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Link

July/August 1975 5p

Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH)

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SQUIBB

Link No. 39

Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus (ASBAH)

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Duchess of Gloucester

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Contents

Editorial

"What I would like to see and what I think may be discussed is the provision of a fixed spot on BBC where it is known that disablement and its problems are being dealt with regularly and frequently.

This was the main proposition contained in a paper written by Ann Armstrong of Responaut and presented to a recent meeting of "Caring Editors". It is an important point. It is something on which readers of Link will certainly have views.

The regular spot idea is attractive. People would know when to tune in. They would know that the programme would be for and about themselves. But it is worth considering if this trend towards separatism is the right one.

Increasingly we seek to establish the disabled as an integral part of society. Why not a similar goal in radio and television? Existing programmes "Tomorrow's World", "Gardeners' Question Time", and other gardening programmes; the various cookery programmes, do-it-yourself items as well as more general programmes could well accommodate items of value to the disabled on a regular basis.

Of course there is the problem of knowing when a disablement item is to be featured but this should not be insuperable. The television companies already publicise their programmes in Radio Times, TV Times, the press and in special notifications to interested bodies.

If this system could be made more effective, then it would mean that the disabled would have advance notice of special items.

There are perhaps two bonus points to support the 'integrationalist' rather than the 'separatist' approach. Able-bodied people watching the programmes would learn more about the problems of the disabled, and broadcasting companies are more likely to respond to the suggestion that they broaden the scope of existing programmes, rather than establish new ones for minority groups — something they are often reluctant to do.

This editorial is not intended to dismiss the separate programme idea, merely to suggest an alternative approach to the very desirable idea of achieving greater coverage of disablement.

Your views would be of real interest, particularly as the Caring Editors are having another meeting in October at the Kings Fund Centre and will be discussing the matter more fully.

FRONT COVER

Wheelchair dancers from Coney Hill School for spina bifida children at West Wickham Kent, show off part of their winning routine. For the second year in a row, a team from the school has won the under 16 section of the National Wheelchair Dance Festival. The Festival was held at the Hammersmith Palais and the team, called the Erossians, danced the Gay Gordons and the Veleta. Photo: Beckenham and Penge Advertiser.

Local Association News

It's love that counts

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs David McConnell, pictured right, after their wedding in Belfast in April.

David is spastic and his wife, Marion is spina bifida. They met at a party at Fleming Fulton school for the handicapped in Malone Road, Belfast and were engaged at Christmas.

They agreed they have problems, but in the words of David: "We love each other and that is what counts".

Their main worry is to find proper housing. The accommodation they moved into after their wedding wasn't a suitable long-term home — especially as it had no bathroom. They are hopeful that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive will be able to find them a new home.

Link wishes Mr and Mrs McConnell all the very best in their new life together.
Photo: Belfast Telegraph.

Trophy time

Don and Dearne. A concert was arranged at Wath Working Men's Club in April to present the tropies to the winning teams in the Spina Bifida Panel Games League. Mr Arthur Scargill presented the Association Secretary, Mr T J Murphy with a cheque for £250 — the proceeds of the Games League. Don and Dearne Association were well represented at the Cavalcade of the Horse Show on Doncaster Race Course when they had a stall in the enclosure. A record crowd of over 50,000 attended.

Fire warning

A member of Don and Dearne Association is concerned that an incident that happened to him, could also happen to others — with much graver results.

He was travelling in his car with another passenger when the car suddenly caught fire. He said the speed at which the flames took hold, could not possibly have given him time to release his handicapped daughter in the rear of the car, had she been there. He asks all members, through Link, to try and ensure that they carry a fire extinguisher in their car.

It's yours

Whose Association is it? — a few words from John Glover, Chairman of the St Helens and District Association (reproduced from their newsletter, 'The Open Gate'):

"I know that at times some of those who devote a lot of time and energy to the Association get a little despondent because they feel that many members do not take full advantage of it. It is not praise or thanks that reward people, although we cannot express enough of it; its to see their hard work bearing fruit in terms of helping spina bifida sufferers and their families to lead as full a life as possible with the minimum of worries.

"So you can say 'thank you' in the biggest possible way by making the most of what the Association can offer. As a parent member myself, I can appreciate some of the problems, but as we all know the problems vary with the individual. If you think the Association can help in any way, or you have any suggestions, don't be frightened to come forward and ask. I know it is not always easy to find words to describe problems, and the last thing we want to do is to intrude into anyone's private life, but the Association can only help if the problems are known; and after all whose Association is it, — the Officers? the Committees? No, its **yours!**"

More help

Bucks: A great step forward for this Association — it now has one of ASBAH's part-time Social Workers, Mr N C Scott, to give help and advice to its members. It is hoped that many Bucks Association members will use this service.

Local Association News

Marion's bracelet

North Hants, South Berks and West Surrey: By her gift of an antique bracelet in gold, amethysts and pearls, singer Marion Ryan contributed greatly to the success of a Spring Fair held at Sunningdale. The bracelet was presented as first prize in a raffle with 6000 tickets being sold in under three weeks. The fair raised over £600 (see pic).

£150 push

Cannock, Walsall and District. Over £150 was raised to buy aids and equipment from a sponsored wheelchair push up the steep slopes of the Wrekin in May. Eighteen spina bifida children and two other physically handicapped youngsters in wheelchairs took part in "the push".

Singer Marion Ryan at the Spring Fair organised by North Hants, South Berks and West Surrey Association (see 'Marion's Bracelet'). Photo: Ascot News.

Go ahead on unit in Wales

Work on Wales' first purpose-built spina bifida unit should start at Morriston Hospital, near Swansea, later this year.

The final breakthrough for this project came with a Welsh Office assurance that nearly £30,000 a year will be made available to run the unit.

More than £40,000 has already been raised by voluntary effort for the unit — to be known as West Wales Centre for the Treatment of Spina Bifida and Paralysed Children — and the Hospital Appeals Committee is redoubling its efforts to raise a further £25,000 so that building work can begin this year.

Since 1963, treatment of spina bifida in South West Wales, which has one of the highest incidence rates in the world, has been carried out by a team at Morriston Hospital without specialised facilities.

Now the region will be served by one of the most advanced and best equipped units of its kind. It will deal with more than 200 spina bifida cases.

The cost of the unit is expected to be £100,000.

News round-up

'Access in Jersey' is a recent addition to the "Access" series, giving wide ranging information for the disabled about shopping, public transport, accommodation, and other attractions on the island.

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for the Disabled is offering an 'odd shoe service', for those with feet of different sizes. Prices are reasonable, ranging from 50p each for wellingtons and slippers to £4 for fashion shoes. Money raised will go to the Foundation. To keep the service running, the Foundation needs shoes and will gladly accept matching pairs, but will only supply odd pairs.

Shoes and orders to: Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for the Disabled, Bishop's Stortford, Herts. Orders should be detailed thus: Man's left foot, 8D black slip-on with no toe cap: right foot, 7B etc.

August is an important month for spina bifida associations in Australia. Professionals and parents will be gathering together in Sydney on 15 August for three days for the First National Congress of Spina Bifida Associations of Australia. The congress theme is 'Issues in the team approach to the multi-handicapped child' and the guest speaker will be Dr John Lorber, who will also be touring New Zealand, visiting spina bifida units there, under the auspices of the New Zealand Crippled Childrens Society.

Health matters

Calipers: an important part of life

Calipers or braces designed to splint the spina bifida patient in such a way as to allow him or her to walk in an upright fashion form an important part of life for most spina bifida patients and their parents. Only about 5% of spina bifida children manage to walk without any form of bracing. At the other end of the scale there is a small number of children who are so severely handicapped that the attempt to fit braces is not worthwhile and must be resisted otherwise the child may undergo much fruitless surgery in a vain attempt to achieve the impossible.

In the middle is the large majority who spend seemingly endless hours waiting to be measured, waiting to be fitted, waiting to be checked and adjusted and inevitably with time growing out of their calipers and having to go through the whole process again for their new pair.

What's the point?

What do calipers aim to achieve? They are simply a form of splint for those joints over which the child has no control either because of lack of muscle power or on account of reflex muscle action which is not under voluntary control. This latter is important as parents are often frequently disappointed to find that a child who seems to have some movement in his legs in fact ends up with extensive bracing because this movement is not under voluntary control from the brain.

Secondly there is a tendency to forget that many of these children because of their hydrocephalus have problems of balance and spatial orientation which delay their general motor development and makes extensive bracing necessary to give them confidence in the upright position. As well as acting as support when the child is standing or walking calipers play an important part in preventing recurrent deformity due to the effect of gravity and muscle imbalance. Hence the importance of keeping the child in his calipers when sitting as well as standing.

Finally, calipers can have a protective function in that spina bifida children are prone to recurrent limb fractures from minor injury. The wearing of calipers can protect against such injury.

What's the choice ?

What sort of calipers does a child need? This depends largely on the pattern of weakness in the lower limbs and trunk caused by the spinal lesion. However, it is important to remember that bracing may also be needed as has been mentioned earlier to help balance and spatial orientation problems which are central in origin.

The simplest form of caliper is the below knee iron which controls the position of the foot and ankle by an iron up each side of the leg connected at the top by a ring below the knee and at the bottom by a socket in the shoe or boot. A more cosmetically acceptable form of this caliper is a moulded plastic splint which fits underneath the sock but this has the severe disadvantage that it cannot be adjusted for growth and it can be difficult to obtain as good a control of the lower leg with this type of brace as with the classic iron. In general more cosmetically acceptible calipers are very desirable but in the growing child these are not only very expensive but also last a very

Health matters

short time as adequate adjustment for growth is difficult to obtain. Once the child has stopped growing then they become a much more practical proposition.

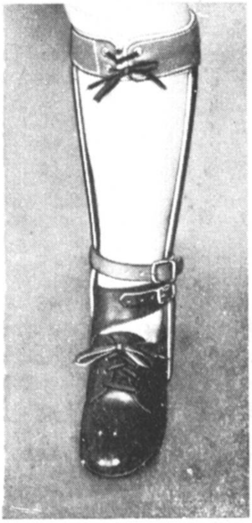
If the child does not have adequate control of the knee then an above knee or long leg caliper is necessary. In this type the irons extend above the knee to a thigh band. In young children a locking hinge at the knee is not really necessary or desirable. However, by about the age of eight it is normally time to incorporate such a hinge, otherwise sitting with the leg splinted straight becomes very awkward. However, a conflict may arise between the need to keep the knee splinted straight to prevent recurrent deformity and the natural desire to let the knee bend for comfort and cosmesis.

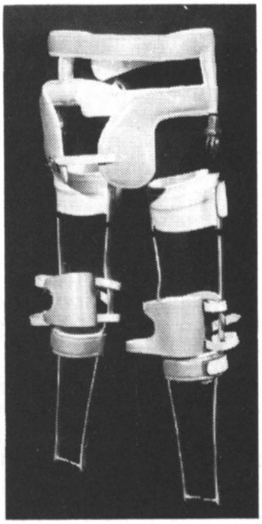
Many spina bifida children, unfortunately, have no adequate control of their hips. This means that they need a pelvic band and sometimes even a higher thoracic band, if their trunk is also weak. The pelvic band is attached by hinges at hip level to long leg calipers so that the hip can be controlled in the upright position as well as the knees and feet. This extensive brace tends to be difficult to fit and is cumbersome and tedious to take on and off.

IMPORTANT

Unfortunately, it is a sad fact that as these more severely handicapped children grow older and heavier they tend to give up the unequal struggle with their calipers and choose a wheelchair as an easier and quicker mode of locomotion. Is it worth fitting this extensive and expensive form of caliper? The present price for such a set of calipers is between £150 and £200. Most orthopaedic surgeons feel that if the child shows any desire to stand and walk such a brace is worth fitting although it may well be discarded in later life. It seems to be important to the general development of these children that they have the chance to stand and assume the upright position rather than sitting all the time.

The standard full set of calipers with a pelvic band aims at allowing the child to develop a form of reciprocal gait. However, many children and adults with severe lower limb paralysis find it easier and more effective to "swing to" or "swing through" on their crutches moving both legs together. This is a very satisfactory mode of locomotion and should be encouraged if it suits a child better than the reciprocal type of gait. The hip hinges may be locked or unlocked while walking. If they are unlocked the support is less but a more natural swing is possible. If the hips are locked this provides a much greater degree of security but makes the child walk in a rigid frame from feet to trunk swivelling on the ball of one foot and then the other.





Mr. Rose's Shrewsbury Walker or swivel splint is a further development of this principle in which a small platform fits on the sole of the boot and as the child rocks from one foot to the other the platform swivels and so produces forward motion. Clearly there are very considerable limitations to the degree of mobility such an apparatus can provide but it does give the child a chance of independent movement and existence in the upright position.

Calipers and their why's and wherefore's are an enormous subject.

I hope this brief sketch will give you some insight into their basic aims and limitations.

J. A. FIXSEN, M.Chir., F.R.C.S.

How Diana came out of her shell to live a full life

Diana Sanderson, 27, of Kingston upon Hull, wrote to 'Link' and left us in no doubt that she thought the magazine had too little to say to adult spina bifidas. We took her point and offered her some space. Here is the result — a lucid, frank personal account which we hope will be a source of encouragement to others.

"Well" said my husband, "if you are going to write an article for 'Link' you'll have to re-orientate your thinking a bit, won't you?"

"Why?" I replied.

"Because you don't usually think you're handicapped do you?" he said.

True enough. I wasn't brought up to do so. I also rarely discussed it with friends prior to my adolescence as spina bifida was almost unheard of then. In my late adolescence a few Sunday papers carried articles about children with spina bifida but I could never recognise myself in their descriptions of doubly incontinent, mentally handicapped individuals in wheelchairs. I wrote and said so as I did again after the recent BBC1 documentary. No-one wanted to know. One Sunday newspaper which should have known better went so far as to say that "no such child born before 1959 has survived". They were forced by a deluge of letters to retract!

GOOD BRAIN

Adolescence can be a trying time at the best of times as one learns to come to grips with emerging adult emotions. I suppose it was always implicit in my parents' attitude that I was unlikely to marry, at least until I was "much older". I had been "blessed with a good brain". Very well then. I would use that. If men didn't want me, I didn't want them! Frightened of their rejection, I made use of what has been called my "direct manner" and my sharp tongue. and they usually wilted and fell by the wayside pretty fast.

So I went to University. This amazed the ASBAH group in the city concerned. "But how did you get into University?" one parent finally asked, obviously awed. I was surprised, even embarassed by the question, never having considered spina bifida as a bar to student life. "I filled in an application form, same as the rest", I said and didn't mean to be flippant, just honest.

It was late in my second undergraduate year that I met "my friend Phil", having thus far successfully avoided the entanglement with a male which deep down I really longed for.

DISCOVERY

Phil was in any case different from the rest — a gentler, a less obvious "threat" to my independence. We shared the same sense of humour and I found myself able to talk to him about anything (well almost anything).

Much later I was to discover that initially he hadn't even noticed that I walked on my heels until a mutual friend informed him of it during a discussion they had about my selling meal tickets (used in one hall of residence) with profits to ASBAH. The friend wasn't sure what ASBAH was all about and Phil couldn't see why I was involved, until the friend pointed out my "funny walk".

That didn't deter Phil from asking me out, and I graciously accepted. I thought as the long vacation was near and our homes over 100 miles apart it would be "safe".

I was wrong. Very quickly I realised that if there was anyone with whom I wished to share my life it was the tall, rather thin chemistry student who was usually so involved with working out chemical formulae (or the positions of the football teams in Division One!) that he would pass one in the street.

It seemed he felt the same about me, but he didn't know my one vital secret — my bag, which I'd had since my urinary diversion at the age of six. I was terrified of telling but knew I must. I couldn't accept what my grandmother had said years before "the **right** young man won't mind **that**".

Eventually, during an over-enthusiastic (but, I hasten to add, entirely modest) embrace, the bag which was rather full, made its presence heard (and felt)! I burst into tears and told

Diana and Phil Sanderson on their wedding day.

Phil the whole sad tale. His knowing "scientist look" crossed his face. Apparently from what I'd told him of where the original spinal lesion had been, he had worked out which muscles could be affected, what that could mean and what might be done about it. Unaided, he had worked out the truth. Despite this he still wanted to go out with me. Eventually he even wanted to marry me, even though he now knew my bowels could be unreliable on odd occasions especially if I had over-indulged on a few items.

SOCIAL WORKER

Generally they can be kept in order by medicine, but now and again accidents will happen. So far that has not stopped me getting my degree or working for three years as a social worker. Still when it does occur, it can be very embarrassing, not to mention depressing.

Currently we are both students again. Phil is working for a Ph.D, and I for my professional social work qualification.

The next step, we hope, will be to start a family. We intend to make use of the addresses of the local genetic counselling services which ASBAH kindly sent us. Neither of us would wish deliberately to bring a severely handicapped child into the world. We have to balance the fact that we want a family with the fact that if we had a spina bifida child it could be far more severely handicapped than I am. The information available about the offspring of adult spina bifidas seems encouraging. I can only hope my luck holds out again.

(MRS) DIANA SANDERSON.

We hope that other adult spina bifidas will follow Diana Sanderson's example, and feel moved to write to Link about their experiences and hopes for the future.

New centre

Prospect Hall, a new centre for non-vocational courses for the physically handicapped is opening in August at Selly Oak, Birmingham. Link hopes to report on this centre in the Nov/Dec issue.

"Spina Bifida — the treatment and care of spina bifida children".

This book, written by journalist Nancy Allum, with the help of specialists on spina bifida, including members of the staff of the Welsh National School of Medicine, has three main aims: to show parents of babies born with spina bifida that "they are not alone in this struggle"; "to show what the problems are and how some of them can be alleviated"; and to inform other parents and the general public in "plain terms" about the nature of spina bifida and the many problems it causes.

The book of 160 pages comprises 14 chapters written in simple language, a short list of definitions of technical terms used in the text, a list of selected articles in medical periodicals, three appendices and an index. Only brief comment is made on careers, further education, training and employment since these subjects were not considered to be within the scope of the book.

The content of many of the chapters will not be new to readers of ASBAH publications, which are available at a fraction of the cost of this book.

The three chapters on Independence, Family Stories, and Parents Views and Problems — which occupy a third of the text — merit a wide readership.

The book, published by Allen and Unwin costs £4.95 (hardback), £2.80 (paperback).

P. HENDERSON, CB, MD, DPH.

1970s bring big advances

HELP AND HOW TO GET IT

The "lot" of the physically handicapped and their families is, to use a Gilbertianism, "not a happy one", though thankfully many rise to meet the challenge in a way which others whose problems (we all have them) are different, greatly admire.

The 1970s have seen a considerable development of provisions and services designed to help the severely disabled and those who care for them. One of the turning points was the passing of the "Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970". The first section of this act laid a statutory responsibility on each Local Authority to know the handicapped people in its area and to see that they were aware of the services which were available to help them.

HELPFUL BOOKLET

A booklet entitled "Help for Handicapped People" (Ref. HB1)* was prepared by the Department of Health and Social Security and the Welsh Office in July, 1972. It gives a broad outline of services available at that date, and is a booklet which families should have or get.

INVALIDITY PENSION

Since then there have, of course, been further developments, and the beginning of next year will see the introduction of the non-contributory invalidity pension for those who do not qualify for an invalidity pension because they have not been able to work and so have not paid national insurance. Many people, notably the Disablement Income Group, have long campaigned for this, and for those who are too severely disabled to work, among them some spina bifida/hydrocephalic young people, it will be welcome indeed.

FRIEND IN NEED

Every family is well advised to make contact with the social worker at the hospital where a baby is first treated, who will be likely to prove a sheet-anchor through the years. She can also arrange a contact with a social worker from the Social Services Department who can advise and support. The health visitor proves a helpful ally. Social Services can arrange for a home help in case of need, and usually either laundry service or incontinence pads if required.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

House adaptations and housing are also the responsibility of the Local Authority – usually through the Social Services Department though following the Housing Act 1974, perhaps through the Housing Department. It is unfortunate that the present financial problems facing the country are making it difficult for some Local Authorities to do things as expeditiously as they would like, and delay does give rise to extra anxiety for families.

AIDS TO MOBILITY

Surgical appliances, including calipers, can be prescribed by the hospital consultant. Aids to mobility, including wheelchairs and "Invacars", may be supplied by the Department of Health and Social Security (Welsh Office in Wales). A mobility allowance is to be introduced in phases, starting in 1976, which will help those with serious mobility problems who are too young or too severely disabled to drive. Advice and suggestions about how to get the best out of this allowance are to be made available.

EASIER PARKING

The Orange Badge Scheme helps with parking. The badge may be obtained through Social Services Departments or Traffic Departments. The scheme has just been extended (see Link 38).

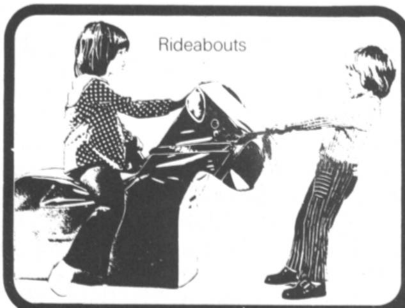
ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

The severely disabled, over the age of two, who need a lot of looking after by day and/or by night may be eligible for the Attendance Allowance. This is a tax-free allowance, and there are two rates, depending on whether extensive care is needed throughout the 24 hours or only by day or by night.

FAMILY FUND

For the last two years many families with children severely handicapped by spina bifida/hydrocephalus have had financial help from the Family Fund. This Fund is provided by the Government and administered by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust. Its purpose is to relieve family stress caused by severe disability among children, to complement the work of Local Authorities and voluntary bodies.

(continued on page 12)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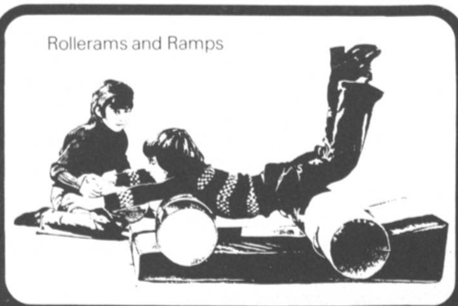
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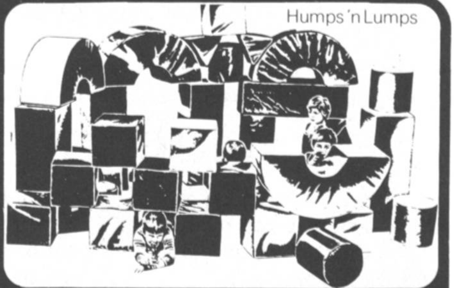
Saddles and Strides


Rollerounds


Tops and Tails.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SOURCES OF HELP (cont)

ASBAH'S ROLE

In the course of a short article it is not possible to cover all aspects in detail, but the Association is always glad to help and advise. Many Local Associations give financial assistance towards the cost of visiting children in hospital, most have an equipment loan service, and others help with holidays, emergencies or where there is a gap in statutory provision. The National Association too assists practically, especially where there is need for extra confidentiality or speed.

The Association can use its good offices in cases where problems arise, whether it be the supply of calipers or the granting of an allowance or help with housing. The Association is YOURS and exists to help you.

USEFUL BOOKLETS

Two useful booklets on help available are:
An ABC of Services and General Information for Disabled People. Disablement Income Group, Queens House, 180-182A Tottenham Court Rd, London W1P 0BD.
* Help for Handicapped People (HB1). Dept. of Health and Social Security, from local Social Security Offices or local authority Social Service Departments.

Holiday beach hut offer

If you are holidaying in or around Dorset you may like to take up this offer from Mrs. E. Brooks.

"I have a beach hut at Bowleaze Cove, near Weymouth, that I am offering to any family with a spina bifida child. There is car parking directly behind, which is free to those using the beach hut.

The hut is only for day-time use — not fitted for sleeping. It is suitable for wheelchairs.

Please telephone me first, and I will make arrangements for the key".

Mrs. E. Brooks, Tel: Dorchester 5116
(phone after 1 pm if possible)

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,
46 Tillbrook Road, Regents Park, Southampton.
Telephone enquiries: Totton 3365
(Mr. Mortimer)

THE SHASBAH TROLLEY FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Patent applied for in
UK, Commonwealth Countries, USA, 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 castor 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 costs £11 plus carriage.

Large model for children five to ten years old costs £14.50 plus carriage.

Overseas prices on application.

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

Aids and equipment

Felicity Birkett

Versatile chair

There are car seats on the market e.g. Britax Star Rider, K.L. Jeenay & Mothercare Car Safety Seat which are 'Approved to British Standard' and are suitable for the very young child. For the slightly older child the Commodore Recliner may be more appropriate.

This is bigger than most and is moulded up round the sides giving support for the head and for the child with poor sitting balance. The seat has its own frame and can be unclipped from the car anchoring straps and stand independently on the grass or beach for a picnic, or in the home. The seat can be in either the upright position or reclining.

A push chair frame plus shopping basket are also available and the car seat can be removed from the car and clipped onto the wheel base.

The seat measures: height 20", width 12", depth 9". It costs approximately £30 plus VAT and the push chair frame plus shopping basket is £17.70 plus VAT. Nordan Limited who import the seat from Germany allow 10% discount if the order is placed directly through me. The seat is stocked by some large department stores — for further information contact Miss F.A. Birkett.

Versatile bars

Storage is a problem in all houses and even more so if you have to have special equipment. The Triclamp Parallel Bars can be partially collapsed, (just remove the cross bars) or completely collapsed into a number of bars and clamps and put away.

The bars are adjustable in width and height and can be built to any size. The top bars are coated in yellow plastic — so your hands don't get cold — with bright red bobbles at the end. When you no longer require parallel bars you can use your ingenuity and turn them into a climbing frame, hanging rails — add a board and you have a play table.

Physiotherapists have found the parallel bars to be very stable and excellent in use in the nursery setting of a child development centre and several parents have found them ideal for home use.

The bars are available from P J Dodd & Son, "The Old Forge", Queens Road, East Grinstead, Sussex.

Approximate prices (excluding carriage) are: £19 (5' x 3' x 2' high), £26 (8' x 3' x 2' high), £33 (10' x 3' x 2' high), and £39 (12' x 3' x 2' high).

Other sizes and designs can be made and prices will be quoted on request.

You may have seen the Triclamp which holds the bars together and makes them so versatile, on 'Tomorrow's World' and 'Pebble Mill'.

Baby Relax Ltd who market the Baby Op Bootees which I mentioned in the May/June 'Link' can now offer these bootees to our members at the lower price of £1.50 (instead of £1.75).

Appeals and publicity

Christmas is coming . . .

When you read this you will be concerned with the summer holidays and the task of keeping the children amused for the weeks when schools are closed. So it seems a bit dotty to be telling you that samples of our Christmas cards are now available and leaflets illustrating the designs can be supplied on request.

If you can in any way help to boost our sales we shall be grateful, as this is one of the ways in which we can attract money to cover our running expenses. In these inflationary times these rise inevitably, no matter what economy we practise.

Perhaps some of you work for companies who like to choose a charity card to send to their business associates and any names to whom I could write would be most helpful.

SHORT TERM CARE

Where money is hard to come by for general funds, it is less difficult for special projects such as the home in Yorkshire which we hope to establish. We have now been given or promised approximately £75,000 and would like gratefully to acknowledge the support given by our Local Associations — it is possible other Associations are intending to contribute but this is the list so far:

Bedford & District	£250
Belfast & District	£500
Bolton & Bury	£200
Buckinghamshire	£ 50
Burnley	£100
Chesterfield	£ 50
Devon & Cornwall	£200
Dudley & Wolverhampton	£250
Essex	£ 50
Gloucestershire	£ 10
Greenwich	£ 10
Hampshire, South	£500
Leicestershire	£500
Lincoln & District	£ 50
Lincoln, Gainsborough Branch	£ 50
Mansfield, Worksop & District	£100
Mid-Ulster	£100
North Beds & Northants	£500
North East (Northumberland)	£200
North Yorkshire	£200
Northamptonshire	£ 25
Nottingham & District	£300
Pontefract, Castleford & District	£ 40
Preston	£1,000
St. Helens & District	£500
Sheffield	£300
South London	£200
Spenborough	£100
Staffordshire	£500
Sunderland	£200
Swindon	£100
Warrington & District	£100
Warwickshire	£ 25
Wigan & Chorley	£550
Wirral	£250
Total	£8,060

When the house is purchased Huddersfield will be sending us £300; Don & Dearne have promised a colour television set for the children's entertainment; and other Associations are co-operating, often from their own funds, in the Geoff Boycott Sponsorship Scheme which, as you know, is in aid of the Short Term Care Home.

For all these gifts, and for the spirit of co-operation which prompts them, we are very grateful. We appreciate too that some Associations, while wishing to help, are unable to do so at the moment because of other commitments.

Old Friends, New Friends

Members of the Independent Order of Foresters continue their efforts on behalf of the Home and numerous other groups and individuals are responding generously.

A welcome newcomer to the "Supporters Club" is the Federation of Master Builders, which has just announced that it will sponsor our Ball next January. For this introduction, through one of our members, we are most grateful. The need for new friends has never been greater.

The best of luck to you all, and a happy summer holiday.

Kate White

This new 'safe-sitter' chair has been developed at Sheffield. It is a considerable improvement on other products.

The backed is high so that the head will be well supported. It has another useful feature — particularly good for hospital use — a clamping device at the back which enables it to be fastened to the back of a cot. A child may sit us safely in bed.

For more information contact Mr. N. H. Watts, Biomedical Engineering Laboratory, University of Sheffield, Mappin Street, Sheffield, S1 3JD.

ASBAH publications and publicity

Your Child with Spina Bifida, 3rd Ed., by Dr. J. Lorber, MD, FRCP	20p
Your Child with Hydrocephalus by Dr. J. Lorber, MD, FRCP	15p
Equipment & Aids to Mobility by O. R. Nettles, MCSP, ONC. A folder of four booklets	complete set 25p
Clothing for the Spina Bifida Child by Barbara Webster, SRN, RSCN	15p
The Nursery Years, by Simon Haskell, M.A., Ph.D., and Margaret Paull, Dip. Ph.H.	15p
Information leaflets	100 for £1

All available from: ASBAH, 30 Devonshire Street, London W1N 2EB. (Special rates available to Local Associations.)

Scottish Spina Bifida Association booklets

The Spina Bifida Baby by O. R. Nettles, MCSP, ONC	[illegible]p
Growing Up with Spina Bifida by O. R. Nettles, MCSP, ONC	20p

Available from: The Scottish Spina Bifida Association, 190 Queensferry Road, Edinburgh, EH4 2BW (at special rates for bulk orders).

Posters. Double Crown, 5p each, "Future Bright", 10 for 20p.
Flag Day emblems. 1,000 for 50p.
Cards for notice boards. 10 for 10p.
Car stickers. 5p each. Postage extra.
Fund-raising items. Price list/details on request.

Local Association offers

Badges. Silver and green enamel with pin fastening. Replica of the Spina Bifida emblem. Bulk orders welcomed particularly. Price: 22p per badge. Postage extra. (For a single badge please enclose s.a.e.) Apply to: Mr. K. McKenzie, Badges Secretary, Salisbury & District ASBAH, 111 East Gomeldon Road, Gomeldon, Salisbury SB4 6LZ.

Special offer

Children's badges with S B symbol and the words "Spina Bifida Children" in black on green. Special reduction to clear—2p each. Good value for Summer Sales. Cheques and postal orders payable to "SASBAH". Send with order to Mrs. I Olditch, High Lea, Turners Green Lane, Wadhurst, Sussex.

Ties. Heavy weave washable terylene with SB symbol on dark blue *or* dark green. Sold by N. Hants, S. Berks and W. Surrey ASBAH. Price £1.10p plus postage, while stocks last. Reductions for bulk orders. Cash with order to Mr. B. High, 10 Woodruff Ave., Burpham, Guildford, Surrey. Please state colour.

Films

The first four films may be hired from Concord Films Council, Nacton, Ipswich, Suffolk. Enquiries about purchasing these four to ASBAH.

What is Spina Bifida? Black/White, 16mm, 25 minutes. Shows the early treatment of a baby born with spina bifida and hydrocephalus. **Hire £2.**

A New Lease of Life. Colour, 8mm, 25 minutes. Made by a parent, it shows through animated drawings the spinal lesions and refers to treatment. **Hire £2.**

Like Ordinary Children. Colour, 16mm, 30 minutes. Two teenage girls describe their disability and their feelings about integration into society. **Hire £4.**

Growing Together. Colour, 16mm, sound, 40 minutes. This film is about education and the choices of day school available to spina bifida children. Discussion topics to accompany this film are being prepared. **Hire £4.**

What shall We Do Tomorrow? Colour, 16mm, 22 minutes. It deals with problems and achievements of spina bifida youngsters, with comments from parents and teachers. Mansfield & Worksop Association, Enquiries: Mrs. E. Freeman, 23 Melbourne Street, Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts. Tel: Mansfield 26860. **Hire: £3 plus carriage and compensation.**

Inter-association holiday opportunities

Camber Sands, nr. Rye, Sussex. New well-equipped chalet, on pleasant situation near the sea available for families with spina bifida members. Sleeps six. Please apply to Mr. S. Evans, 1 Coniston Gardens, Wembley, Middx. 01-904 7840.

Cotswolds, nr Stow-on-the-Wold. Small bungalow, short lets. Large bed-sitting room, kitchen and bathroom, all electric. (Access unsuitable for large wheelchairs). From £11 weekly. S.A.E. to Mrs. Bevan, Kingsland, Bledington, Oxford.

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

Looe. Bungalow, two bedrooms, spacious accommodation at Millendreath Holiday Village, nr. Looe, Cornwall. Mr Keith Jackson, 202 Exeter Street, Plymouth.

Looe Holiday bungalow at Millendreath Holiday Village. Sleeps six. Fully furnished. Further details Mrs. Cook, 19 Winslade Road, Harestock, Winchester.

Mablethorpe. Self-contained 6-berth chalet situated at Golden Sands Estates, Mablethorpe, Lincs. Apply to Mr. Ken Hall, 17 Walhouse Street, Cannock, Staffs.

New Forest. Well-equipped chalet, sleeping six people. Within easy reach of Bournemouth, Beaulieu, etc. Swimming pool, paddling pool, restaurant and playground on site. Details from Mrs. A. Rae, 16 Clifton Road, Lee-on-Solent, Hants. Tel. Lee-on-Solent 550242.

Prestatyn: 2 six-berth luxury caravans, running hot and cold water, flush toilets, televisions, gas fires. £12.50 per week. No vacs. August. Apply: Mrs. E. Taplin, Colonial House, 63, Corporation Street, Manchester M4 3DT.

Prestatyn. 6-berth luxury San Capelle caravan situated at the Bourne Leisure Centre, Bastion Road, Prestatyn, North Wales. Bookings to Liverpool Association, Tudor House, Wood Lane, Netherley, Liverpool L27 4YA.

Selsey. New well-appointed, self-contained 16ft. x 30ft. 6-berth mobile for families with spina bifida members. Sited at Selsey, Sussex. For full details please send s.a.e. to Mr. R. V. Taylor, 3 Dickins Way, Horsham, Sussex, RH13 6BQ. Vacancies 20 Sept — 25 Oct only.
Booking for 1976 after 1st Nov 1975.

Winterton-on-Sea, Nr. Great Yarmouth. New well-equipped 6-berth chalet. Indoor swimming pool shop and play areas. Details from Mr. R. Morris, 127, The Pastures, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks. Tel: High Wycombe 32184.

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