chair for 100 hours, resulting in a cheque for £30. A sponsored slim produced a weight loss of 6lb. and a financial gain of £2; and the sale of hot dogs at a school open day yielded £25. We are most grateful to everyone who continues to support us and I know in many cases, especially the old age pensioners who write to me, that the gifts represent real sacrifice.

With this magazine is a letter about our Green Shield Stamp Community Savings Plan. Some of you have already responded but we have a long way to go to reach our target. Do please help. The aim is to collect enough stamps to buy really worthwhile prizes for a national competition next spring.

We've had another film premiere—this time in Leeds, for the F.A. Centenary Film: CUP GLORY. It was a great pleasure to meet and work with the Leeds Association and the function produced useful publicity locally as well as £1,400 for ASBAH funds.

We are now getting ready to launch a special appeal for £60,000 to finance a Spina Bifida Research Fellowship. More of this later. Meanwhile, we are nearly submerged in Christmas card brochures! I will gladly send copies to any of your friends who you think would like to help us in this way.

Kate White

Owing to the interesting number of new items, I have had to hold over the instructions for making a headrest for an ordinary type of baby walker but hope to include it in the next issue. If however, any of you are interested in this or any of the other articles mentioned do please write to me for further details.

YOUNG LINK

I have had a very interesting post bag and would like to tell you what some of the people who have written to me have been doing.

Colin Hough is 9 years old and goes to Brays School, Sheldon, Birmingham. A few weeks ago a party went to the Games at the famous Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Colin won a gold medal for his part in the relay race.



You can see him holding it up in the photo.

SPINA BIFIDA SURVEY

from p. 5

atmosphere than is possible at the out-patient clinic.

I have only been able in this short article to mention a few of our findings, but these examples will perhaps give some idea of the kind of things that we are trying to achieve. One of the trials of doing research, of course, is that one can never be sure that the conclusions or recommendations will be put into practice. But I have been impressed by the attitudes of the higher administrators, by their genuine interest in the welfare of spina bifida children and by their desire to improve services. Where there are failures at present this is usually because of poor organisation or the ignorance or insensitivity of some of the people working at the day-to-day level, and it is this which must be avoided. If we can suggest how to translate our findings into practical suggestions for evolving better services, then I think that we should be listened to. In that case the families of spina bifida children will be very much indebted to the parents and the children in our survey who have provided us so generously with all the information that we have asked for.

Well done, Colin. I should like to hear if any others have been to the Stoke Mandeville Junior Games.

Yvonne Price lives in South Wales and she is 14. Yvonne sent a photo of herself in the garden of her home in a very pretty lilac trouser-suit. I wanted to print it, but unfortunately the snapshot isn't quite big enough, so it can't be done, but perhaps Yvonne will get a friend to take her close up in black and white for another issue of *Link*. Best wishes, Yvonne. Do write to me again.

Jeremy Stovell is another 9-year-old who lives in South London and goes to Charlton Park School. Jeremy belongs to the 17th Forest Hill Cub Scout pack. In June he was interviewed in the Radio 4 "To-day" programme by Tom Bostock because he belongs to a Wingfield Club and was playing the trumpet at a Concert in the Royal Festival Hall. (See cover).

Will any other readers of Young Link who play an instrument write and tell me about it. Perhaps we could have our own orchestra one day. What about it?

All the best,

"William"

A pre-school idea

Mothers who cannot find a play group near enough to their home but who want to give their three to five year old some extra stimulation and help may like to know of the "Three, Four, Five Nursery Course". This is a series of booklets (sent each month for a year) to help with number, colour, reading, story and so on. It is attractively designed with cut-outs and each month there is an E.P. record.

A descriptive leaflet can be obtained from ASBAH or direct from Three, Four, Five Nursery Course, 92a Old Street, London, E.C.1. The normal cost of the course is £10.75p but there is a special price of £9.75p for the parents of a handicapped child.

A Local Association might decide to join for a year so that mothers could get an idea of the scope and perhaps adapt the ideas to their own use.

INTER-ASSOCIATION HOLIDAY OPPORTUNITIES

Cleethorpes. Three-bedroom Bungalow to accommodate 6-8 persons situated at Humberston, Fitties, Nr. Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire. Further information from Mrs. W. Steele, 59 Louth Road, Holton-le-Clay, Grimsby.

Great Yarmouth. Self-contained 6-berth caravan. Situated Caister Beach Caravan Camp, nr. Great Yarmouth. Details from Mrs. E. N. Barefoot, 23 Marlborough Road, Southall, Middlesex. Tel. 01-574 5067.

Lessingham, Norfolk. Well-appointed 6-berth caravan. Sea 100 yds. Vacancies. Apply Mr. P. White, 12, Swallow Gardens, Hatfield, Herts. Tel. Hatfield 63018.

Looe: Bungalow, two bedrooms, spacious accommodation, situated in Millendreath Holiday Village, Nr. Looe, Cornwall. Mr. Keith Jackson, 202 Exeter St., Plymouth.

Mablethorpe. Self-contained 6-berth Chalet situated at Golden Sands Estates, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire. Further details from Mr. Ken Hall, 17, Walhouse Street, Cannock, Staffs.

Mablethorpe. 25ft. self-contained 6-berth caravan. Situated at Golden Sands Holiday Estates, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire. Details from Mr. J. Cannon, 28 Deerpark Crescent, Wingerworth, Chesterfield, Derbyshire. Tel. Chesterfield 78952.

New Forest. Extremely well-equipped Chalet, sleeping six people, situated in the New Forest. The chalet is available for weekends from October to March, 6 p.m. Friday to 9 a.m. Monday. Further details from Mrs. A. Rae, 16, Clifton Road, Lee-on-Solent, Hants.

Rhyl. Open Plan 6-berth caravan, partitionable into three, situated at the Robin Hood Holiday Camp, Coast Road, Rhyl, N. Wales. Bookings available 1st May-30th September to Liverpool Association, 46 Manchester Street, Liverpool 1.

Selsey. Well-appointed, self-contained 16 ft. X 22 ft. 6-berth caravan for families with spina bifida members. Sited at Selsey, Sussex. For full details please send s.a.e. to Miss G. M. Clarke, Badgers Copse, Rudgwick, Nr. Horsham, Sussex.

Book Review

Paul in Hospital: by Camilla Jessel.

This is a hard-backed book at £1.10p giving an account of a boy who had to go into hospital as an emergency. It gives clear explanations of his ward and treatment during his stay. Although some of our children are frequently in and out of hospital and are as much at home there as with their parents, there are other luckier ones who may not remember their last stay. For these, as well as for normal children, this book makes an interesting story, and would certainly make an unexpected hospital stay less frightening.

It is published by Methuen Children's Books.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY MATERIAL

"Your child with Spina Bifida" by J. Lorber, M.D., F.R.C.P., 15p post paid.* (Revised edition).

"Your child with Hydrocephalus" by J. Lorber, M.D., F.R.C.P., 15p post paid.*

"The Spina Bifida Baby" (published by the Scottish Association) by Olwen Nettles, M.C.S.P., O.N.C., 10p each.*

"The Spina Bifida Child in School" by D. H. Lee, 10p each.*

"Equipment and Aids to Mobility" by O. R. Nettles, M.C.S.P., O.N.C., 3 booklets in a folder, 20p complete.

General Information Leaflets: £1 per 100.

Leaflet for Young People: £1 per 100.

Posters:

Double Crown 5p each.

"Future Bright" (Plain) 20p for 10.

"Future Bright" (Words) 20p for 10.

"Wendy Craig" Handbills 2p per 10.

Flag Day Emblems 50p per 1,000.

Cards for Notice Boards 10p for 10.

*Special rates available to Local Associations.

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS OFFER:—

SB Badges.—Silver and green enamel with pin fastening. Replica of the Spina Bifida emblem: 20p plus postage. (Single badges, please enclose s.a.e.). Enquiries from groups welcomed for quantities.

Apply: Mr. K. McKenzie, Badges Secretary, Salisbury and District A.S.B.A.H., Ballard Down, Gomeldon Road, East Gomeldon, Nr. Salisbury, Wilts.

Badges for Children.—Good quality 1½in. diameter incorporating the SB Symbol and the words Spina Bifida Children in black on a green background. For sale in the following quantities: 25 Badges for 75p, 50 Badges for £1.40 and 100 Badges for £2.65 including P. and P. Cheques or postal orders should be crossed and made payable to "S.A.S.B.A.H." and sent with order to: Mrs. I. Olditch, 3, Stone Cross Road, Wadhurst, Sussex.

Car Stickers.—"Support the Spina Bifida Campaign". Transparent stickers 5p each plus postage from Staines, Hounslow and Districts Association, c/o Mr. E. G. West, 13 Princes Road, Ashford, Middlesex. (Minimum order 50.)

Ties.—N. Hampshire, S. Berkshire and W. Surrey Association has ties for sale—the SB symbol on dark blue or dark green. The ties are washable terylene of a heavy weave and cost £1 each. Cash with order to Mr. Bernard High, 10 Woodruff Avenue, Burpham, Guildford, Surrey. Please state colour required.

Blackpool. Homely accommodation for severely disabled children and families. Well equipped. Self catering. Convenient for promenade, beach, shops. Available all the year round. All enquiries to: Mr. J. H. Lawes, 18 Kenilworth Gardens, Blackpool. Tel: 47972.

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Twentieth Century Press (1912) Ltd., T.U., 8-13 New Inn St., London EC2A 3HE-13259