

Scottish Child

June/July 1990

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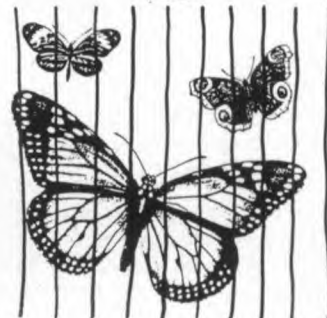
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CONNECTIONS

CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION

A site for Scotland's planned Peto-style conductive education centre – announced only last December by Minister Ian Lang – looks to have been found. Six sites throughout Scotland have been under active consideration by the Scottish Office for this prestigious project, and Greenfaulds in Cumbernauld looks to be the favoured option.

The new project will comprise a centre, based on the pioneering work at the Peto Centre in Budapest, to apply the conductive method to children suffering from motor disorders such as cerebral palsy. Scottish parents of such children have long felt let down by services in this country and a steady stream have been beating a path to Hungary in recent years.

The planned Scottish centre will cater initially for around 40 children aged between 2 and 7 years, and will include some residential accommodation.

But there is widespread unease about the whole project. The speed with which the centre is being set up – planned opening is for the end of next year – is less than cautious. Doubts are being expressed too about the funding level – £2.5m of Scottish Office money over three years to get the project up and running. There seems to be general agreement that the job cannot be done for the money on offer – there will be no hydro-therapy pool for instance, considered essential by those working with cerebral-palsied children. The plan is to welcome business sponsorship for the cost of this key component of the facility.

Earlier this year, the Scottish Office Advisory Group – set up to “advise Ministers on how best to achieve their wish to establish the Centre” – went to Budapest to look at the Peto Institute. The 20 strong committee is made up of 7 Scottish Office officials and 13 others drawn from Education Departments, Health Boards, Colleges of Education, Universities, Parent Groups, Special Schools and the Scottish Council for Spastics. There are no plans, once this committee have advised on the setting up of the Scottish Centre for Motor Disordered Children, for it to continue with the task of evaluation.

Good practice at Westerlea School, Edinburgh



New Scottish Peto Centre

Talking to some of the Advisory Group, none of whom – as appears to be the way – wanted to be identified, a feeling of some confusion deepens. Trying to decode the various thoughts on Scotland's Peto-style centre is like attempting to decipher a Party manifesto. This may be an apposite comparison. The establishment of the centre is widely regarded as politically inspired.

The Peto approach is regarded by more than one member of the Advisory Group as philosophical – not so much a method as a way of life. One member drew a parallel between the Eastern bloc attitude that all citizens must be of use to the state. So if a child cannot be of use because he cannot walk into a mainstream school, then he must be made to walk.

Though it appears that Dr. Hari who runs the Peto Institute denies it, there is a strong feeling that children are carefully se-

lected, and Hungarian children accepted by the Institute have less pronounced difficulties than those accepted from abroad. In this country it would seem fair to assume that as much emphasis would be put on teaching mentally handicapped as physically handicapped children. But the general truth is that mainstream schools in Scotland do not have the facilities, experience or will to accept walking but still disabled children – integration of Special Needs children remains light years away for most Regions in Scotland. So by whatever route cerebral palsied children get to their feet, the follow through to the rest of society still needs to be taken.

One of the most impressive parts of Peto seems to have been the Mother and Baby Unit, which teaches mothers to work with their children from an early age as part of a multi-disciplinary team, an approach already used by some of the schools run by the Scottish Council for Spastics.

One Advisory Group member wondered about the potential and possibilities for children if trained conductors from the Scottish Centre were to be dispersed throughout the country to teach mothers their skills. There is a feeling though that such an infrastructure would take ten years before we have enough knowledge to run such a network, and even the centre itself successfully.

One of the fundamental tenets of the Peto method is to reduce the number of people involved with the children down to the conductor, who is a combination of teacher and physiotherapist and this obviously makes sense. Given the intensity of the programme the message would be diluted with a great many people involved in the teaching of it.

In Hungary, there are 4 inter-disciplinary conductors to every 8 children. Which has prompted the question, where would we in Scotland be now if we had given that staff ratio to cerebral palsied youngsters? Certainly what is planned to be available here will be a hybrid version of the original, and that may well be a welcome addition.

There are pockets of good practice in Scotland, and there is a view that, to show willingness to seem accepting of what is bound to be a welcome additional and prestigious resource, we should not be in such a hurry to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Certainly we should be keeping an open mind, and people in the field feel they have undoubtedly much to learn, but impressive though some of the Peto ideas are, many parents believe that the money on offer, such as it is, should be put, albeit belatedly into improving what is already available.

Interviews for the first Director of the Scottish Centre are planned for this month. And there is inevitably much jockeying for position by the many parties who will have an interest in the centre once it is underway.

The feeling persists that among the frantic preparations and the likely hype surrounding the setting up of the centre, there are very real children to be considered, and that given the speed of this development, if they are being considered at all, they are far down the list of priorities. ■

Meg Henderson

Parents Thumbs up to Scottish Schools, but . . .

PARENT PARTICIPATION

One of the last acts of former Scottish Education Minister, Michael Forsyth was to commission a market research study of parents' views of schools. Any misgivings that the findings from the research might be used to promote school boards and 'opting out' were dispelled with the publication recently of the series of reports completed by the MVA Consultancy.

Most of the results of the widest ranging survey of parental opinion so far undertaken in Scotland (3,351 interviews) are unsurprising. They will bring crumbs of comfort to supporters and critics alike of government education policies.

In the report 'What Makes a Good School' for example, parents give highest rating to good teaching and good discipline, with good home-school contacts coming third. Most added that poor teaching and discipline were not worries that they had about their own child's school.

Improvements parents would like to see included better buildings and facilities, more welcoming staff and more adequate playground supervision. Parents who visited school judged it most by its 'ethos' or atmosphere. They were impressed by schools which were 'busy', 'active', 'lively', and 'colourful'.

Most parents said that they had sent their child to the school of their choice, with the school's

accessibility, 'good reputation' and family/friendship links being the key considerations. Only a few though made specific mention of the school's academic reputation or reputation for good discipline.

School boards, which came into being in October last year, have a special duty to promote good home-school links. How do the MVA findings map out the task that lies ahead? Parents on the whole were very positive about the relationship between themselves and their child's school, although nearly a third thought that the school did not contact them enough. About one parent in five thought the school could respond more quickly when there were difficulties.

The report on 'Teaching and Learning' is likely to be read with some interest. Parents saw arithmetic, reading, writing and English as the most important areas of the curriculum, with science being the only subject mentioned by a substantial number.

But learning was seen as most effective if individual differences were taken into account, if support is provided for the least able, if it took place outside as well as inside the classroom, and emphasised the role of parents as educational partners.

And although two out of three favoured testing, only 6% saw its purpose as making pupil comparisons.

Most parents acknowledged that teachers had a 'difficult job'

and were not as well respected as they used to be. 58% of primary and 47% of secondary parents thought that teachers were in tune with their needs as parents. For parents 'good teaching' meant recognising their children as individuals, and motivating them through understanding their weaknesses. Virtually all parents thought that teachers should undergo appraisal.

The main message from these findings is that parents in Scotland seem generally content with the deal their children get from school, albeit with some wishing to be better informed. The findings could be seen as an endorsement of the status quo.

They sit uneasily next to reports of cut-backs in school expenditure, the decline in the real value of 'capitation' spending on school books and equipment, the dilapidation of many school buildings, widespread pupil disaffection, low morale among teachers, and reports of pupils often leaving school ill-fitted for the world.

How can such an apparent discrepancy be accounted for? It may be that parents adjust their expectations to what they perceive, in an uncertain economic climate, the schooling system realistically can deliver. Were they to believe that the economy was rapidly expanding, they could well be clamouring for smaller classes, more curricular emphasis in the arts and other 'non-basic' subjects, better school amenities, and so on, confident that at the end of schooling, job and other

opportunities are awaiting their child.

As shown in the survey, parents are also content to leave most decisions, and the teaching and learning process to the professionals, thus insulating them against the constraints affecting decision-making at school and local authority levels. Membership of school boards would be expected to make parents more aware of the conditions under which schools have to operate and might therefore result in a lowering of the satisfaction threshold.

School boards will receive information about school budgets and other expenditure, for example, and approve capitation spending on school books and equipment. Anecdotal evidence already points to dismay among parent members of school boards about just how tight school budgets are.

The task now facing school boards is to acquaint parents, as an electoral force, with the political and economic framework in which school spending and other decisions are taken. Had the MVA consultancy's remit extended to the educational possibilities under a different political and economic order, directed, say, more towards the development of personal growth than to the manufacture of examination fodder, then parents in the sample might well have had another story to tell. ■

Graham Atherton



Fiona Lindsay

Contracting Health Care

HEALTH

Since the beginning of April, family doctors have had a new contract. There are some excellent ideas and sections enforcing long-needed changes but also worrying moves towards a market economy in health care (from which the USA is now trying to escape). And there are some demands that are irrelevant or simply unworkable.

Some of the more publicised changes have yet to be implemented but even now certain things are clear.

Since the Court Report in 1976 it has been recognised that GPs should be offering comprehensive care to young children,

rather than just seeing children when they are ill. Included in this monitoring of the well child is the arrangement for immunisations. This kind of child health surveillance forms part of the new GP service and GPs will be paid a fee for duties they perform in connection with it.

It all sounds good progressive stuff. The trouble is that the actual effect of the changes in some parts of the country has been the **closure** of neighbourhood health authority baby clinics and the **withdrawal** of a mother's option of consulting a common clinic doctor.

The problem is that the surveillance must be carried out in line with Health Board guidelines

and GPs will need some kind of additional training to be registered to provide the service. And not just training but support, at least in the early days of the scheme.

Health service managers, alarmed by the potential increase in demand from GPs have responded by threatened or actual cuts in the community health doctor budget.

Immunisation, a fundamental part of surveillance, is dealt with in a similarly flawed fashion. GPs will now only receive full payment if they achieve over 90% immunisation uptake. GPs have greatly increased their efforts to immunise un-immunised children, to ensure their targets are reached. Parental choice as

to whether their child is to be immunised has again suffered. In places there have been overt threats to parents and community staff. We could have done without legislation that serves to divide rather than unite health care for children.

Most at risk, however are those already disadvantaged children from areas of highly mobile populations. GPs in these areas are likely to see that computer-verified targets of 90% immunisation rates are impossible to achieve. They may well give up immunising altogether in the face of little or no reward and of pressures of other duties forced on them by the new contract.

Paul Carter

Emancipation of both Sexes

GENDER

Women are back on the agenda in Scotland in 1990. There have been significant developments since **Women's Claim of Right** was launched last year. Their aim is to increase the number of women in Scottish politics.

Demands for more women in a future Scottish Parliament have risen. The Women's Committee of the STUC recently submitted a proposal to the women's issues group of the Convention calling for equal representation of the sexes – one man, one woman from every constituency in Scotland. This year too, the Labour Party in Scotland, at its annual conference in Dunoon committed itself to pushing for a 50:50 gender split within a Scottish Parliament.

For those of us long involved in the women's movement, this is indeed welcome news. Growing up and being a woman in Scotland has had, perhaps, more than its share of crosses to bear, and it has been difficult to get women, even those sympathetic, to look at ourselves within the Scottish context.

And the 80s have seen an alarmingly smug attitude – 'we didn't vote for Thatcher – it's not our fault' – in public affairs. Traditional party politics secured the headlines. As effort was redirected to working for the return of a Labour Government or in



dependence in the predominant Labour and SNP camps, there seemed little public interest in questioning party political assumptions, or looking at new ways of working for change, which have been so character-

istic of the women's movement.

However, in what might be one of the more positive developments of the Thatcher decade, younger women are showing signs that they need little

convincing of the need to focus in on the position of women in Scotland.

While there is a definite commitment in the Scottish Constitutional Convention to guarantee an increase in women's representation in a future Scottish Parliament, the general reception of ideas on a women's committee or ministry is at best lukewarm. Equal gender representation won't happen overnight, but the likely outcome would be a leap in the percentage of women in the new parliament.

The Scottish Joint Action Group, set up by the Scottish Convention of Women, has been chosen to represent the women of Scotland on the Women's National Commission. Along with others they are currently setting up a new umbrella group to work on behalf of all women's groups and to ensure our representation on the European Women's Lobby.

Women working for change through these avenues will have to be alert to the possibility of being hi-jacked. The point where the question of redistribution of power to women in Scotland has a chance of happening, could be when it is most threatening. As the impact of environmentalism/feminism in the last two decades shows, we should be debating the whole patriarchal society and its values, and the need for both sexes to be emancipated.

Cathy Thomsom



Different Priorities

DAY CARE

Liz Gallacher and Susan Ireland have already set up private nurseries for working parents. Now they plan a first for Scotland – a fully private multi-company nursery, serving a new industrial development on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

"We have started by commissioning some research on what there is and what is wanted. The first thing that has to be said is that there is very little at all in Scotland. In fact genuine workplace nurseries are really only found in any numbers in the south of England.

"The interesting thing is that until now companies have not seen it as useful to monitor how many staff they lose because of parenthood. One significant exception was the Midland Bank. It did its image as a modern employer no end of good when people became aware of its nursery provision. In fact the bank's decision to move ahead with workplace nurseries came about because they discovered that the

cost of keeping on bringing in new staff was so high that it was actually cost effective to provide nursery places instead."

For anyone used to discussing nursery places for children in terms of child development, this research report comes across as 'different'. The arguments in favour are about morale in the workplace – linked to better productivity and less absenteeism – the promotion of a good corporate image, the asset value of an on-site nursery and the competition factor in inducing companies to bring in such a facility.

Both Susan and Liz are clear that a significant problem in the future for new nurseries will be the high set-up costs. Their own existing nursery for thirty children employs eight full-time workers, of whom five are qualified nursery nurses.

Companies which have already set up nurseries charge in various ways for the service. A typical weekly fee is said to be £30 to £45 per week but this can vary widely, 'depending', as the reports says, 'on what kind of staff are

expected to use the service or what kind of staff the company is trying to retain.'

Susan and Liz have noticed an encouragingly high involvement by fathers in the care of their children. Would this still be the case in a workplace nursery? That poses a whole new set of questions which, it has to be said, are unlikely to be resolved using the kind of arguments companies seem to feel most comfortable with.

Take just two of the dilemmas. Supposing the company the father works for has access to a workplace nursery but the one the mother works for doesn't. Is the father deemed to be eligible for a place to enable his partner to work for someone else? What happens if the company the mother works for is a competitor with the father's company? Does the company offer an employee a space in their nursery as a high-status perk? Or does such a resource go 'down through the ranks'?

The companies interviewed in their survey described themselves as keen to offer a facility of

this kind to women rather than men.

"But", says Susan, "our impression is that decisions about these sorts of developments are still being taken by men in privileged positions both at work and home. They really don't see childcare as a live issue, often because if they have children they either have a non-working partner who looks after the children full-time or if the woman works, they have a nanny.

Add this kind of evidence to the constant talk of places 'for parents' and you're left with the strong impression that as far as companies are concerned, the children are a bit of an afterthought. Will that change if more nurseries are opened? Can we ever expect to see a time when parents make choices about work no longer simply on whether the company has a nursery but on the respective merits of one company's nursery over another's. Starting from where we are now, what, you may wonder, would be the basis of that analysis?

Rosemary Milne

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CHILDREN OF RESISTANCE

Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa.

Edited by Victoria Brittain & Abdul S Minty

During the last decade the Apartheid regime has unleashed the full force of its repression not only against adults, but even against children. Fearful of the response of the international community, the regime has censored the media and tried to keep the actions of the police and army secret.

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Edited by Victoria Brittain & Abdul S. Minty



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IN BRIEF

The Strangeways Prison riot and rooftop protest which sparked off the recent round of prison protest had more than one curious side to it. One of the 'debates' in the press centred around the softness or hardness of methods used to bring the event to an end.

The quick end to the rooftop protest at Pucklechurch Remand Centre near Bristol – described as one of the 'copycat' episodes was expedited by two squads of prison officers in riot gear storming the barricades. 100 young unsentenced remand prisoners were brought down from the roof, after having surrendered, it was said, peacefully. You wonder what legacy of the unrest is around in the prisons, and, for those only on remand and now released, outside.

Yet according to a report out this month on the work of a Scottish **alternative to detention** project, such wide scale imprisonment of the young adult male group, who comprise most of British prisons' annual population, need never be.

The project in Dumbarton, run by Save the Children Fund working in conjunction with all the other local agencies including the Sheriffs, the police and social workers, claim dramatic reductions in the number of custodial sentences handed out to the 16-20 year age group. From 112 custodial sentences passed at Dumbarton Sheriff Court in 1987, the effect of the community based project already is to reduce the number to a mere handful.

And credibility with the young offenders themselves is evident. "I'd recommend it to anybody," said Jamie, aged 20 and with several prison sentences already behind him. It's not all plain sailing. The project uses offence-related groupwork to get the participants to look at the source of their offending behaviour. "Once I just exploded in the group . . . and ran out," explained Jamie. But he got himself back, and is glad he did.

The Dumbarton project, in a second phase development, are now expanding to work with a younger group, who should be under the remit of the Children's

Panels but tend to be passed onto the adult custodial system prematurely, leading to Scotland's unenviably high prison rate.

The full report, a vindication that alternatives do work, is available from the Alternative to Detention Project, 125 College Street, Dumbarton. Tel 0389 42591.

Frightening statistics about the growth of **youth homelessness** in Scotland have emerged in a report from Edinburgh. **Somewhere Safe to Go** is the 1990 report of the Stopover Project for homeless young people in Edinburgh, a 12 bed hostel set up by Edinburgh Council for the Single Homeless to provide emergency accommodation for homeless young people in the city.

According to the report, the number of young people in Edinburgh who become homeless is increasing dramatically, with more and more young people having to be refused any help because of lack of resources. Changes in Housing Benefit regulations, restrictions on Income Support for teenagers and lack of help for teenagers leaving care are seen as major causes of youth homelessness.

The 20 page report is available for £2 (including postage and packing) from Stopover, 9 Mayfield Gardens, Edinburgh EH9 2AX (telephone 031-667 2068).

A report from the Scottish Council for Research in Education on **bullying** in schools reveals that out of almost 1000 pupils questioned, half said they had been bullied at school at least once or twice during their school careers.

The report provides some useful data on the incidence of bullying and some indications as to the form this takes and where it usually happens. The same methodology and definitions were used as in a larger scale Norwegian study, in order to enable comparisons to be made. The writer, Andrew Mellor, a principal teacher of guidance in Kirkcudbrightshire, feels that on the evidence his research uncovered, although there is no room

for complacency in Scotland, nevertheless the claim that Britain is the 'bullying capital of the world', as made in The Guardian newspaper, is unfounded.

The report suggests that three elements need to be present in order for bullying in schools to diminish: recognition that there is a problem in the school; putting bullying on the agenda of school meetings and certain kinds of class work; encouraging the victims to tell staff that it is happening to them.

The advice about helping victims to speak out is interesting for the qualifications that are introduced:

"Achieving this is not easy in an educational system which traditionally spurns 'tell-tales' – and it will bring problems. **Younger children could overwhelm teachers with trivia.**" (emphasis added)

This is arguably the most important sentence in the report. It could provide a useful starting point from which to conduct further research into this question. It tells us that if we are serious about tackling bullying in Scottish schools, we need to know more than just the attitudes of the pupils to the problem. A school's culture is not created solely in the playground and children act out more than family values when they taunt and hit.

One thing is sure, it takes a brave child to risk standing out from the crowd once he or she has been bullied. And there are plenty of examples in our adult institutions to show that this is a lesson well learnt both by bullies and the bullied.

Scottish Child – Reader Survey

We'd like to thank all the many readers who responded to our survey. The returns will be analysed by computer shortly but in the meantime we thought you'd like some 'initial impressions'.

Who are our readers? We expected to find that the readership is overwhelmingly female. But we were proved wrong – your responses show that although women certainly are in the majority, we have a sizeable following among men too. The ratio is about 40% men to 60% women.

Of all those who responded, over 40% report that 3 or more people read their copy of **Scottish Child** and half of those say that more than 6 people read it.

This is both good and bad news for us. We are very pleased to have confirmed what we already suspected – that our actual readership is well over 10,000. But it would help the magazine's finances a lot if some of those who share just now paid out the £8 necessary to get their own!

Something like 70% of you seem to read it from cover to cover – that goes for those who enjoy it and even the few who say they don't.

We were inundated with suggestions about how **Scottish Child** might develop. Lots of you say you'd like more writing by children and young people, as well as more from 'ordinary people'. We hope this will encourage those of you who can to send in articles by children so that we can build up this aspect of the magazine.

A lot of you like the 'Scottishness' of what we publish but that view is counterbalanced by a high number who say they'd like more of the international perspective, more European coverage and particularly more articles that draw attention to Scotland as a multi-racial society.

Perhaps overall what impresses about the returns is the rich diversity of the readership – from teenagers to the retired, from health workers to unemployed young people, from those who have sought solutions to the education of their children by 'opting out' of the state system to those who are firmly part of it. This is a truly astonishing endorsement of the magazine's policy of trying to cut across artificially created institutional barriers.

There are complaints too, of course. Some of you feel we focus too much on the bad experiences of childhood and some of you, just a few, think we are in danger of becoming too 'political'. Others just think we should come out more often – once a month, at least!

Last but not least, we have to tell you who is the lucky winner of our £30 prize. This goes to Marion Brockie of Peebles. Your cheque is in the post! ■

In this six page feature on brothers and sisters, **Patrick Kane** reflects on the waves of brotherly love . . . and hate; brotherly rivalry and friction are the subject of a short story by **Julie Roy**; **Ann Laybourn** looks at the myths attached to being the only one; and **Aonghas MacNeacail** contributes a poem.

remote from you, now

Patrick Kane

My younger brother Gregory and I are in many ways opposed, in many ways at one. It's taken us over 20 years to accept this fact as simply given – that our fundamental differences aren't eternal antagonism, that our similarities don't mean we aren't separate individuals. Now we just enjoy, respect, work with each other. It wasn't always so peaceful.

Ours was a family of men – my mother was faced with four traditional West-of-Scotland males, which meant a lot of housework for her and a lot of tension for me. From very early on, I had a crude psychological model in my head of what my relationship with my brothers structurally was.

"It's always the problem with three sons," I remember an unidentified voice of authority saying, stupidly thinking I wouldn't overhear and understand. "The first and the last are always spoiled – the middle one always has the problems."

I never knew whether this preconception shaped Gregory's reality, or whether it was a response to his own actions – but it soon became obvious that Gregory was not me, was defining himself almost in direct opposition to his elder brother. I was introverted, bookish, academic, unfriendly; Gregory was outgoing, practical, witty and gregarious.

As 'our Patrick' got the plaudits for exam results and public achievements, Gregory – no less intelligent – decided to drop out of that race. Measured by the working-class aspirations of my parents, Gregory's resistance to achievement – simply, on

reflection, an expression of his own autonomy – became a family problem.

Many seeds of future disruption were sown in these judgements-by-education; each of us could touch each other's open wounds with the delicacy of torturers – Gregory portraying me as unnatural, abnormal, weird; me retaliating with accusations of his stupidity and triviality. Me as all head, Greg as all heart; like other areas of life, the splitting of one from another caused endless misery.

I cannot honestly pass over the more typical aspects of brothers growing up together – the physical violence and intimidation, from myself to Gregory. I can only remember my exercise of power over him as stemming from my perception of his difference – he wouldn't go along with me, do what I did, how dare he!

My problem with socialising got projected onto Gregory, who couldn't possibly work out all my angst, all my moods. And when he didn't, I hit him. Other male friends have told me of their own fraternal tyranny, so I don't feel so anomalous – but how could this buried memory not have shaped our relationship?

So we progressed through primary and secondary school, passing each other in corridors and muttering hellos, either fighting or competing at home. The struggle was endless, incremental, painful. We both had a love of cars, their shapes and specifications, and would sit for hours on the living room couch drawing together – or versus each other, more accurately. Sometimes I could never find later the drawing I'd

painstakingly done; it was only recently that Gregory confessed he'd ripped up my best ones, in a fit of sheer jealousy.

Music was yet another marker of difference and antagonism between us. I could sing, but he could play four instruments well; his world became one of glowing reports of good or bad gigs, its esoterism infuriating me.

When we eventually conjoined musically – a jam in the living room to some old Clash songs with a friend – that was the first spark of the joy of our working together. We could be separate yet complimentary, each bringing our distinctive selves to a collective endeavour that was literally bigger than the sum of its bickering parts. I felt exhilarated that day, and later that night tried to listen to the tape we'd made of the jam.

It was blank. Gregory had erased the performance, perversely denying me the pleasure of hearing us work together.

Our first years as professional musicians, on a major record label, were crammed with mistakes. We still viewed each other as essentially polar opposites. Somehow we got a hit with our second record, and the spotlight came down on our blatantly obvious antagonism – which I foolishly tried to make capital of – the biblically feuding brothers who make wonderful music from their tensions.

Unfortunately the pressure of the press turned something simmering into something explosive. On various public occasions, we two grown men started thumping



The Kane Brothers

the life out of each other, a detail of pop policy providing an excuse for both of us to hammer out our brotherly frustrations. Why couldn't he be more radical, less craven? Why couldn't I be less idealistic, more pragmatic?

We finally, climactically, said the worst things in the world to each other – and then everything seemed to be over. Our gulf was unbreachable. We prepared to part, profoundly and forever.

Our manager sat us round a table and told us we were fools – the antipathy that caused this rested on a more permanent empathy. Something must be salvaged. We embarked on a new album, musically together, but personally we enacted a strange formality. Everything had to do with respect – the only way forward was to regard each other as strangers, humans with our rights to individuality rather than as fatally linked brothers.

So followed an odd year of mutual professionalism and politeness; what we were in effect doing was reconstructing our relationship as adults rather than inflated children – aware of our knee-jerk responses to each other and trying to be honest about feeling them. A kind of mutual analysis.

They were uncomfortable times, but necessary. That might have been enough – a kind of existential tolerance of each other; our existence in various situations determining us more than our essence. The song that defined that period was the title track of the second album, *Remote*.

*"The tension is all that we'll ever have
May as well use it."*

We took to performing it as piano/vocal only, like a gentle reminder to each other, in front of thousands of people every night, that we had to keep persevering with each other.

**"each of us
could touch each other's open
wounds with the delicacy of
torturers"**

But hollow men cannot give themselves substance simply working from the outside in. Something new came along, an unprecedented jolt into humanity. After I announced that my wife and I were going to have a baby, I saw Gregory acting in a new way, and felt myself responding too.

Surely we must let warmth and love and acceptance flow freely, without inhibition, when we have a far more delicate problem of life to deal with than our own ossified complexities? Brother Pat becomes Pat the father; Brother Gregory becomes Uncle Gregory. My child not only allows us to become new selves – she forces the change on us.

So we find ourselves sitting as a foursome, my wife, baby Grace, myself and Gregory, out in the sun on the back green, happy to be together, relaxed, non-performing, non-evaluating. If I never write another song with him, I'm thankful we can be so civilised together. Such normality is enough.

And my other, youngest brother? He has watched us tear one another apart, struggle for common ground, fail again, and has quite rightly decided that he'll improve on both of us. None of this 'intellectual-versus-noble-savage' rubbish – our Garry gives a percentage of his weekly British Rail telephone engineer's wage to the ANC, which is as neat a blend of his brothers' oppositional traits as you could imagine. He is inches taller than both of us, which entirely fits his largeness of character. I love him dearly and simply, as I now love Gregory.

To be able to say that is a triumph; to be able to maintain is our challenge. Brothers in arms; remote no more. ■

me too, brother

Julie Roy

Tommy was two years older than me, and he was good looking. Tall, dark and handsome, the girls called him, with his sparkling blue eyes, short brown curly hair, and strong build. He was clever too, and Mum and Dad were fair proud of him. Some said he would win the dux at school and they were right. I can vividly remember that day at the prize-giving. I watched Mum's and Dad's faces as Tommy walked up onto that stage and shook hands with the Headmaster. A tear or two rolled down Mum's flushed cheeks. And Dad stood straight as a door with his chest expanded so wide that I thought it was going to burst. I was fair jealous of Tommy's brains. Folk said I was clever, but I was never that clever. I never won the dux. Aye, that was me, wee Billy. Tommy hated me being called 'wee' Billy. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that Tommy hated me. I was the one that got away with all the mischief. Tommy always got the blame because 'he was older and should know better'. I'll never forget the day when the pair of us were playing with matches. I was five and Tommy was seven. I was the one who dropped the box of lighted matches into the can of paraffin, not Tommy – he told me not to. That was some bonfire that night, and Tommy was leathered and grounded for a month. He got the blame. He was older and should have been more responsible.

So, I was always jealous of Tommy, and Tommy resented me and, I suppose, that was why we weren't very close. In fact we were leagues apart. But a time came when the situation changed.

It was a beautiful hot July day in the summer of 1959. Tommy and his pal decided that they were going to take Chancer, my dog, for a walk.

"Can I no go, Tommy?" I begged. "Chancer's my dog and I should be allowed to go if I want to."

"No way, Billy. Bob's my friend and we are going for a walk and you're no going."

I gave up trying to argue and watched as Chancer came running out of the kitchen, his tail wagging at the mention of his name. The little squint in his eye was as evident as ever. Chancer was a cross-breed, of which type of dogs I was never quite sure. All I knew was that I got him as a pup for my ninth birthday and that I was the one who looked after him. No-one else really cared about him. Unless they wanted to take him out to torment me, that is.

I strolled outside and wandered about looking for something to do. I don't know how long I had been lying on the grass in the hot air, when I felt a long slimy creature drop onto my sweating face. I stood up quickly and the longest fattest and biggest eel I had ever seen fell to the ground and wriggled about on the grass at my feet.

"God, yon eel could be a record breaker!" I proclaimed before I realised that Chancer wasn't anywhere to be seen. "Where's the dog?" I asked.

Tommy answered as natural as can be. "We lost him a wee while back. He did one of his usual disappearing tricks – but don't worry, he'll turn up as usual."

"Where exactly did you lose Chancer?" I asked after a couple of hours has passed.

"Er, well . . ." he stammered.

"Answer me!" I shouted. "Where in the hell's my dog? He doesn't take over two hours to wander home."

"Who do you think you're shouting at, eh?" Tommy paused and then went on, "Well if you must know the silly bloody mutt went into old Broon's hens."

I felt the blood drain from my face.

"Huh, don't believe me then. We ran as soon as he started to rip out the first one's throat."

Tommy's cool exterior began to break and his guilty conscience began to trickle

through its cracks. He looked up at me. With his face flushed and eyes watering he snarled, "What are you looking at me like that for? It's no my fault!"

I ran outside ready to race down to see if Tommy's story was true, or if it was just another of his cruel wind-ups. But a police car drew up and saved me the bother. I ran back inside the house and crouched in the corner of the lobby as my mother answered the door. A six foot policeman handed Chancer over to her in a wire cage. Its mouth and throat were covered in blood, and its sides were sorely bruised where the farmer had given it a good kicking.

As the policeman stood talking to my mother, I crawled over to the cage and opened it. Out rushed the cowering little dog, looking up at my mother with that same squint in its eye.

Eventually the policeman left and the door was closed. My mother's face had gone deathly pale and I could tell that she was both worried and angry. She went quiet for a minute or two, and then she started shouting like I'd never heard her shout before.

"Thirty pounds worth of damage were done to those stupid hens. THIRTY! How am I supposed to pay that? Willy will have a fit!" At that she let her temper loose on the dog and kicked it hard in the ribs. Chancer gave out an ear-piercing yelp and backed away.

"What am I going to do?" she asked looking at me. "The dog will have to be put down before your father gets home. That's the only solution. He'll be too irritated and tired to deal with this by the time he gets back from the pit. Here, there's a shilling. Take the dog down to Davy Steel. Explain the situation and ask him to put the dog down. He should do it for that. Tell him your father'll see him at the Welfare the night."



At that she threw the dog's blue lead at me and stormed away into the kitchen. The tears streamed down my face as I picked up Chancer for the last time and put the lead round his neck. The dog whimpered as I stroked him and held him close to my chest. I could hardly believe that this was the same beast that had run savagely amock in old Broom's hen yard. If only I had been there to stop him.

As Davy sat Chancer down in the field and held his shotgun to Chancer's head, I looked away and broke down howling as the shot rang out across the countryside. As I got up to walk home, Davy shook his head at me. "Do you want the lead back, son?" he asked.

I looked at him in disbelief and then ran towards home. A wave of anger came over me. I cursed Tommy under my breath. Clever Tommy, if he was so clever, why hadn't he stopped and tried to control the dog. Why hadn't Tommy had Chancer on the lead as they walked past the farm? Tommy had just run at the first sign of trouble.

Clever Tommy's cleverness had gone way down in my estimation.

In fact, I was more than angry with Tommy. He had taken my dog for a harmless walk which had turned out to be fatal due to his irresponsibility. I couldn't remember the last time Tommy had shown me any brotherly affection. I was his scapegoat for practical jokes and punches when he felt in the mood for a fight. It was me who felt in the mood for a fight now and by God he was going to get it.

When I got home, Tommy was waiting at the gate. He put his arm around my shoulders and looked pitifully into my tear-stricken face. I flung his arm from me as my anger expressed itself in relentless violence.

"You stupid callous heartless bastard!" I screamed as I tore into him. I punched. I kicked. I clawed. I pulled Tommy's hair. I spat into his face. Tommy just stood there.

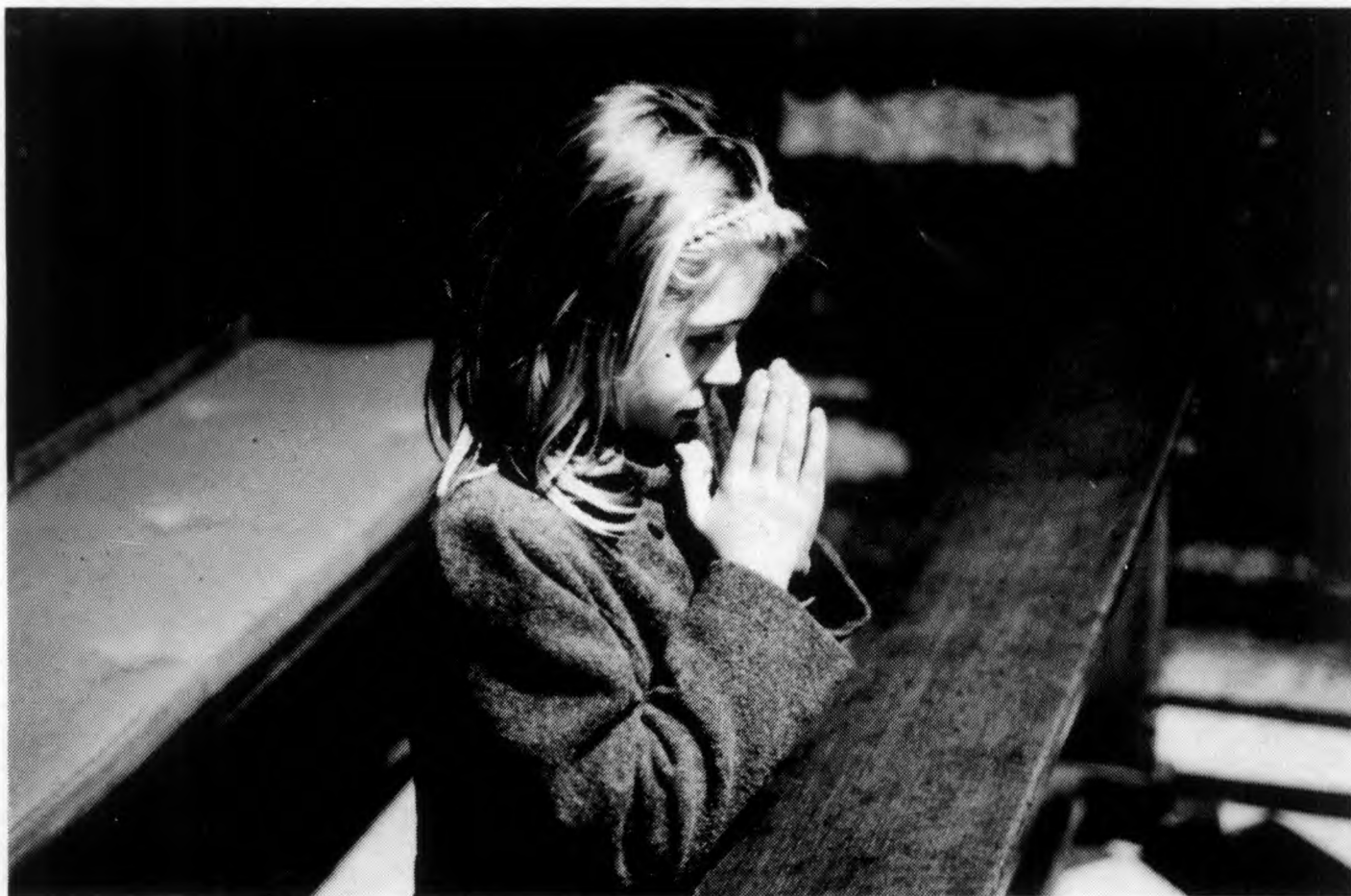
By the end of my outburst Tommy sat leaning against the fence in a crumpled

heap, tears streaming, and I sat sobbing beside him. I put my arm round him and helped him up before the pair of us went inside.

"I'm sorry, Billy," murmured Tommy as we clambered up the stairs to the bathroom. I inwardly accepted his apology, but could bring myself to say nothing. Then, as we stiffly got changed in our bedroom I forced myself to say audibly, "me too".

For the moment we were even; the incident at the farm had been Tommy's fault, yet I, although being younger, had had to take responsibility for it. No longer did Tommy exclude me from games with his friends or refuse to help me with my homework. No longer did he blackmail me by threatening to tell my parents that report cards had been given out at school. I never again jumped into bed to land on a pile of drawing pins left there by Tommy's mischievous hands. Although we never discussed the changes and the event which brought them on, we realised that the resentment and animosity between us had changed to affection and even love. ■

not the only one



John Stark

only children

Ann Laybourn

Ask anyone what they think of only children, and unless they have one or are one themselves, the chances are high that you will get a reply along the lines of 'spoiled, lonely and maladjusted'. Ask what they think of parents who have an only child and the answers will range from 'unfortunate', if the parents have one child through circumstance, to 'selfish' if it is through choice. This negative stereotype is deeply ingrained in the British consciousness, and surfaces periodically in fiction, the media and even in educated conversation.

British suspicion of one child families is interesting compared with trends in other countries. Only children are now becoming quite common in a number of other western societies including, to many people's surprise, such a child worshipping place as Italy. Many mothers in these countries are choosing to have only one child as the easiest way of combining motherhood with a career.

In Britain, although family size has decreased over the past 20 years, for most parents this means a minimum of two and few choose to have an only child. Information from a recent survey of Scottish youngsters shows that only one in twenty Scottish 16-17 year olds is an only child.

Studies suggest that the main reason for this is the deeply held belief that without brothers or sisters children are unhappy and selfish.

Yet the paradox is that research on the development of only children, of which there is a great deal, presents a very positive picture. In general only children differ very little from those with brothers and sisters; they are no more likely to be lonely or spoiled in childhood, and are as good as anyone else at making close friendships and successful marriages when they grow up. Some studies suggest that, if anything, they are likely to be higher achievers and better adjusted than children from larger families, but overall they seem to turn out much like anyone else. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that siblings are essential to a child's normal development.

In that case, why is prejudice against only children so widespread? The origins are not at all clear, but, like other prejudice, once established it has become self-perpetuating. When a child (or adult) from a large family is peculiar or obnoxious, people produce a variety of explanations, of which the most usual is the way he or she has been brought up. When an only child behaves in the same way they look no further than family size. Any individuals who do not fit the stereo-

type are dismissed as 'not really a typical only child'. I have even heard of a child's behaviour cited as typical of only children and later discovered that he was from a family of three!

The experiences of only children vary enormously, as two friends of mine illustrate. Capable and kind, with successful careers, happy marriages and a gift for friendship, both are as far removed from the popular image of the only child as they could be. In any research study they would number among the successes. Yet they have very different feelings about their childhoods.

Elizabeth was left an only child when her much loved older sister died. She grew up in an atmosphere of loss, aware that she did not measure up to the idealised memory of her sister. She lived in the country, and spent little time with other children out of school; feeling that her mother would disapprove of her friends she did not like to invite them home. Her parents were busy and had few social contacts themselves. The turning point for Elizabeth came when she decided to go to University. Her parents, who worried about her isolation, supported her decision, and encouraged her to move to the city where she made many friends. Although the unhappiness of her early life was due to

other factors, she feels that having brothers or sisters would have diluted the effect of them by giving her company and support.

Jean grew up in the close knit community of a small mining village. She thinks her parents were simply unable to have another child, but they never gave the impression of being sad about it. She had 'a wonderful childhood'. Her parents were not well off, but they went out of their way to make life fun and share their interests with her and other children. Her father was a keen naturalist and regularly took Jean and her friends into the country after school to look at birds and plants. Both her parents were a magnet to young people and the house was always full of them. Surrounded by her extended family, Jean never remembers being lonely, and feels the rich experiences she got in childhood were crucial to her development as a gifted teacher.

Although these are two individuals, they do point to some of the particular features which may make childhood a good or bad experience for an only child. The best of the many American books on only children, (*One Child by Choice*: Hawke, S and Knox, D. Prentice Hall 1977) which is based on the personal experiences of families with one child, suggests a number of ways in which parents can help to ensure their child is happy and develops well. These include being positive and outgoing individuals themselves, acting as a companion to their child, sharing interests with them, encouraging them to become independent and avoiding being dependent on them, helping them to develop interests, avoiding overindulgence, fostering contacts with the extended family, and above all, helping them to make and value friendships. All very well worth reading.

But is this kind of upbringing really any different from what other children need, and what any sensible loving parent tries to provide? It may be that good parenting is especially important to only children, since they lack the buffer against bad experiences which brothers and sisters can provide. On the other hand, siblings do not invariably support each other in times of stress; they sometimes make the situation worse by scrapegoating and teasing.

The fact is, we just don't know how the family life of only children differs from that in larger families, and whether different kinds of relationships develop with parents and friends when children do not have siblings. Nor do we really know what makes for a good or bad experience as an only child.

What seems very clear is that far from being a race apart only children are much like anyone else. There are pros and cons to every family size, and parents should be free to choose the size that suits them best or to accept what life has brought, without feeling they are breaking some unwritten taboo, or dooming their child for life. Only children are no more likely to turn out spoiled, lonely and maladjusted than their friends with brothers and sisters. ■

the divide

1.

Old Donald has seen New York from seaward,
spent a winter in Archangel, been broke in Valparaiso,
has drunk till dawn with shanty blacks in Capetown,
smuggled liquor here to there, loved a dancing girl in Cairo,
and has no regrets

except
that his bones are grown brittle,
his muscles stiff, his eyes cloudy.

the tramp he sailed for over 30 years
went to the breakers' yard in 1948.

now he sits in his house by the shore, listening to the gulls
looking westward, reminiscing,
waiting.

2.

his brother John lives inland
tending his score of lean black cattle,
playing pibrochs on a chanter:
he does not hear the cows prattle.
daily he cleans and polishes his father's bagpipes,
and never let these pipes play reels for dancers,
but dreams

he is the last MacCrimmon
lamenting the desolation of Boreraig.

Aonghas MacNeacail

the divide is from a new collection of poems and prose by Aonghas MacNeacail **ROCK AND WATER** published by Polygon at £6.95.

CHILDCARE NOW!

"On no account leave the children at home when you protest. Don't let M.P.s or Councillors get away with dealing with your children in theory. Always face them with the children. Don't be frightened off. Full council meetings are open to the public – there is a public gallery."

Scotland's and the UK's low level of publicly funded childcare provision is under attack. And as the extract from the publicity leaflet of the new campaign body **Childcare Now! Scotland** makes clear, things are on the move.

"This whole problem," said Childcare Now! steering committee spokesperson, Helen Eadie, "has just been swept under the carpet." And where educational arguments for pre-school provision have come, in this country, to not very much – Britain has the lowest childcare and pre-five education rates in Europe, parts of Scotland have no state provision at all – other imperatives in the 90s make for a new determination.

Helen Eadie is herself a Regional Councillor in Fife. She chairs the Region's Equal Opportunities Committee. Her perspective includes, but takes her further than the lack of facilities for the under-fives.

"Childcare Now! Scotland is strongly of the view," she stresses, "that childcare should not be restricted to the under-fives alone." If access to good childcare is difficult enough before children go to school, arrangements for the children of working parents after school's out and during holidays can be well nigh impossible. "Out of school care should be seriously looked at up to the age of 14," she feels.

Childcare Now! is calling for central government co-ordination of childcare policy, including a clear commitment to public funding for an improvement in services. They see a partnership arrangement between local authorities, employers and voluntary organisations as best providing a choice of high quality childcare provision, allowing those who care for children "the opportunity to work, study, or participate in public life." Children too, should have a positive play and social experience.

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Continuing our series **Childcare: urgent need for the 90s**, we look at what's happening on the ground; and over the page **Shona Fraser** describes an exciting parent-led childcare initiative in the Western Isles.

The Childcare Now! charter lists the importance of an improvement in the status of those working in childcare, including good training, pay and conditions. And as part of a general enhancement of the value placed on bringing up children, they call for improved maternity and paternity leave conditions for workers, in line with what pertains in other European countries.

If experience of attitudes in recent years is anything to go by, the campaign faces an uphill struggle. A questionnaire on policies and plans on childcare provision circulated to all prospective Regional Council candidates in last month's local elections in Scotland, brought according to Helen Eadie "a disappointing return". But plans are underway to develop other high profile campaigning strategies in the coming months. As with other grass roots and women's initiatives, there is no lack of determination. And, as they say, they won't be talking about children in theory.

There is agreement generally in the childcare sphere that things are on the move.

The impact of Equal Opportunities legislation and the so-called 'demographic time-bomb' have provided the push for the expansion of services. These are exciting times for what has been until recently, a bit of a Cinderella area.

The Scottish Child and Family Alliance (SCAFA) the umbrella body for childcare organisations in Scotland take some of the credit for the Childcare Now! campaigning initiative. SCAFA has played a developmental role over the years in supporting the playgroup movement and the expansion of family centres, and they have watched and encouraged the emergence of new services like creches and homevisiting schemes.

It is likely that if childcare services are to expand, and as yet not much tangible evidence is available on the ground, the debate on standards of provision will quicken. SCAFA has already run training courses for project managers and various other events.

Last month in conjunction with Fife Regional Council they convened a 'Childcare



in Europe' conference. Oversubscribed weeks in advance, the conference heard speakers from Denmark, Sweden and Italy explain their countries' child and family policies. As one delegate said, "In Denmark they seem to have more childcare facilities in one small town than we have in some of our regions."

An interest in the quality of childcare and the need for a recognition of the complexity of the many child and family policy issues is held too by the Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA).

"The message, certainly in the past," according to SPPA's Pat Trenaman, "seems to have been that any kind of creche provision will do, as long as it releases the mother for 'something useful'." She feels that the government attitude that industry should provide has limitations. "Because childcare has to provide for a whole range of needs," she argues, "there is a strong case that it should be provided by the community."

"The big concern in SPPA is that the debate in childcare becomes not so much led by childcare needs, but by employment concerns."

SPPA organise facilities for a big proportion of Scotland's pre-5s. They catered in 1988/89 for an estimated 70,000 plus children (22% of the 0-5 age range) attending at least one two-hour play session per week. They are a self-help organisation with a

"The big concern . . . is that the debate in childcare becomes not so much led by childcare needs, but by employment concerns."

Scotland-wide network of around 120 part-time fieldworkers, who help parents organise play facilities on their own. Because of a generally low level of subsidy, cost per session is quite high at an average 75p per session.

But the self-help component is an integral part of the playgroup approach. "Immense learning takes place," said Pat Trenaman, "confidence building - which is not often recognised. The notion of parents as providers

is bolstered, which enriches the parent-child relationship." SPPA is affiliated as an organisation to the Childcare Now! campaign, and they would like to see a real choice in provision so that all children's needs are met.

One aspect of the drive for childcare facilities which is already having to be addressed is the fact that it is almost entirely a women's initiative. The power stakes in the disbursement of funds for good childcare led one activist to comment, "The status of parents won't be raised in this society, until it is recognised that men are parents too". ■

Derek Rodger

Childcare Now! Scotland are at SCAFA, 55 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QY Tel. 031 557 2780; SPPA are at 14 Elliot Place, Glasgow G3 8EP Tel. 041 221 4148.

Continuing the series, "Childcare: urgent need for the 90s" in the next issue, Ros Kirk will report on research into parents' attitudes to gender issues and access to Family Centres.

Also - Community nurseries: can they be the answer to user-friendly provision?

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GUTH NAM PARANT

ANNS NA H-EILEANAN AN IAR

('The Voice of the Parents' in the Western Isles)

Guth nam Parant was formed in 1987 – initially to take over the former role of Proiseact Muintir Nan Eilean (Western Isles Community Education Project), the final phase of which had focused on support and training for pre-school groups in the Western Isles.

The project is parent-run with a management committee of 12 parent representatives from the islands of Lewis, Harris, Uist, Benbecula, and Barra. Over the last three years the project has supported and run training courses in the sphere of pre-school provision.

In addition Guth nam Parant is now in the process of setting up various projects:

- Bi-lingual theme boxes – which are loaned out to member groups;
- Western Isles Playgroup Aid – organised fundraising events throughout 1990 (in



conjunction with the Scottish Pre-school Play Association);

- Parents Newsletter – a means whereby **parents** are invited to air their views;
- Book Library – including most of the Gaelic children's books available;
- Video Library;
- A fundraising booklet and a grants booklet – who to apply to and when.

The project has also taken on a pressure group role. Issues which parent members feel they need to take initiatives on include:

- campaigning for better pre-school provision and grants for pre-school provision, especially from the local authority;
- discussing plans for provision for parents and children in the new Western Isles

Hospital, now being built;

- pressing for better facilities – in shops, pubs, restaurants and public transport for mothers with young children.

The focus of Guth nam Parant's year, so important with a widely dispersed island membership, is the Annual Seminar, held this year on 12th and 13th March at Linaclete School, Isle of Benbecula. Every member group in the Western Isles is invited to send two representatives. This year the 60 bed hostel at Linaclete School was not big enough to accommodate all the participants, and 10 people had to stay in the local hotel.

While the first session of the seminar got underway with workshops including Gaelic Drama, Women's Health and Non-competitive Play, the children, (68 in all) were looked after in 4 creches. As well as informational displays and ideas exchanges,

an evening discussion group on Growing Up in the 90s covered drink and drug abuse, child abuse, adult incest sufferers, children's attitudes to strangers, and the effect on children of parental separation.

A Playleader Training Course led by Sheila Sansbury from Young Families Now in Aberdeen ran concurrently with the workshop sessions, and was completed by 15 leaders.

Before lunch on the last day, everyone gathered in the theatre and all were asked to give written views of Guth nam Parant's work; workers resources, pressure group work; language; support.

Guth nam Parant is financed by the Bernard van Leer Fund. It now employs a full-time Project Leader, 2 part-time administrators, and a team of part-time field-workers.

Shona Fraser

TAKING CHARGE



Cyril Bernard

WE'RE WEE?

*what's your favourite word dearie
is it wee
I hope it's wee
wee's such a nice wee word . . .
. . . oh my
a great wee word
and Scottish
it makes you proud*

from Tom Leonard **The Voyeur**

Continuing our 'Taking Charge' series, **Derek Rodger** argues for ways to break out of ghetto thinking.

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It might not seem at first a very promising prospect, but our own local national BBC Radio Scotland, like it or not, does give pointers to where we're at.

The Art Sutter Show, for instance, for those who are into London's Radio 4 **Woman's Hour**, at work, or otherwise getting on with their lives in the afternoons, and who therefore don't know . . . the Art Sutter Show is a two-hour stalwart of the daily p.m. schedule. Art seems a cheery sort of

chappy – a 'personality' you might say, if you were feeling kind.

He's on now. "Cup season just now." He's talking about last night's telly. "Lots of football on last night (Warmly)." "Not in Scotland, of course (Chidingly, but with a chuckle)."

"But we won't go into that!" (Serious, as if rebuking us for even thinking we would). Here Art is touching on a raw cultural nerve. As football officianados know, because of the politics of cash deals and a touch of local authoritarianism from Scotland's own football administrators, if East Stirling are attracting a crowd of 350 to their home match with Stenhousemuir, no televised soccer is allowed to compete with the live product.

But, as Art says, we won't go into that.

Those who simply bypass Radio Scotland, or who dismiss the banality of all mass audience chat, games and music output,

Sutter Show is, after all, on the publishers' circuit, along with autograph tours of libraries and bookshop wine readings, of publicity appearances. The thing about writers, at least some of them, is that they are all too human . . . and unpredictable. Either Ralph Glasser is a man prone to spontaneous and frequent displays of great emotion – and from a reading of his autobiography, the third part of which **Gorbals Voice, Siren Songs** (Chatto £13.95) he was on to promote, he has every reason to be – or he had a streaming cold. In between great trumpeting and sniffings, a great conflict unfolded between the culture of the syrup manufacturing mass media and this unlikely, but so familiar elderly Gorbals Jew.

What was it like, asks Art cheerily, going back to the Gorbals, to Abbotsford Primary School?

Very traumatic. Very hard. In a touching account of loss – the more so because he was an outcast even while in it – Glasser mourns the Gorbals that he sees in memory. It is not what he sees now. Even the street plan is obliterated.

Was it a tough upbringing, Ralph? chimes in Art airily.

Very tough. There follows a relating of regular starvation in the Gorbals of the 1920s. Simply nothing to eat for days on end. But (searchingly) you must have had some fond memories as well? Didn't you? (You almost hear a 'please' in the intonation.)

Friendships. Although they're all dead now, most of them. Glasser describes his father – a Latvian Jew who thought he was on his way to New York, with Glasgow just a stopping off point. A disconnected, unhappy individual who gambled everything. If I win I'll be free, he told his son. His son retorted directly – free to do what? At which his father used to get angry. What's this? Metaphysical questions. Watch the audience figures. How about your mother? says Art urgently. He'd obviously not read the book.

She died when I was 6.

But those were different days then, Ralph. Weren't they? Weren't they?? How did the working class boy from Gorbals fit in at Oxford?

He didn't.

More problems? (balefully).

To them I could have been a Bushman from the Kalihari for all they understood me. Complete incomprehension.

Glasser goes on, disobligingly, about persecution of the Jews at school – beatings, being reviled, all sorts of nasty things.

You mean, chimes in Art breathlessly, and as if incredulously, you were being persecuted in Glasgow?

Let me touch on something lighter. Quick. At last we're listening to a reminiscence about being literally landed on in a Biarritz casino in 1949 by a very drunk Duke of Windsor – "stoned out of his mind". After what went before – anti-semitism, poverty, talk of the boss class and

divided Britain – running down the royalty was by comparison light, entertaining even, and safe. Phew!

So typical of popular radio the world over – only the BBC haven't even got the excuse of keeping the advertisers happy – yet so local in its flavour, the Art Sutter Show seems true to its type. The bland leading the blind. No rough edges; no sharp corners, nothing to upset people. Just nice. Nice music, nice wee games, and nice wee chats with listeners on the phone-in.

Yet the Glasser-Sutter dialogue could as well be a metaphor for the deep and timeless conflicts of human life – happy-sad, inside-outside, integrity-diversity, up-down . . . manic-depressive even. It has echoes too no doubt, of the perennial quality of the relationship between the governing and the governed.

One of the changes that might at last endure from the turbulence of the last decade, when nothing now seems – through Eastern Europe, the Soviet republics, Southern Africa – as once it was, is the doubt about the split between the individual and the political. The metaphor for all the creative unions and massive shifts in consciousness in the momentous year of 1989 lies in the person of Vaclav Havel – from prisoner to president, playwright to person of import, at once artist and practising politician. His is an admirable if onerous burden.

But what of our own corner in Scotland and the non-metropolitan provinces of the British state? (as far as their remoteness from power lies you have to include many parts of London in the latter). Any sign here of poets becoming famous? Artists taking power? Writers rumbling the administration? The emotional, intellectual and the reflective combining with the practical? We do live in hope, but there are enough examples around of continuing split and fraction of life into containable but essentially limiting categories to suggest that while the world power balances may be changing, there's a way still to go here yet.

The politics of the poll tax – surely the issue of the year so far – is a good case in point. The introduction of the tax – which as even one Conservative backbencher has described as making the winners feel guilty and the losers feel like . . . like losers, has thrown up a whole range of personal dilemmas. In parts of Scotland, Sheriff Officers' activity in poinding goods in people's homes has intensified since the turn of the year. Personal dilemmas of individuals can be acutely felt. These are, in the imagination if not in reality with policeman men coming into your house with a policeman to look over your things, fairly discomfiting circumstances.

Shouldn't I pay after all? Is it worth the fuss? Should I fob them off with something? Shouldn't I just wait till the next election to get rid of 'her'? And more ominously, given the folkloric fear of the usually burly, besuited pursuers of the common debtor, will they be back?

The weekend of 31st March/1st April showed, perhaps if nothing else, what happens when those in authority seek to split

won't be bothered. But some, who do care about the standard of even-tempered schmuk that can come out over the airwaves, have been heard to call the likes of Art rude names.

It's the 'we won't go into that' that gives the clue to a certain syrupy standardisation of all human experience – the have-a-nice-day-and-drive-safely syndrome of contemporary culture. As we just come up to the weather check in a couple of minutes, after this jumpy little number from Glasgow girl Sheena Easton, aren't we smugly living in the best of all possible worlds?

The warts and bumps of real human life sometimes do, by accident – it is 'live' radio after all – give the standardisers and comforters of all you nice people out there, if not exactly a hard time, at least a bit of a dunt on the shins.

The other week one of Art Sutter's guests was the Glasgow-born psychologist, economist and writer, Ralph Glasser. The Art

Keepy Uppie

Thirty eight,
thirty nine,
forty,
forty wan,
forty two,
forty three,
keepie uppie's a great gemme
n' ye kin play it yersel'.
Aw ye dae is git a ba'
n' see how long ye kin
keep it up in the aif fur,
jist usin' yer heid n' yer feet.
Sixty four,
sixty five,
sixty six,
sixty seven,
sixty eight,
sixty nine,
Tam McNair hauds the street record
it's six hunner n' forty wan
but mine isnae as good as that,
it's only two hunner n' ten
but that's no bad either.
Eighty wan,
eighty two,
eighty three,
eighty four,
eighty five,
eighty six,
if there's only wan o' ye
keepie uppie's aboot the only
gemme that ye kin play,
except fur hittin' the ba' aff the wa'
but the wummin doon the stair
aye complains that her man's
oan the nightshift.
Oh aye, n' there's action replay,
that's where ye kid own that yer
scorin' the winnin' goal in the
last meenit o' the cup final.
A hunner n' eight,
a hunner n' nine,
a hunner n' ten
Och,
wan,
two,
three,
four.

Tom Grierson

policy from people. The rioting in Whitehall and Trafalgar Square must have been about something getting out. Or in Strangeways prison talk the day after, something 'blew'.

Glasgow, on the same afternoon as the London rioting, saw its biggest street demonstration since the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders support marches in 1972.

"It's sort of different," said one youngish man with a shaved head and wearing the sort of garment with braces that looks like an elasticated loin cloth with holes in it. "It's not like the usual sort of demonstration where everybody's the same."

"I mean," he explained looking around meaningfully, "there's lots of older people, all sorts here." This was indeed a mixed gathering, punks and peace campaigners, nationalists and anarchists, Militant and church groups, and unlike the traditional left macho campaigns, it actually seemed like the majority of the marchers were women. As this massive human snake wormed its way past the seat of the people's power, not in Whitehall, but along a re-routed way on Glasgow's South Side, not only was there not an imported agitator in sight, the nearest thing to violence I saw was the t.v. presenter Malcolm Wilson telling some horseplaying youths - Hello mum! to the camera - to go away obscenely.

The fact that both the London and Glasgow marches - the biggest in living memory for anyone under 20 - took place without the presence, never mind the leadership, of the party of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, or Trade Union blessing, shows the treacherous chasm that has opened up between the legalists, preoccupied by staying within the law, and the opinion polls, and people's sense of rage.

Why does rage overflow into violence in London, but stays 'friendly' in Glasgow? Varying police methods, proximity to potential security 'targets', the new dawning of the poll-tax realisation in England, whatever? . . . the mood of the crowd, and public expectations of what's acceptable? The connectedness between personal psychology and political perception must lie near the root of an explanation.

For it has to be recognised that there is a strain in Scottish political and cultural life, that while having a well-developed sense of distrustful and disdainful marginality, will only carry that oppositional stance so far, and no further.

Examples of this attitude to public life, so ingrained and common, seem superfluous. An earnest 'left' university lecturer, shaking his head in anguish, exhorted with regard to the Constitutional Convention, that the whole thing was "too vital to *indulge* (emphasis added) in disagreements and disharmony". A *Scottish Child* reader, a teacher, ordered me recently with regard to the education system - not in any way an unusual opinion - to "cut out the smart-arsed comments about the public sector".

If the power of governments is measured in direct relation to how much they encourage people to become observers rather than participants, a large section of those of us on

the outer fringes of power in the British state seem only too willing to meekly police ourselves. No ripples, no controversy, no criticism, and no dissent outside the pre-existing constitutional lines.

This is in part, a calculation of political possibilities. It may be partly a judgement on the lack of true leadership in oppositional ideas. It is partly too an expression of rational self-interest – these examples are from upwardly mobile middle class Scots who know where they came from and how far they have to fall. Whatever it is, outwardly determined or innerly derived, this mind-set is the mentality of the ghetto.

On the plus side, ghetto thinking is typified by the “warmth of human understanding, humility, the ability to accept hardship with humour and resilience”. The downside of ghetto thinking is that it provides the psychological excuses “to bear what is basically intolerable”.

The attempt at definition is not mine. Bruno Bettelheim – a man of the century, if only because he must be one of the very few to have lived in every decade of it – attempts to get to the bottom of the question of why many Jews in the Warsaw ghetto seemed to passively accept the prospect of their own destruction.

In an essay which must have been running off the presses when he died this Spring, Bettelheim (*Recollections and Reflections*, Thames & Hudson) recalls his astonishment that the exclusivity of ghetto thinking – this is only happening to us, we are the people – still prevailed even among American Jews who had, like him, succeeded in getting away from the clutches of the Nazis. They were disbelieving when Bettelheim told them that the majority of his fellow prisoners in the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald in 1938/9 were not Jewish, but German Gentile. Ghetto dwellers do not see their experiences on a world stage, but only in their own parochial terms.

Bruno Bettelheim, an uncompromising seeker after truth in life, has in death left a bitter pill to swallow. He takes pains to couch his remarks within the context of the high achievements of Jewish culture. He alludes to the capacity of many Jewish people to externalise their inner life, to make connections in the real world, and to act on it. He makes reference too, to the generation of Israelis who seem to have no difficulty, indeed may need rather, as if in some kind of overcompensatory zeal, to exercise restraint, in self-assertion.

But strong light of achievement in Jewish culture, he says, leaves dark shadows. And the darkness of what he sees as the supine, avoiding disposition of the ghetto mentality he seeks to explore.

A deadly devotion to ‘business as usual’ is evident in this mind-set. It is a massive act of denying themselves. So much did the ghetto Jews identify with their oppressor, says Bettelheim, “that they literally walked themselves into the gas chambers.” Olga Lengyel, who fled from the death camp at

Auschwitz, reported on her fellow prisoners calling the supervisors to tell them of her first escape attempt. Ghetto thinking, in a perverse self-justification of the acceptance of misery, requires a resentment of those who try to save themselves from the common fate. Originality and difference are shunned.

And it is the ghetto within that determines what is possible on the outside. “The reason,” writes Bettelheim, “that they could not and did not fight back lay in their inner feelings of resignation . . . in the ingrained habit of believing that those who bend do not break.”

It is not the humility of the ghetto that compels the ear to bend towards the words of the Holocaust survivor. It is the imperative to learn from the 20th century’s darkest passage. The parallel between the eradication of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto and in the Nazi death camps and current values in our own context will only seem gross, if read as a theory of racial/national assertion. It is not.

Bettelheim’s motive for studying the issue, born of his own fascination with human frailty and possibility, and no doubt his work as a child psychologist with disturbed children that others had long given up on, is so that we might learn from the

“Just whose interests, we should feel encouraged to ask, are being served by a puerile preoccupation with the chirpy and the good?”

deadly mistakes of the dark passage that was the Holocaust.

So if a dedication to ‘business as usual’, a parochialism, or an identifying with the ‘oppressor’ (how many collusive anti-English remarks have you heard today?) don’t have a certain air of the familiar, then we really do have a lot to learn from others’ history.

Certainly the shunning of originality and difference in all sectors of Scottish society is legion. Not that we’re not getting better at it – at one time in my living memory it was common at meetings for ‘the workers’ (who were all male usually) to be ‘fed’ with animal-fat rich mince pies, and pre-sweetened mugs of tea. Feminism and food consciousness, among other influences, have made some inroads into our often deep-rooted insecurity born of fear of the different. Organisers of public events now have to give due consideration at least, to diversity of gender, race, diet, political persuasion, and childcare needs.

In the post-war period, in spite of many people’s daily bad experiences of the welfare state’s education and housing services, public provision has delivered sufficient numbers of us from ignorance and darkness to have assumed the standing of the welfare-ist orthodoxy. You’re either for us or against us. There is no inbetween. ‘Smartarses’ are not indulged. They should quickly be brought into line.

But to break our own parochialism, all history is admissible – even persecution of Jews in 1920s Glasgow and persecution of other groups today.

If any level of maturity in human thought and behaviour is possible – and this is written on the assumption that it is – it is rooted always, not in a one dimensional separation of the good and bad, or the upbeat and downside of perception and experience, but in a commonsensical if sometimes painful integration of the two.

Just whose interests, we should feel encouraged to ask, are being served by a puerile preoccupation with the chirpy and the good? Or, in the political arena, the elect and the damned. Just who is all the cheeriness in the mass media, or in all the many current ‘celebratory’ ‘cultural’ ‘extravaganzas’ for? And how can we be optimistic about the possibility of ever taking charge of the ordering of our own moods and emotional inclinations in the face of what sometimes feels like an overwhelming mass of self-deluding lies and pap?

As the title of Tom Leonard’s lines suggest, he sees our parochial self-definition and petty minded delusion of ‘wee-ness’ as essentially voyeuristic. We don’t take part in the processes of power ourselves, like. We’re too unimportant/nice/wee. We just watch.

It is small comfort that such personal responses are mirrored almost exactly on the political stage. The compliant, the pragmatic, the parliamentary/constitutional – fight the poll tax, fight everything by waiting to vote Labour! – are all represented. There comes a point when the virtue of ‘canniness’, so high in the Scottish national conceit of ourselves, – another form of bending but not breaking – has to be seen for the cowardice it often is.

As for the fear – and let’s not forget the largely repressed anger to support the voyeuristic position – not much of mainstream politics is really very much into that. Fear and especially anger, as the management of the population’s pulse goes, are tricky and unpredictable. People are liable, in the professional politician’s mind, to ask for all kinds of unreasonable things if you allow them to give vent to their emotions.

But it’s precisely among the “ardently opinionated, the ardent in all forms, the raisers of voices, the thumpers on the table, the ‘swearers’, the passionate, those who burst into tears” that hope for the future lies. Voices which are involved, which cut through the cloak of collusion, which take risks, which are different, which break out of the ghetto, can take charge. There’s not many of them around here. But we have to go into that. ■

The quote about the “ardently opinionated” . . . etc is from a Tom Leonard essay **ON RECLAIMING THE LOCAL**. Other poems and prose by Tom Leonard, including **THE PROOF OF THE MINCE PIE**, which provided some of the guidance for this piece are contained in **INTIMATE VOICES**, Pub. Galloping Dog Press. £4.95.

ORKNEY'S WEALTH

Gumnie Moberg

Orkadian **George Mackay Brown** considers himself not an isolated storyteller, but as part of a tradition. In his Stromness home he talks to **Helen Welham** of influences on his work.

Renowned for his poems, radio plays, novels and short stories, George Mackay Brown is perhaps less well known as writer of books for children. A broad range.

"There's not very much to tell," he says when asked about his childhood in Orkney and its influence. And then tells . . .

"My grandparents on my mother's side came from the Highlands – Sutherlandshire. They were Gaelic speakers. My mother was a Gaelic speaker, but I was too lazy to bother. I do regret not knowing Gaelic myself.

"I was the youngest of five children and I was lucky in a way, because I had one sister ten years older than me who was very good at telling stories. I think she probably got me started off, writing stories and getting a taste for narrative.

"She just seemed to have a natural gift for telling any kind of story. She'd never done any writing or anything like that. When I was 5, she'd be 15, and she would tell me lots of love stories. Of course being 5, I didn't know what she was talking about, but nevertheless I was quite fascinated by the way she put them over in great style. They seemed mostly to be very sad stories, in which the girl nearly always died of a broken heart. Of course I didn't know what on earth she was talking about, but anyhow I knew the story was ended when it came to that!"

And the influence of school and teachers?

"At school I was never really encouraged in my writing by any teacher."

In his story, **The Tarn and the Rosary**, the boy Colm is influenced by his sense of place and eventual acceptance of the Roman Catholic faith. Is Colm perhaps like the young George as a child?

"Not really, you know. There may be touches here and there of me in Colm, but I don't believe in autobiographical writing at all. I try to distance myself as much as possible from the characters.

"But in fact, that incident in the story in which he falls under the spell of poetry – one or two stanzas from a poem by Wordsworth – that in fact actually happened to me too. That same stanza and that same poem. The

way the teacher reacted in the story (ignoring Colm's love of poetry in her condemnation of the heavily accented recitation style natural to the island children) was how two or three of them were. They'd been to Teachers Training College, and I think they had had elocution lessons, and it corrupted their natural sense of rhythm.

"But another thing at school, I was very good at writing essays. You know, we got an essay – they called it a composition – every week, and I was always the best at composition in the class. And I couldn't understand why because at all the other subjects I was stupid, mediocre, somewhere lost in the ruck, you know. But every week the teacher would say, 'George has written the best composition.' And it came very easily to me. I could do it quickly and fluently. And I couldn't understand why all the other boys and girls around were grunting and sweating to get a few more words out!"

George Mackay Brown's writing is full of many influences, including the Scandinavian. Was that something he was aware of as a child?

"It's a curious situation in the Orkneys, because right enough we were very proud of Scottish heroes in history like Wallace and

"As children we were told we should read certain things . . . but I for one never liked these writers very much."

Bruce, like all other Scottish schoolchildren I should think. And football too – we were all keen on football when we were boys, the international games against England especially. That was a red letter day in the year when of course Scotland was backed up to the hilt.

"But at the same time we were aware of the Scandinavian influence. I don't think it affected us very much, just vaguely it was there in the background. But there was a strong Scandinavian element in the population. As children, we knew vaguely we had to pride ourselves on being 'sons of the Vikings'. It was only later that I discovered **The Orkneyinga Saga**. That has been a rich quarry for me.

"Then a later influence, from the point of

view of imagery, has been my religion. Catholicism is a very rich storehouse of images. It is an almost bottomless well to draw on.

"Also there's the interaction between the land and the sea in Orkney. It's so powerful and overwhelming that it dominates everything. The getting of food from the sea and from the land are specialist activities now for the farmers and fishermen, but in the old days, before I was born, maybe a generation or two ago, the small farmers had their boats too.

"Sea disasters were always happening. Not so much now, of course. There's nothing like the disasters that used to happen in the days of the sailing ships, when it was just a graveyard along the coast. Even so, nowadays there's hardly a winter that passes that one or two small fishing boats get swamped or thrown against the cliffs. It's always there. And in the old days the women waiting on the shore."

The **Two Fiddlers** published in 1974 was his first book written for children – a collection of legends "very much embroidered and interwoven." So what made him first decide to write for children?

"I can't remember. There's a great wealth of legend and story in Orkney, so I didn't have far to look. Also at the time, some of my friends had young children and I was often called on at bedtime to tell them a story. So I got into a way of telling children stories. Especially one little girl from about the age of seven to ten. Every night I think I had to tell her one or maybe more. You get their wavelength once you actually practice on somebody young like that. In the end I thought I would make a book of children's stories. It seemed to be well enough received so then I went and did a second one called **Pictures in the Cave**.

"I have done one or two for radio. They have a Schools' Radio programme. Sometimes it has to be religious themes. In my day they just told stories from the Old Testament, which I thought were magnificent. But now they want them to be brought up to date and given a modern setting, so I've been trying my hand at two or three of them.

And which books did he read as a child?



"As children we were told we should read certain things, people like Robert Louis Stevenson. I forget all the writers we were told to read, but I for one never liked these writers very much. What we read as boys were these weekly magazines that came from D.C. Thomson in Dundee, **Wizard** and **Rover** and **Hotspur**. And the **Magnet** and **Gem** you know, their school stories. We were tremendously fond of these stories. They were regarded by our teachers and our parents as just rubbish. We weren't encouraged to read them at all.

"But I think anything a child latches onto is as good nourishment for it. They don't look for the finer points. Children are not interested in the finer points of literary style or technique. So long as they're gripped by the story, that's the thing. For a child the story is the most important, surely.

"I remember being fascinated by the Grimm's fairy tales. I thought they were wonderful, and when you think about them now some dreadful things happened. But children are not very interested in whether somebody gets their head cut off or thrown in the fire or something. You just take it. You know that it's a story anyhow. And somebody told me about Hans Andersen. I suppose as literature, it's regarded as superior. Grimms' are folk tales after all, not really literature, more oral stories. But I couldn't get to grips with Hans Andersen as a child. I saw much more in it later."

He once expressed the view that a written story compels the reader to use his own

imagination. The reader is an active participant with the author. In **Fishermen with Ploughs** he argued that progress can bestow dubious gifts, especially on the quality of life in a simple community. Does it follow that modern children exposed more to film and television, find it harder to become imaginatively involved in written stories?

"I think so. I think television has a lot to answer for. Even with radio, you see, to some extent you must cooperate. You can't see what's happening – so you supply the scene out of your own mind. But with television everything is given you on a plate. There, you're just a passive recipient. Usually also, an adaptation on TV is very much inferior to the story. But with a book, you must cooperate with the author or there's no point in reading.

"I think it's just that people move further away from the basic things. In a way it's good, because they live in far more comfort and they're better clothed and fed and housed and they live longer and have fewer diseases. But at the same time, something very subtle and strange has happened. People seem to have lost some of the qualities that their grandparents and great-grandparents had."

The spiritual qualities of life?

"Yes. And stemming from that maybe, there is a progressive erosion of how people express themselves. Their language is poorer than it was. The poetry has gone out of their language. In my lifetime I see a great difference in the way Orcadians express themselves; the vivid idioms are no

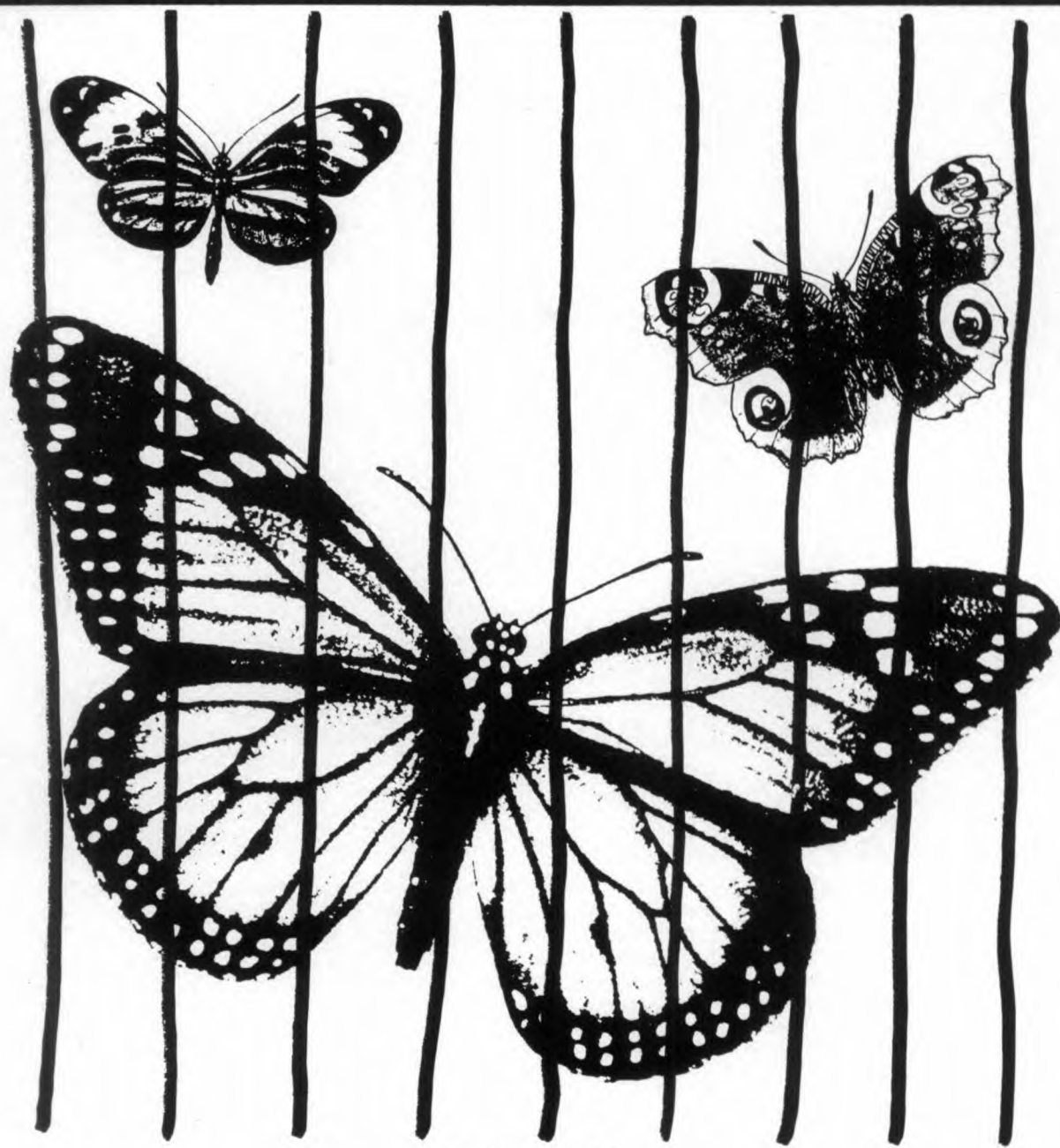
more; the speech rhythms and intonation approximate more and more to Standard English.

"There's a dictionary of Old Norn, the language that was spoken here up to about two hundred years ago. So it's preserved in that way. But except for two or three words it's almost completely disappeared from the spoken language. I don't see any point in trying to resurrect it."

George Mackay Brown considers that his writing hasn't reached the top yet. At the age of 68, he's still finding out things about writing and still trying to do new things that he hasn't done before.

"I think it's true to say I'm my severest critic. I think I'm more ruthless than anybody else. When people come to me and say 'I like that' of something I wrote maybe ten years ago, I think about it and sometimes wish I'd never written it! On the other hand, there are things that I think very highly of myself, which nobody ever mentions. There it is. ■

*Titles by George Mackay Brown include collections of poems, **LOAVES AND FISHES**, **THE YEAR OF THE WHALE**, and **THE WRECK OF THE ARCHANGEL**; short story collections include **A CALENDAR OF LOVE**, **A TIME TO KEEP**, **THE GOLDEN BIRD**, and **THE MASKED FISHERMEN**; books for children are **THE TWO FIDDLERS**, **PICTURES IN THE CAVE**, **SIX LIVES OF FANKIE THE CAT**, and **KEEPERS OF THE HOUSE**.*



Fantasy Life

LIFE AFTER LIFE

Tony Parker

Secker & Warburg £14.95

Rosemary Milne

"All I see in my past's a hole, a black hole; an in a future an even bigger, blacker hole still. Where I've been is nowhere, limbo: where I'm going towards is more of the same. I'm not trying to sound like a self-pitying person, because I'm not a self-pitying person: I'm clear-sighted, I'm talking about fact. The future to most people is other people. I don't have any other people . . . There's no noticeable difference between being in prison and now. The only difference I can see is when I was in prison I had to ask permission if I wanted to go for a shit. Now I can go when I want."

The words are Andy Reid's, one of twelve murderers whose conversations with Tony Parker are collected together in a book which appeared earlier this spring, *Life After Life*.

Prisons and prisoners – especially violent ones – have made the newsmen's job easy this spring. Lots of copy – its quantity in inverse proportion, some would say, to its quality and insight. It is nice therefore, to be able to report that this is not a criticism to be laid at Parker's door. In fact, like all of Parker's work of this kind, the book somehow 'reads itself'. Twelve people with histories as mundane and diverse in their origins as they are tragically similar in their endings.

Don't come to this book hoping for explanations or theories. Its great strength, like others he has written, is that it offers none. Parker simply listens and records.

"You know, you can learn a lot about butterflies by catching one, sticking it on a board with a pin, and looking at it through a microscope. You can study its wing structure, its anatomy, how it breeds, how it flies, its whole mechanism – but you're still nowhere near knowing what it's like to *be* a butterfly, are you?

"Why don't these people sometime set aside altogether the rights and wrongs of the matter and get a few criminals to work in with them on the thing of what it's actually like to be one?"

Wise advice, perhaps. But the fact is that although it's now 30 years since Bob Allerton spoke them and *The Courage of His Convictions* was first published, there is still no sign that prisoners themselves are considered as acceptable contributors to discussions about crime and imprisonment. The truths they know are not the ones the system wants to hear.

Maintaining the status quo means blocking serious demands for change. Within the framework of a democracy that necessitates certain types of response. In Britain our approach to a challenge by disenfranchised groups such as prisoners is to give them a hearing **after** the riots are over. This ensures that the focus of attention is turned away from the source of the original grievances and towards the outbreak of disorder itself.

The demand by the public for a different way of doing these things never gets made because those who report and analyse popular uprisings and prison riots do so largely without reference to the wider political and economic context in which they occur.

What were the grievances of the men in Strangeways? It's unlikely that out of the thousands who watched the daily news bulletins many could now say. Television turned a deadly serious affair into vaudeville, with regular pictures of daredevil feats of climbing, clownlike pranks with hoses, meals eaten in the sunshine and taunting slogans on placards. The counterpoint to all these high jinks was supplied by a 'stone-faced, virtue-will-triumph' performance from the governor.

The tragedy is not simply that prisoners have to go to such lengths to make their protest known but that the melodrama of the actual events almost guarantees that their complaints will scarcely be examined at all in the public domain. There is a further reason for this. Helped on by the press, the public quickly loses sight of the prisoners' own reasons for the protest and participates at a safe distance in a gratifyingly colourful enactment of their own fantasies of protest and revolt. For that fantasy to remain safe, it is important for the imprisoned men to remain clearly 'other', so that when the time comes for penalties to be exacted they can properly be felt to belong with the 'bad men behind bars' and not with their colluding onlookers.

And it really works like that – once the drama is over, the real-life penalties for the real-life damage and injury that is caused are safely contained behind closed doors again. Then Strangeways – or Dartmoor, or Horfield, or Shotts, or Pucklechurch to mention just the most recent – becomes just one more example of the system's ability to contain protest at this limited level.

Reinforcing that message is easy. Only days after the last protesters come off the roof people are queuing up to do it. The governor surveys the mangled landings of his gaol and says with a straight face that "Strangeways is still open for business" and a prison spokesman expresses surprise to the TV cameras that the men involved in the riot "are cooperating with the enquiry".

He got it slightly wrong of course – what he should have said is "we're all cooperating with the enquiry". ■

Steading Close

O steading close, aa'm feared o' yer wa's
whae mind me o' the Scots stories
drawn intae my dreams frae days at skule.

(Murderous kings and Black Douglasses
the smell o' dank stane, o' rich hide, o' blude
that cloyed the air they lived in.)

Fer twa hunner yer
Beasts hae rubbed and crushed in their smouldering dung,
Pressed intae yer crumblin, stiflin wa's.
Aah hear them, their wailing.
Aah see them, engraved
deeper than ony caveman's sketch at expiation.

Aa'm feared o' the tribe
and the dark thrill which pulses thru' ma dreams.

David Cameron



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Ours is an increasingly 'rights' conscious society. Very rarely though, do we hear about the rights of children.

Of course, everyone acknowledges that children have a right to education, to medical care, to be brought up in a healthy safe environment, protected from abuse and exploitation. But is it possible to identify rights that will stand in law?

It is perhaps not widely known that there is a U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the drafting of which began in the year designated International Year of the Child, 1979. In summary, this sets out the rights to possess or have access to such things as nationality, education and care; to be protected from harm and to be heard on deci-

sions affecting their lives. The best interests of the child are said to be the guiding spirit of the Convention.

That there is international recognition of children's rights is wonderful. The danger is that the Convention could remain a statement only of various governments' aspirations or intent.

Behind the support for rights, lies the need, argues Cathy Marr, for representation

A real right needs to be embodied in statute, so providing a remedy if the right is infringed. It is the British government's intention to implement the Convention and therefore it needs to consider whether existing law relating to children needs to be amended.

What real rights exist at present?

These include:

1. The right to **education** – This is created in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which imposes a duty on education authorities to secure adequate provision of school education, and a similar duty on parents to provide education for their school

age children either by causing them to attend a public school regularly or by other means.

2. The right to a **safe and healthy upbringing** – Social Work legislation imposes a general duty on local authorities to promote social welfare by providing ad-

vice, guidance and assistance to people within their area. More specifically they have a duty to provide for orphans, abandoned children and those whose parents may temporarily be unable to care for them. Similarly they must investigate any information received which suggests a child may be in need of compulsory measures of care, such as in cases of neglect, abuse, etc.

3. The right **not to be exploited** – The law limits the hours that a child may work in paid employment prior to reaching school leaving age. Such restrictions are based in statute but are generally regulated by local bylaws. If a child is to take part in public performances, whether on stage, tv, or in films, then a licence is required by the education author-

ity. (This does not apply to amateur productions.) In this way, a child can be protected from unscrupulous employers and this could include parents who wish their child to work within the family business.

Enforcement of Rights

The obvious difficulty in legislation concerning children's rights is in providing an efficient method of enforcement. An adult will be aware that he has the right, for example, not to be unfairly dismissed. If aggrieved in this way, he can personally initiate the appropriate action.

Clearly an infant cannot have such awareness and even a teenager may not have the confidence or the know-how to take on 'the establishment'. In many cases it would be a parent who would take up the fight on behalf of the child. But what if it were the parent who was infringing the right? Or what if parent and child disagree on whether a right has been denied? In these instances the intervention of a third party may be crucial.

So it is interesting to examine the various aspects of law relating to children, to discover to what extent do they have rights of representation.

Care Proceedings

When a child is referred to a Children's Hearing, the grounds of referral must be explained to parent and child. If either or both do not accept the grounds, then the matter goes before a Sheriff who decides on the evidence presented whether the grounds are established. At such a hearing the child or the parent has a right to be represented. And legal aid is available to parent or child in this situation.

A real problem would arise where, for example, the parent is denying neglect of the child. A clear conflict of interests can arise if the parent has arranged legal representation – that solicitor cannot then serve both parent and child. The sheriff then

has the power to appoint a person for the purpose of safeguarding the child's interests. This can be done too, before a Children's Hearing or on appeal to the Sheriff against a Hearing's decision.

The safeguarder is an independent person, entitled to receive all information made available to Hearing members, who can represent the feelings and views of the child concerned, considering always what are the best interests of the child. A safeguarder may also be appointed in proceedings relating to the assumption of parental rights by a local authority.

Even a brief look at care proceedings indicates an awareness that representation of children is important and in some instances there may be involvement of friends, lawyers and safeguarders throughout the proceedings. On the other hand, there is no requirement that a child have legal or indeed separate representation. Although a child's stay in care is subject to frequent review, it could last for years. Perhaps the principle of fairness should demand automatic representation at every stage.

Education

If a child does not attend school for a period of time, the Education Authority will enter into correspondence and meetings with the parent to ascertain the reason. If no reasonable excuse is forthcoming, an Attendance Order may be made against which the parent may appeal. Throughout the procedure the child is without education.

It is possible to imagine all manner of reasons why a parent keeps a child at home – to help with younger children, in protest against a particular rule of the school, because of alleged bullying, etc. It could well be, however, that the child concerned wants to be at school, but there is no provision for the views of the child to be sought. Social Work involvement may

be initiated and in some instances there may be a referral to the Reporter, either of which may lead to the resolution of the difficulties. Essentially however, the dialogue is between parent and authority.

There is a similar situation regards exclusion from school. An exclusion order may be made, not only because the child is disruptive, but where the Education Authority believes that the parent refuses to comply, or to allow the child to comply with the rules or regulations of the school.

There is an appeal against an exclusion order firstly to an Appeal Committee and thereafter to the Sheriff. Legal Aid may be available for the parent at this stage but there is no provision for representation of the child. There are occasionally reports in the press of parents keeping children away from school on a point of principle. A child does not have the right to be heard on such a decision which clearly affects his life.

Family Disputes

There is a wide area of law covering, for example, divorce, custody, access, maintenance, and orders as to parental rights. In some instances there may be several parties to the action – parents, extended family members, and if the child is in care, the local authority.

Each party could be legally represented and the sheriff may be faced with considerable amounts of conflicting evidence. From this the interests of the child must be determined. There is however no automatic right to separate representation for the child.

The court does have powers to appoint an individual to investigate and report on the circumstances of the child and this power is widely exercised. In many cases this will be a social worker. Where this is not appropriate, a person not connected with the local authority may be

chosen and would act as Curator as *litem*, representing the interests of the child in the action.

In this way, there is the objective involvement of a third party who can present the case, and where the child is older, the views and wishes of the child. There can be no doubt that the use of such procedures is invaluable in safeguarding the interests of the child. It should be remembered, however, that there is no legal requirement for separate representation.

The Future

If, as suggested in the U.N. Charter, the child is to have a voice in decisions affecting her life, then perhaps representation in all situations should become a right rather than a discretionary power.

It is encouraging that there does appear to be increasing concern about the rights of children and that more is being done to publicise these. Not only is there discussion at government level, but individual agencies are acting at local level too.

The work of the Scottish Child Law Centre (Tel. 041-333-9305) is of immense importance, responding to the needs of children, their parents, social workers, etc. to have expert help and guidance.

There are publications available too, such as the booklet, **Basic Rights: Information for young people in Scotland**. This is available from ITRC in Glasgow (Tel. 041-204-0417) and covers a wide range of issues including social security benefits, education, care and government training schemes. Some local authorities produce their own information such as **You Need to Know – A Guide for Young People in Care in Borders Region**. Such publications not only inform the young of their rights but give advice on the first steps to take if they are aggrieved in some way. ■

Cathy Marr writes this regular law item on which we welcome letters.



Care

Dear Editor,

Having now resided in Scotland for three years, I found Cathy Marr's discussion of the meaning of being taken 'into care' an interesting contrast to the legal system in England & Wales. Yet one point emerged which raised a question about both systems, namely, – How voluntary is voluntary?

In a recent article in the *Guardian* (21st March), an English social worker is depicted explaining voluntary care to a

lone parent in which she emphasises that she can ask for her child back at any time. Soon after, the senior social worker added that if they decided the mother was not competent then they would go to court to stop a return, and plan for adoption.

But that was not pointed out to the lone mother in the first instance. Similarly, I have been present in Scotland when social workers have told a parent that if she did not agree to voluntary care then they would seek a place of safety order. So how

voluntary is voluntary? No matter what the safeguards for parents on paper, their effectiveness is nullified if information is withheld and threats implied.

Of course, at times statutory action is necessary to remove children from their natural parents. But, under both systems, I am concerned that parents at risk of having action taken against them are (a) not made aware of the implications of voluntary care; (b) not informed fully of their rights; and (c) are not put in touch with an indepen-

dent body to advise them.

In England, I found the Family Rights Group an invaluable agency because it took the line that all parents, who so desired, should be enabled to present their case as fully as possible. Is there a similar body in Scotland? If so I would urge all parents at risk of having compulsory measures taken against them or of losing their parental rights be put in touch with them.

Bob Holman
Easterhouse
Glasgow

Behaviourism

Dear Editor,

For the last two years, I have been working as part-time Fellow in Creative Writing at Jordanhill College of Education. This ends shortly – and it has been a dismaying experience.

The behaviourism which you identified so accurately in *Classroom Control* (Connections, April) seems to be rampant, together with a behaviourist-derived methodology of such complexity that students have little time to consider the wider implications of their future profession. At no time have I found any serious discussion of educa-

tional philosophy or of the socio-political conditions which children will encounter as wage-earners or benefit receivers – let alone the effect of these conditions on the children at the present time, via their parents.

In a wide experience of Scottish schools over the last two years, I am disturbed by the uncertainty shown by many teachers about the handling and encouraging of creativity in children. Because there is a close correlation between creativity and delinquency, the former is almost routinely suppressed with the latter.

Particularly depressing is the way the battle-cry of 'anti-elitism' is now used in a destructive campaign against all forms of intellectualism, thus effectively suppressing the universal educational opportunity for which socialists have so long fought. The old Glasgow contempt for pretension is much to be respected, but it has been distorted now, flattened into a sour suspicion of any sign of brilliance or originality.

This is deeply damaging to our collective self-confidence, and the results can be seen in the defensiveness of teachers and in

the caution with which students and pupils express opinion – if, indeed, they venture to say anything at all.

If we are to have any hope of achieving self-determination, the move towards it must start with a recognition of the value and validity of each individual human spirit. While we continue to think of children merely as the raw material on which teaching methodology works, we condemn our future to a conformist mediocrity.

Allison Prince
Arran

Mono-Culturalism

Dear Editor,

I have read **Scottish Child** for some time and have been heartened by the content and layout of the magazine. However, I am dismayed that the focus of the articles and photographic presentations are predominantly relating to issues within the context of a mono-cultural, mono-racial society.

Whilst applauding your support of individual anti-racist work – e.g. Save the Children Fund's Anti-racist work packs, I feel that **Scottish Child** suffers from the age-old disease of colourblindness, assuming that all

children are the same regardless of colour and it doesn't make any difference anyway!

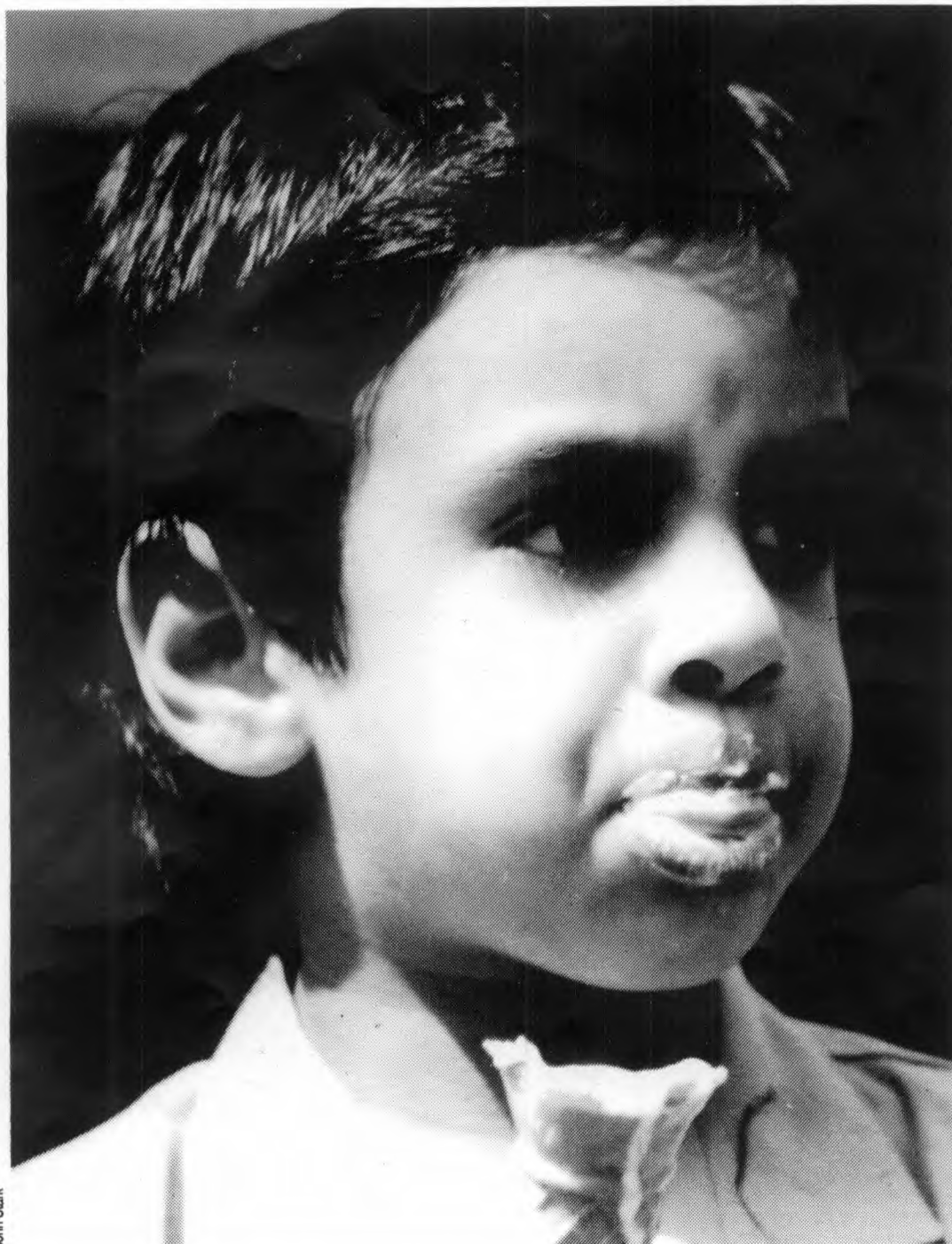
Articles addressing issues such as punishment, care and custody, self-determination and power are important to all children and carers. However, if such issues are discussed outwith a cultural and community context they cease to be relevant to sectors of the population who already suffer institutional discrimination, disadvantage and disempowerment.

The positive portrayal of black, asian and chinese children

and the recognition of their right to their culture, language and religion as an integral component of a pluralist society, is vital in promoting a positive self-image for all children and in challenging racial stereotypes.

Some positive action on the part of **Scottish Child** would assist this process and raise awareness of the importance of a multi-racial/cultural perspective in all issues relevant to Scottish children.

Diane M Swales
Glasgow



John Stark

Among the Contributors in this issue ...

Graham Atherton is Senior Researcher with the Scottish Consumer Council in Glasgow. He writes in this issue in a personal capacity.

Daniel Boyle is now a full time writer.

David Cameron was brought up on an East Lothian farm. He now lives in Italy.

Paul Carter is a community child health doctor in Aberdeen.

Shona Fraser is Project Leader of Guth nam Parant, and can be contacted at Guth nam Parant, Tarbert, Isle of Harris. Tel 0859 2181.

Tom Grierson is from Bellshill. **Keepy Upple** won a prize in the Motherwell Bookfest Open Poetry competition, but is previously unpublished.

Meg Henderson is a freelance journalist.

Pat Kane is singer, with musician brother Gregory, in the pop group, Hue and Cry. He is also Rector of Glasgow University.

Ann Laybourn is a social worker turned researcher. She is an honorary lecturer at Glasgow University, where she is currently making a study of one child families.

Aonghas MacNeacail is a Gaelic poet. His new collection in English, **Rock and Water** is published by Polygon.

Cathy Marr is a solicitor with practical social work experience who has recently become a full-time mother.

Sheila Ramsay works in a child care team in Strathclyde Social Work Department.

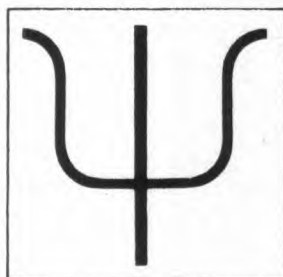
Julie Roy is a sixth year student at Larkhall Academy, moving soon to study medicine at Glasgow University.

Helen Welham has two grown up children and lives in Edinburgh.



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SCOTTISH CHILD LAW CENTRE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY 12TH JUNE 1990
7.30 P.M.

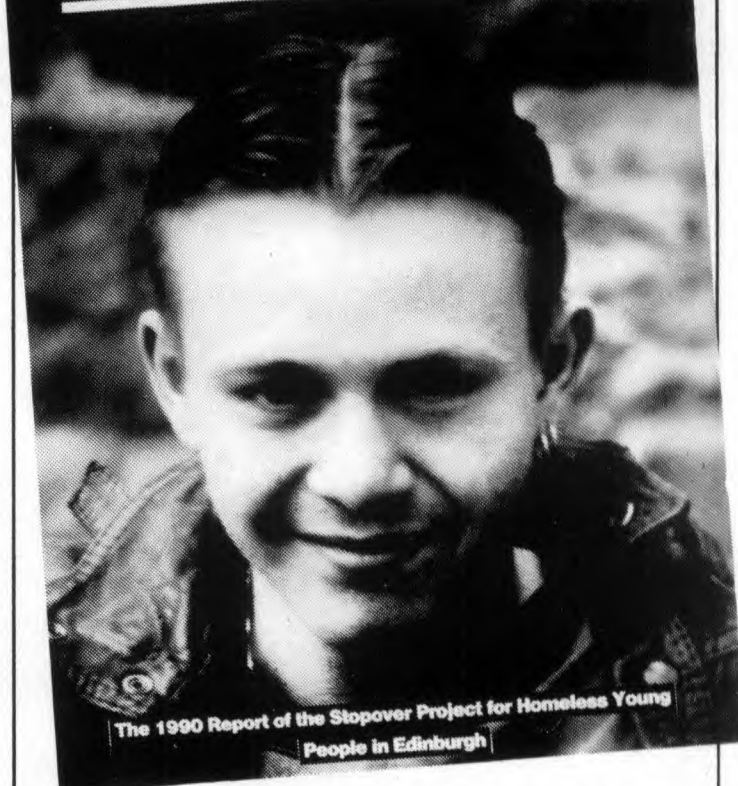
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DIRECTOR, CHILDLINE SCOTLAND

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Just because you're paranoid . . .

Someone once defined paranoia as 'being in full possession of the facts.' If this is true then I am paranoid. And the facts are that for some time now every one I've met has been trying to rob me. This truth first came apparent when, following a sudden rush of blood to the head, I decided to move back to my home town of Greenock.

I put my house on the market and was very, very happy with the price I received. It is not an exaggeration to say I felt moderately wealthy. The world took on a pinkish tinge and I was tending to smile more than usual. Then I turned my attention to the purchase of a new house. Coming from a social milieu where little or nothing is known about lawyers other than they're folk who 'get you off' – or don't as the case may be – my choice of brief was bound to be arbitrary. I simply walked into the first office I came to, and there he was. I fell in love with him at first sight.

His left shoelace was undone and I noticed that he wore his shirt tucked into his underpants so that the elastic of said drawers just peeped over the waistband of his trousers. He had a Churchillian crouch and sat amidst a perpetual cloud of cigarette smoke. He looked a little crazy and his memory span seemed to be about three seconds. I was immediately at ease with the man. He congratulated me on the bundle I'd made from the house and I thanked him and

said, somewhat expansively, that I intended to set two thousand aside to cover his fees for buying and selling. Well he laughed and laughed and said how I was a right card, and if I sent that one into Merry Mac I'd be sure to get a fiver for it.

I began to feel a mite apprehensive. How much, then? I asked. So he hemmed and hawed and muttered about 'searches' and 'stamp duty' and 'percentages of buying and selling prices' and eventually he advised me to add on another grand-to-fourteen hundred. All of a sudden the pink tinge was gone and I was sliding back into grainy monochrome. And as he was telling me this between links in his big chain, the smoke cleared long enough for me to notice a hardness, a steely glint in the eyes of my affable eccentric. 'Now,' he hissed. 'You'll want the gaffe surveyed. I can fix that.' And he did.

I had 'splayed dwanglings', apparently, and these should be examined more closely when I had moved into the house as they 'might' prove troublesome in the future. There were a number of other points in the report which 'may', 'could', 'possibly' give rise to problems. But it wasn't all that bad. There were parts of the place which 'appeared to be', 'seemed', 'were probably', 'more than likely', all right. Two hundred and nine pounds, thank you very much. Signed: A Surveyor.

I had negotiated an excellent price with a Dundee removal firm – two hundred pounds – and proceeded to phone round similar enterprises in the Greenock area with a view to having my few sticks put in storage, as there were the usual problems with entry dates. The responses were uniform. There would be a fee for 'receiving' my stuff, plus storage costs. If, however, the firm(s) in question were hired to do the removal as well as the storage, then the fee for 'receiving' my odds and ends would be waived. And guess what? No matter how you cut it, the price for removal plus storage was always less than for 'receiving' my goods from the Dundee firm, but considerably more than the two hundred I had agreed with the most reasonable company. It was with heavy heart that I cancelled our transaction.

I was given the keys to my new dwelling by the seller's brief and crossed the threshold at approximately nine thirty in the morning. At nine thirty five the postman arrived bearing a missive from my building society. They hoped everything had gone well, wished me joy and happiness and asked if they could please have the five hundred and twenty six pounds I now owed them. Attached was an explanation as to how I had accumulated this debt in the five minutes I'd been in the house.

Over the next few days, assorted people wrote, or called in person to demand money from me. Money for telephone disconnections and connections, money to have rubbish removed, money for this and that. Finally, I'd had enough. I had to get away.

I drove to the seashore to reacquaint myself with a sight familiar to all Greenockians: the horizontal rain which seems perpetually to shoot across the Clyde at us from the Argyllshire hills. But after a minute or so of that I got restless and started to hunt about for something to read. I looked into the glove compartment and found a letter. I was curious. I'd read it before, but when? And what had it said? It was from my car insurance company and it said the one hundred and fifty pounds I owed them was due that very day.

Given my run of luck I reasoned that a crash was imminent and thought it prudent to settle the account. So I drove to my local office with fifteen tenners and a oner clutched in my fist. The young man behind the counter was of a type all too common these days. Ten years ago he would have worn a boiler suit and drank his tea from a tin can in some hastily built lean-to beneath the hull of a ship. Now he had a computer, a suit, a tie, a small moustache and the obsequious manner to match. He tut-tutted when I showed him the demand. 'Surely sir's quote could be lowered,' he oozed. My heart leapt! Had I turned the corner? Were the demands on my fast-dwindling resources at an end at last? Was I in for a rebate!

He fairly hammered away on his keyboard and a million facts and figures flashed onto his screen. Now and then he would turn to me, smiling and wiping his brow in a gesture of reassurance that he was doing his best for 'sir'. And then he came back.

Well? I asked hopefully. And he told me that my premium was indeed wrong. It wasn't one hundred and fifty pounds at all! It was one hundred and fifty nine! Car insurance was more expensive in Greenock! Sir! I asked him if the oversight would have come to light had he not taken the trouble to consult his computer. He cheerfully assured me it wouldn't have.

Again I slipped out of black and white. But the colour before me now was not pink. It was a deep red. Blood red. And that smiling face seemed to shimmer before my eyes. The pearly white teeth growing larger and larger. And it was then I reached out and . . . But this is a respectable magazine. Suffice is to say that my lawyer thinks I can plead diminished responsibility and get off with a fine. Plus his fee, of course.

Daniel Boyle

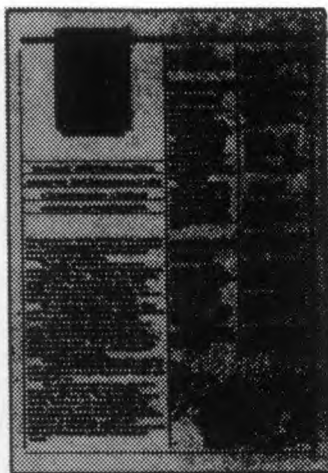
Scottish Child June/July 1990 33

"Ten years ago he would have worn a boiler suit and drank his tea from a tin can in some hastily built lean-to beneath the hull of a ship."

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Barrier Methods

A paragraph in the *Observer* the other Sunday alarmed and depressed me. It came at the end of an article about the decision to allow a mother to withdraw her child from a racially mixed school and it informed us that –

"An alliance of evangelical Christians, Muslims, Orthodox Jews and right-wing pressure groups is lobbying Mr. MacGregor to amend the law to allow the rapid development of Whitehall-funded single-faith religious schools."

More barriers, more separation, more opportunities to develop fantasies about one another, without ever having to test them on the reality.

The argument for increasing separation in children's education certainly produces some unlikely alliances. Between the above groups for instance, and some 'liberals' who support such a move in the name of allowing people freedom to express their own religious and cultural identity.

Not that I wish to deny anybody, be they Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, Druid, atheist or whatever the right to live according to their beliefs. Neither do I wish to eradicate difference and evolve some kind of homogeneous cultural/religious mish-mash. But total separation can only lead to a static and stagnant society. Or rather a collection of

smaller closed societies, with increased opportunities for scapegoating.

The increase in the expression of nationalistic and fundamentalist religious feeling throughout the world may indicate a need, heightened during times of change, to reach for simpler and more rigid definitions of personal identity. Maybe modern urban society is now so complex, with so many differences and changes having to be conti-

nuously negotiated, that our sense of identity becomes fractured, the consequent anxiety more and more difficult to manage.

So, we can retreat into our own narrowly defined groups, and avoid having to deal with the differences. We could hold onto our fantasies about Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, Jews, etc.

never having to confront the complex reality. We can disown our on prejudices and intolerance and attribute them to all the other groups. We can regress into the fiction of a simpler, safer past.

Or, we can face the differences, which after all reflect the complexities within each of us. We can check out our beliefs and assumptions, and affirm our own beliefs and identity whilst learning about what we might actually share with one another.

Not to be over-dramatic, but we do have responsibilities in this – to future generations. To enable children to grow up able to find their identity and confidently take their place in this complex world. To do this, they need to be open, curious, questioning and eager to explore and negotiate differences – not frightened, suspicious and quick to retreat behind regressive and defensive walls.

We can seriously try to develop multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural schools which would necessitate recognising the fears of all groups about being overwhelmed or marginalised.

It's bad enough that in Scotland we already, at the age of five, segregate children into Protestant (sorry, non-denominational) and Catholic ghettos. Maybe we should be discussing eradicating that existing divide rather than erecting new ones.

Sheila Ramsay

A·F·T·E·R·T·H·O·U·G·H·T·S

In the next issue... August/September 1990



BEING ORIGINAL – Alison Prince takes up the theme of our series **TAKING CHARGE**. In our political context, she asks, do we have problems with being creatively different?

Scottish Child & Family Alliance (SCAFA)
Director Bronwen Cohen has been six months in the job – she outlines her perspective for the future.

Childcare – urgent need for the 90s

PLUS Regular Features

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THE PROCLAIMERS - SKYE CONCERT
November 1988
Scottish Rock Music; School Management; Under-5s provision; Joyce McMillan on Jack Stein biographies; Roald Dahl; etc.



ROYAL BABIES February 1989
Monarchy – Joyce McMillan; the child in history – John Hamilton; yuppie universities; human relations in organisations – Robin Hall and Christine Wilson; etc.



WHAT'S ON TELLY April 1989
Gordon Rennie and Joyce McMillan on the power behind the t.v. screen; learning to read – Jeff Aldridge; Fairy Tales & Technology – Chris Harvie; etc.



TELL IT LIKE IT IS! August 1989
Young Scots tell it like it is, including Y.T.S. trainees, Who Cares? Scotland, photos, poems; Ronald Fairbairn review; Play – should it be supervised – Alasdair Roberts; etc.



READ ALL ABOUT IT! October 1989
Young people's attitudes to the press; Tony Robinson interview; Rosemary Milne on Rights; Work & Community; etc.



FOOD December 1989
Comfort eating – Sheila Ramsay; Football Casuals; Self-determination; a political challenge to voluntary organisations – Bob Holman; baby feeding; etc.



CARELESS TALK! April 1990
Care in the caring nineties!!! Fife Care Enquiry; Daycare (or the lack of it!) for the pre-fives, Pat Kane profile, James Kelman on Taking Charge; Andrew Coyle on self-determination; etc.

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