

# Scottish Child

December 1994/ January 1995

£2.55

**New  
Dads  
for Old**

ISSN 0950-4176



9 770950 417029

**Teens & Sex • Rights • Xmas Books For Kids**

# Erskine MacAskill & Co.

## The Approachable Solicitors

**Specialists in all matters of the law relating to children and young people up to 18 years of age in Scotland:-**

- **CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION**
- **CUSTODY/ACCESS**
- **CHILDREN'S HEARINGS**
- **ADOPTION**
- **EDUCATION**
- **ABDUCTION**



### SOLICITORS AND NOTARIES

Erskine MacAskill & Co. 4 Gayfield Square, Edinburgh EH1 3NW.

Telephone: 24 Hour Answering Service 031-557 1520

Are you keeping up with all the voluntary sector news - from crisis and cutbacks to innovation and achievement?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you informed and up-to-date on Parliamentary debate?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Can your organisation subscribe to a wide range of professional journals?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Are you aware what other Scottish voluntary organisations are doing?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Do you receive regular news about grants and other sources of funding?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

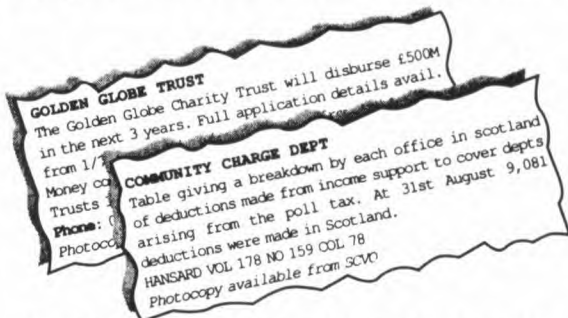
Are you aware of training opportunities in your area and topical events or conferences?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

**Be able to say "yes" to all these questions by subscribing to SCVO's fortnightly information service...**

**THIRD FORCE NEWS** brings you Scottish voluntary sector news, features, comment and debate every fortnight. It looks at many issues including Government policy, housing and environment, race, childcare and volunteering.

**INFORM** brings you a current awareness briefing every fortnight from SCVO's information unit. It contains short, sharp and relevant information on new sources of funding, abstracts of parliamentary debate and listings of training events and conferences. It also cites reports and journal articles. Each issue usually contains more than 50 items of current news.



**For Only £36 per year!**



SUBSCRIPTION RATES	
THIRD FORCE NEWS and INFORM	- £36 per year
Extra Copies to same address	- £20 per year

**For further details and a free sample copy of INFORM and THIRD FORCE NEWS, write to the subscriptions department, SCVO, 18/19 Claremont Crescent, Edinburgh EH7 4QD, or telephone 031-556-3882.**



**Editor**  
Rosemary Milne

**Assistant Editor and Subscriptions**  
Stephen Naysmith

**Design & Photography**  
Geoffrey Craig

**Business Development & Advertising**  
John Hunter

**Contributors to this issue**  
Colin Chalmers, John Hunter, Stuart Waiton, Kathy Barnes Alice Riddell, Mickey Aronoff, Stephen Naysmith, Anthony Hillin, Jeni Bremner, Billy Cornwall, Rona Sutherland, Geoffrey Craig.

Scottish Child  
Edinburgh office: 130 St Stephen Street,  
Edinburgh EH3 5AD  
Phone: 031-220 6502

Glasgow office: Maryhill Community Education Centre,  
35 Avenuepark Street, Glasgow G20 8TS  
Phone: 041-946 0009

Scottish Child Limited is a non-profitmaking cooperative which publishes Scottish Child magazine and runs conferences and training events to promote a greater understanding of the importance of children and childhood in society.

ISSN 0950-4176

Letter and articles to  
The Editor,  
Scottish Child,  
130 St Stephen Street,  
Edinburgh EH3 5AD

©Copyright all articles and material except those marked exempt is held by Scottish Child. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the editor.

Subscriptions: UK Annual Rates - individuals £15.00; organisations - £25.00. Cheques should be made payable to Scottish Child.

Overseas airmail: individuals - Europe £25.00; rest of the world £30.00; organisations - all countries £37.00. Overseas subscriptions are payable by sterling international money order or banker's draft.

Production

Front cover: Geoffrey Craig  
Camera: Edinburgh Make-up Services  
Printing: Allander Litho



# Contents

## COMMENTARY

Editorial - The Fork in the Road <b>Rosemary Milne</b> .....	5
In Brief .....	6
the 'comic' treatment of young runaways - Glasgow and Stirling Stopover hostels - students debate world peace and justice - local government reorganisation and the voluntary sector - Kilquhanity celebrates - T4 Project - Children (Scotland) Bill	
Out in the Cold .....	9
What's behind the new campaigns against youth homelessness? <b>Colin Chalmers</b> finds out	
Puppets and Loss .....	11
<b>Mickey Aronoff</b> writes about her work with ill children and their families	

## MAIN FEATURES

Talking about sex .....	12
<b>Anthony Hillin</b> and <b>Jeni Bremner</b> discuss staff needs for training on sexuality when working with teenagers	
Christmas in Castlemilk .....	16
In the newly opened Castlemilk Youth Centre Cinders is getting ready for the rave, as <b>Stephen Naysmith</b> found out	
New Dads for Old .....	18
Fatherhood's in crisis and there are precious few pointers for the man who wants to 'get it right' - <b>John Hunter</b> examines the dilemmas	
NEVER .....	22
<b>Alice Riddell</b> evokes her childhood and celebrates motherhood	
When Children's Rights are WRONG .....	24
<b>Stuart Waiton</b> The first of a series looking at what we mean by rights in relation to children	
Confrontation and Care .....	26
<b>Rosemary Milne</b> and <b>Geoffrey Craig</b> visited Geilsland School in Ayrshire, run by the Church of Scotland, to see how it helps young men in trouble	

## POETRY AND REVIEWS

Poems by <b>Billy Cornwall</b> .....	30
Reviews .....	32
Bairns - <b>Geoffrey Craig</b> Children's Books for Christmas - <b>Katy Barnes</b>	
Rona's Diary .....	34
Cartoon .....	10



## be my friend!

SCOTTISH CHILD receives no public funding of any kind - it relies on your support to stay independent and keep growing. Make your support for SCOTTISH CHILD concrete by becoming a FRIEND OF SCOTTISH CHILD.

### AS A FRIEND OF SCOTTISH CHILD

You will make a significant contribution to securing the future of SCOTTISH CHILD and it's work

You will receive a year's complimentary subscription to SCOTTISH CHILD

You will also receive absolutely free all SCOTTISH CHILD's publications throughout the year and will receive advance notice of conferences and events

YES, I want to become a FRIEND OF SCOTTISH CHILD and I enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum £50) made payable to Scottish Child.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to SCOTTISH CHILD,

### A Different Kind of School

Parents who find themselves questioning the values of today's society, and the current regime in most of our state schools, are invited to enquire about amore hopeful, more child friendly school.

Kilquhanity House in Galloway, established in 1940, offers human scale education. The maximum role is fifty boys and girls, ages 5 - 16. A creative approach: the arts and crafts are seen as the very stuff of education, not as an unnecessary fringe. There is a small school farm with cows, pigs, poultry and ponies. Children share the work maintenance as well as sharing in the school government. Assisted places after 10 years of age and the possibility of weekly boarding. Interested parents welcome to visit.

Write to the Headmaster,  
Kilquhanity House, Castle Douglas DG7 3DB

# Bairns

## Scottish Children in Photographs *Iona McGregor*

190 photographs of Scottish children at home, at school, at play, and at work. Third in our popular photograph series - a wonderful Christmas present.

From bookshops or direct from NMS Publications, RMS, Chambers St, Edinburgh EH1 1JF.

☎ 031 225 7534 x186

Hardback £14.99 (p&p free) ISBN 0 948636 61 0

sead

Brighten up your walls with Sead's full colour yearplanner. With plenty of writing space and a selection of striking colour photographs.

Sead's poster size yearplanner is practical, decorative & economical at only £3.95.

# sead

The 1995 edition of "Shifting the Balance" marks the end of the second U.N. Decade for Women and copies can be obtained from the Sead office. Generous discounts are available for orders of five and more.

To order your copy, or for further information on Sead publications, services and membership, contact:

Sead, 23 Castle Street, Edinburgh  
Tel. 031 225 6550, Fax 031 226 6384

sead



## The Fork in the Road

I recently read *Mutant Message Down Under* by Marlo Morgan (published by Harper Collins, £13.50). It's one woman's account of a life-changing journey across the Australian outback in the company of an Aboriginal tribe. Besides being an extraordinary book in its own right, it got me thinking about journeys of different kinds and of the way in which every culture creates its own versions of the Quest - for the Holy Grail, for Eldorado, for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

To go on a journey you must *go from* somewhere in order to make your way to somewhere else. Literature is full of destinations unknown and trials overcome en route but much less expansive on the subject of departure. It's as if in the moment of leaving the face is only turned forwards. Is that because we know deep down that all the old baggage is still with us? Or, on the contrary, because we think that by turning our face towards the unknown we can truly leave it all behind?

We're taught that for the child to develop to the best of his or her potential, each new stage in life is best embarked upon if what has gone before is not denied or reviled but incorporated and used for whatever's next. Sometimes that embracing of experience takes years to do and it seems as though parts of the old path must be walked again and again.

Journeys are in my mind because I'm leaving **Scottish Child**. I am proud to have played a part in growing **Scottish Child** from its earliest origins, yet glad now to hand it on to John Hunter and Geoffrey Craig and the others who will work with them to make something new and different of it.

As World AIDS Day comes round again who can avoid thinking of the hardest partings of all - final goodbyes - and of words unsaid because the truth felt too difficult to tell? A year ago Dr Jacqueline Mok, writing in this magazine, made a plea for honesty and openness with children who are going to die or who are going to lose a parent through the AIDS virus. Now the call is taken up again by Anthony Hillin and Jeni Bremner in this issue, writing about the lack of information and good counselling on sex and sexuality for teenagers.

Judging by what they have to say, we're a long way yet from the openness they advocate. Adults are still choosing to remain silent, victims of their fear and, yes, cowardice. Children know - much more than we give them credit for. If only we could have the guts to take them with us properly. But we don't. We feed them half truths and lies in the name of 'child protection' which when looked at closely is so often revealed as more like 'self protection'.

At Scottish Child workshops on child punishment we often talked about

hitting, excluding, reprimanding, grounding, stopping pocket money - and worse than that when punishment becomes abuse. But I have come to think that this way we have of telling children just so much - or nothing - of what they need to know to understand what's happening is maybe quite as harmful to their future wellbeing, whatever the good intention behind it.

We have to tell children how it really is because unless we do that how are they going to make a better job of things than we have done? It's like setting David against Goliath without even a sling in his hand.

✱

Looking back over this past six years of being with Scottish Child I find myself trying to assess what it is that we have done 'well'. Perhaps our most conspicuous achievement has been not simply going with the flow as dictated by the mainstream media and big business.

If you read the papers you won't see much now about Orkney, nor about sexual abuse in general. That was 1993 or 1992's story. Sexual abuse is old hat. There's nothing else to say unless you can find a newsy angle to bring it back to life again. Perhaps it can get another airing under the heading of 'women do it too' or 'kids in care do it to each other'? But sexual abuse hasn't stopped just because the papers have lost interest.

Likewise youth homelessness, the violence women experience at the hands of their partners, the lack of services for under-fives, the campaign against single parents and so many more '**Scottish Child**' type themes.

'Celebrate childhood more,' we've been told more than once. I think we do. Every time a child or an adult finds space to tell their story in these pages we are celebrating something quite important: someone is finding a voice. Perhaps that's a small achievement. I think though that it's an important one and it's what we do best.

And with that I'll stop. I'll see you again perhaps, a bit further down the road. Thanks for travelling this far with me. I've enjoyed our time together more than I can say.



When it comes to comics you might well think they have little to offer but superheroes, pulp sci-fi and cute characters like Dennis the Menace. The latter has become an archetypal image of the naughty schoolboy, but is a stack of Beano's away from the real problems and interests of young people today.

However, in the world of the 'graphic novel' (comic is a demeaning word, this is serious fiction!) there is often more of an attempt to deal with the here and now.

The Tale of One Bad Rat is by a veteran of the graphic novel format, Bryan Talbot, who published a ground-breaking sci-fi epic called Luther Arkwright. His latest piece of work, published by Dark Horse Comics, tells the story of a young runaway, Helen. Abused by her father and lost in the 'skipping' culture of London, she takes refuge in her love of drawing, her pet rat and a world of her own fantasies.

As is fashionable in the world of comic-books, the illustrations are used to make the story work like film. Cinematic techniques such as flash-backs, close-ups and fantasy sequences are all used to this effect. Helen's view of events is reflected as her memories, her imaginings and the reality of her situation combine.

A Beatrix Potter theme runs through the story: The title is a reference to Potter's 'Tale of the Two Bad Mice', and it looks as though Helen may encounter people who represent other characters from the books, given

that there is a meeting with a 'Jeremy Fisher' in part one.

You might reasonably argue that the last thing homelessness and abuse need are arch references to the characters in turn of the last century middle-class children's fiction - characters who are probably unknown to many of the kids who live in cardboard boxes. However perhaps it will raise awareness in certain quarters. The jury's still out at Scottish Child - what do you think?

What is it they say about swings and roundabouts? Pardon us if our joy is a little restrained at the news that Glasgow Stopover is to re-open in the new year, given that when it closed in October 1994, Glasgow District Council promised that it would re-open in a matter of weeks.

The building has stood empty in the interim and the experienced staff there have mostly now found new jobs, breaking up an able team. Quarrier's Homes, who will run the new Stopover, had hoped to be able to make use of many of them if the delay had not been so great.

The real reason for the downbeat note however, is that as Stopover in Glasgow rises from the ashes, there is gloomier news from Stirling. The Stopover there, regularly over-subscribed in its seven years of helping

desperate youngsters in the area, will be closed by the time you read this, its Urban Aid funding having expired.

It is their own fault, of course, according to Housing Committee Chair, Conservative councillor Helen Scott. They failed to put a system in place to make the service self-financing, even though they knew funding was about to run out. The excellent service provided by the team there for homeless young people was simply not excellent enough - they forgot to turn a profit.

Peace, justice and the environment were the theme of a one-day conference held for school students in late October in Coatbridge. The event, entitled World Problems - Our Problems, attracted 236 pupils from 21 Strathclyde schools. Campaigning groups like Amnesty International, Oxfam, Earth First!, Schools' Campaign Against Militarism and Glasgow for People, ran workshops throughout the day. What was the purpose of the conference? According to organiser, Michael Annis, it was to act as a 'conduit' for young peoples' thirst for debate and action: "They have a voice and they can change things themselves," he said.

As well as becoming an annual magnet for critically-minded youth, the work of the event is being expanded to develop activities throughout the year where young people can take the initiative.

Pat Kane, gave the keynote speech at lunchtime, attacking the World Bank and IMF policies and proposed the need for a 'conserving radicalism' to end the exploitative relationship between the rich world and the poor.

Not surprisingly there were politician around too - Helen Liddel and Tom Clarke both made brief addresses on policy issues of overseas development and aid to Eastern European countries. They went down like a lead balloon with some of the delegates who were clearly highly sceptical about mainstream politics and dismissed the MPs' speeches as empty posturing and self-publicity.

The hands-on format of the workshops has already reaped dividends. Students at St Patricks, the host school for the day, have decided to set up an umbrella peace and justice group that will liaise with Amnesty and a number of environmental pressure groups.

Local government reorganisation is coming and with it a whole new era of uncertainty and insecurity for non-governmental agencies like One Plus in Strathclyde. One Plus supports over 140 local groups serving more than 70,000 one-parent families throughout the region - but for how much longer?

It has been clear for some time that turning nine regional councils and three island

councils into thirty-two 'unitary' councils will present huge problems in how services are delivered as well as enormous additional costs. Whatever the arguments against the gigantism of a region like Strathclyde - and there are a few - no-one can deny that it has used its size to good effect in supporting (and admittedly also controlling), agencies serving groups who don't feature very high on central government's list of priorities.

When Strathclyde Region is abolished in April 1995 One Plus and all other organisations in the same category, will have to negotiate with twelve local authorities instead of one. No-one can predict how long it will take to get the new authorities properly up and running, nor how each of them will want to use their budgets. One thing is certain however: lone parents are going to be that much more lone once these 'reforms' take effect - and that's bad news for kids as well as mums and dads.

The kids at Kilquhanity had a wonderful time on St Andrew's Day. This year they created a Highland cottage by the sea in which to hold their celebrations. Every child took a bowl and a spoon to the meal but not just any old bowl or spoon out of your mum's kitchen cupboard. They carved their spoons in the woodwork room and threw their

bowls in the pottery workshop. Elsewhere in the school paintings were made, poems and stories written for the final event. Did we say the kids had a wonderful time? - Correction: everyone had a wonderful time.

Kilquhanity School, Castle Douglas Telephone: 055-6650242.

You, Me and HIV is the name of a project which has been going on throughout 1994. The outcome is a multi-screen, multi-visual projection extravaganza with an accompanying exhibition of photography, writing and screenprinting.

The T4 group put all this together, with the help of SOLAS, Magic Lantern and Greater Pilton Print Resource. The group takes its name from the T4 'helper' cell, one of the key cells within the body which stimulates the immune function.

The project kicked off in January 1994 with six taster sessions introducing the basic techniques of the various media it was planned to use. This led to the formation of a core group of fifteen people and six arts workers meeting twice a week in SOLAS and Pilton Print Resource. Participation, trust and commitment in the group developed through group painting, drumming, drama and relaxation. Out of this came the plan to produce a tape-slide show, made up of chapters aiming to reflect the wide range of issues and emotions that HIV and AIDS raises.

Scott, one of the group members, summed up how he felt about the project: "It was something that I didn't think would hit home to me as much as it did. I'm glad I was involved because I confronted the whole issue of life and death. I confronted it, slapped it in the face, laughed at it and then moved on .... T4 has been one hell of a catalyst."

The tape-slide production consists of twenty individual pieces of work, lasting about five minutes each. The Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh is hosting a free exhibition of stills and work from the project until 23 December.

The Children (Scotland) Bill finally gets underway this month with its second reading at the Scottish Grand Committee in Edinburgh on December 5.

After much delay the political will seems to be there now and its passage is likely to be quick under new parliamentary procedures.

However, while many of its measures are welcome there are some organisations which are unhappy with details of the proposed legislation. Children in Scotland and the Scottish Child Law Centre are fronting a consortium to make representations to the Grand Committee over these issues when the time comes in the new year.

Issues covered in the bill include extending the responsibility of local authorities

for children in care until the age of 18. However Who Cares? Scotland are unhappy with this and are calling for the age to be raised to 21.

Other points of concern are the fact that no clarification is made of the law relating to physical punishment of children, leaving us with the vague definition of 'reasonable chastisement' as the only measure of what is 'acceptable'.

Also there is a section defining children in need which several organisations working with children feel is too narrowly drawn. As it stands in the bill, for instance, child carers would be excluded from its provisions.

Fears have also been expressed about the proposal to centralise the work of reporters in the children's hearing system, and doubts have been raised about the ability of the new unitary local authorities to adequately fund some of the provisions in the bill.

A standing committee will hear opinions from those with an interest, including young people themselves, in the new year. Those wishing to have an input through the new consortium should contact Children in Scotland on 031-228-8484.

Reporting by Stephen Naysmith, Deirdre Molloy, Shiel Yule, Geoffrey Craig, John Hunter



---

# CHILDREN IN NEED NEED THE CHURCH.

---

The Church of Scotland operates the largest voluntary social work programme in the country. Not content with responding to community needs, the Church sees its role as leading the development of caring services for those who are most vulnerable in today's society.

The Church operates over 80 Residential Homes, Care Centres and Support Projects throughout Scotland, several of which are specifically for children.

In addition to a number of family counselling and support units, the Church operates 3 units for children with learning and physical disabilities, and 2 residential schools for teenagers who are in need

of compulsory measures of care through Children's Panels.

These schools are also a "home base" for many boys who are without family situations they can return to. The difficult task in this regard is to try to prepare often very difficult and vulnerable youngsters for adult life in the community and to support them through this process.

That's why children in need need the Church.

**The Church of Scotland,  
Board of Social Responsibility,  
Charis House,  
47 Milton Road East,  
Edinburgh EH15 2SR.  
Tel: 031-657 2000.**



*Help us practise what we preach*



# Out in the Cold

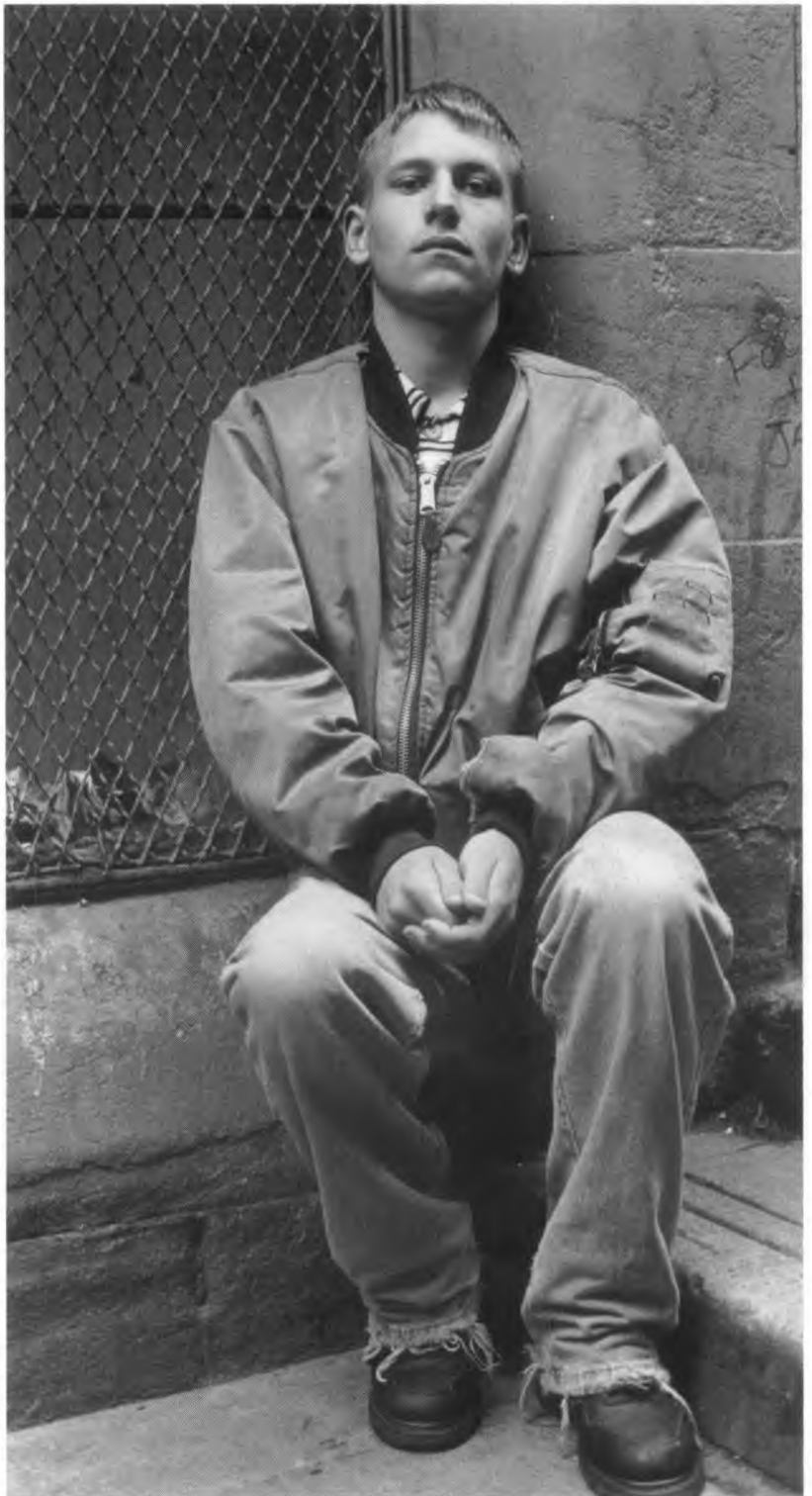
Youth homelessness is getting the same propaganda treatment as unemployment. Colin Chalmers looks at the reasons behind the shift in tone.

Once upon a time, and not that long ago, the sight of a teenage beggar was a rare one - hard to imagine but true, like a time before cash machines or video recorders. In those days, campaigners pointed out the causes of youth homelessness and talked about what needed to be done to put things right - reducing youth unemployment, building affordable housing and generally investing in the next generation.

Unfortunately, the relative clarity of those days seems to be more and more a thing of the past. Nowadays, arguing that central government has to provide money in order for young people to be given a decent start in life doesn't seem to be happening so much. And for one simple reason - the Labour Party is heading for power. Time for a change of tack, the argument goes. After all we don't want to be making 'unreasonable' demands of a Blair-led government. And if that means ignoring reality and stuffing those at the bottom of the heap, so be it.

One of the most visible examples of this rush-from-reality is the 'Stop Homelessness in Edinburgh' poster campaign, launched by Edinburgh District Council and Shelter (Scotland). The posters encourage you to ring a hotline so you can get a glossy information pack explaining that the Council 'want to change attitudes to homeless people. People's attitudes to homeless people discriminate against them taking full part in society. People's attitudes are often the biggest barrier to homeless people getting jobs, private housing, health care etc.' There are some facts and figures and addresses to contact if you want to fundraise or volunteer for homeless organisations.

All very laudable - but what has it got to do with stopping homelessness? Whenever people start hawking on along the lines that 'we are all responsible' for some social ill or other and that 'we all have to examine our own attitudes' you can lay a safe bet that attention is being drawn away from something else, usually the fact that rich people don't want to have their money taken away from them to deal with the problem. And that's exactly the case with this campaign.



It's a bit rich for Edinburgh District Council to tell its citizens how to stop homelessness when the Council itself is the body *directly responsible* for that homelessness. The Council could of course, as it often has in the past, point out that it cannot provide the housing needed because of government constraints, but nowhere in the information pack is that said. No, it's our fault - something you'll be hearing a lot more of once Mr Blair gets into Number 10.

The rush from reality towards 'moderation' and 'what is realistic' hits you full in the face in Shelter (Scotland)'s 1994 annual report, *A Force for Change*. Next to the statement that 'Shelter's Annual Homelessness Survey found that approximately 87 children in Scotland became homeless every working day last year', the Director of Shelter (Scotland), Amy Issac feels able to describe the legislation that has allowed this situation to develop as 'legislation which, by and large, has worked well in Scotland since 1978'. A rather bizarre comment you might think, until you put it in its context - the Tories want to make the legislation even worse but Labour certainly have no intention of improving it. So the present legislation works well for homeless people - and my name's Mickey Mouse.

When the report goes on to discuss youth homelessness we move from the sublime to the ridiculous. Unable or unwilling to point out the causes of youth homelessness

**Out in the Cold** causes Shelter (Scotland) are all too well aware of - the report argues that what is crucial in dealing with the problem is raising awareness amongst young people about how to find somewhere to live. The Tories are always saying the same thing about unemployed people - if only they looked harder they could get a job - but it's a sad day when a campaigning organisation like Shelter (Scotland) starts blaming young people's ignorance for the fact that there isn't anywhere for them to live.

However, the first prize in this rush-from-reality campaign must go to Glasgow District Council's Hamish Allan Centre. This centre, which has claimed to 'never turn young people away who need help' is well known by the many young people who needed its help and were turned away for not meeting its strict admissions criteria. Unlike many other hostels throughout the country that will readily admit that they do not have the resources to deal with a growing problem, the Hamish Allan Centre has developed quite a reputation for denying there is any problem at all. In 1991, for instance, their Single Person's Manager, Nicola McNulty, told Scottish Child that there were 'about 20' young people sleeping on the streets of the city.

Since then the figure seems to have dropped. Nicola McNulty refused to answer questions from Scottish Child over the phone (we're in their bad books for printing young people's views of their service), but she did agree to answer faxed questions on the condition that answers were used in their entirety. Fair enough. In answer to the question 'As roughly as you want, how many young people would you say are sleeping on the streets of Glasgow each night?' Ms McNulty answered 'During the winter months of 93/94 (December/March) a rough sleepers' initiative was developed. Only 13 people under 24 used the initiative.'

So there you have it - you were actually imaging all those teenage beggars you saw because actually they were being welcomed with open arms at the Hamish Allan Centre. Mel Young, editor of The Big Issue in Scotland, doesn't think he is imagining it. "There are certainly more than 13 young people sleeping on the streets of Glasgow," he told Scottish Child, "and I'd be happy to show anyone from the Hamish Allan Centre where they are - in car parks, derelict buildings, bus stations, wherever they can find a place to sleep."

The attitude of some homelessness professionals and campaigners in Scotland is a frightening foretaste of life under a Blair-led Labour government. Nothing of substance is done to solve the problem; a lot of nonsense is talked about how the problem doesn't exist or is about perceptions and attitudes; and anyway, it's the fault of those suffering the problem in the first place.

One big snag with all this pretending is that it doesn't stop things from being as bad as ever - and getting worse. As Mel Young puts it, "Adverts on the sides of buses are not a solution to homelessness - we need a genuine all-encompassing anti-poverty strategy to deal with it. We have a society of haves and have-nots and the politicians have completely failed the have-nots. Unless something happens to change that urgently we face the risk of major social conflict."

Quite so - because when the anger and alienation of those young people who get forced to live on the streets eventually gets expressed it will not be in glossy reports or media-friendly campaigns. When that anger starts to show and the headlines start appearing about how mindless and 'incomprehensible' it all is - just remember where the madness started.

*Colin Chalmers works for a youth counselling and information service in Brighton. He was editor of Scottish Child from 1991 to 1993.*

## We Spend All Our Adult Lives Trying To Recreate Our Childhood Coburn & Naughton



# Unmasking our Grief

**Mickey Aronoff** explains how puppets can help children to express their grief for their own and others' illness or impending death.

If you look up 'bereavement' in the dictionary you'll find a definition such as 'loss by death of a relative or friend'. Bereavement can begin *before* death however. It can be the unsettling realisation that you will outlive the dog you've loved since it was a puppy, or it can be the harsh and empty reality of the foreseeable loss of a loved one who is ill. Bereavement can be about any irredeemable loss that holds meaning: loss of bodily limb or function, loss of your grandmother's wedding ring, loss of a home through fire.

In some cultures death is treated as an integral part of the cycle of life. In the west the subject is taboo as are the feelings engendered by it. It's viewed as a frightening topic and 'quiet respect' may be our only sanctioned, protective response.

Keeping death at arm's length denies feeling, which means denying living. Emotional health is strengthened when we can say our unsaid goodbyes, apologies, avowals of love. The social expression of grief and joy is our universal connection. When someone we love is nearing death or is even at the point of death, we need a language in which to express our loss, whether that takes the form of keening or highly controlled and organised state funerals.

Puppets offer all of us a lost language. For thousands of years they've been used across many cultures as a spiritual guides, as storytellers, as mediators between gods and people.

Today in the west psychologists speak of a puppet acting as a 'transitional object', which means serving as a symbolic plaything or as a toy which can act out for us some of our deepest feelings in a safe non-threatening way. Puppets release the voice that tells the stories children need to tell in order to share the pain of their loss. They are transitional objects *in a time of transition*.

Puppets can express anger, sorrow and need for attention, just as humans can - through text and through movement. They can cower, hit, yell, bite, whimper and run. They can also express joy. With puppets children can rehearse feelings, paving the way for the choice to 'own' and express them directly.

When no other avenues exist to express grief, what can children do but play? Play is the natural language of the child. Puppets allow children - normally excluded at the time of death - to participate in the business of grieving and to grow with the experience.

Children as well as adults need the laughter that is a part of life, the release and relief from tension, from sadness, from anger. Child-centred approaches, with non-judgemental acceptance of feelings, elicit those feelings and give scope for reflection of them.

For children with life-threatening illnesses, issues may arise with puppets that relate to fears about hospitalisation, such as mutilation or death. Brothers and sisters may also need to work out the guilt of ambivalent feelings or magical thinking (the fear that wishing death upon a brother or a sister has caused that death). Working with puppets in groups helps to share the pain.

I have used puppets to prepare children with cancer for loss of limbs. These children have used my puppets to speak about their friends who had died before them ("If only she could give us a sign", said one child's puppet). I have seen 'mini-rehearsals' of death with puppets: one child liked to be buried under my entire collection of soft puppets.

13 year-old Diane was facing the thirteenth shunt revision to her head.



Pic. Mickey Aronoff

---

## Puppets release the voice that tells the stories children need to tell so as to share the pain of their loss.

---

During pre-operative puppet play her doctor puppet informed my patient puppet that it would die - soon! My puppet quickly tumbled through feelings of denial, anger, bargaining, sadness and finally, acceptance. Her puppet told me, "When I have patients who are dying I can't eat. I have four patients dying now and I'm starving!" She attacked her fears through the life-affirming approach of humour.

Puppets work well in tandem with other expressive art therapies. An 11 year-old boy with leukaemia, deserted by his non-coping family two weeks before he died, had earlier opened up emotionally with puppets used in preparation for invasive, diagnostic procedures. When Ted's family returned with friends and a ritual that would help them bear his death - three days before the event - the boy was ready.

Using puppets cross-culturally is wonderful with people whose traditions include this art form, although it is essential to respect taboos in puppet characterisation and to beware of racial stereotypes. The body language of the puppet also provides a good vehicle of expression for children for whom English is not their first language.

It may be that the only way to deal with death is to deal with life. These seeming opposites are really a part of a continuum and are inextricably intertwined. If there is ever to be hope for an emotionally healthy society, stories of sorrow must not be buried but should be told alongside stories of joy. ■

*Mickey Aronoff is the Special Needs Puppetry Consultant at the Scottish Mask and Puppet centre, Glasgow.*

# Talking About

# SEX

In the second part of our series on teenagers and sexuality, **Anthony Hillin** and **Jeni Bremner** give a brief account of the training they carry out with adults who care for teenagers.

"20% of the total number of people with HIV are 15-25 years old. Of the total number of women with HIV or AIDS, 40% are in the 15-29 age group....most of these women will have been affected during their teens." Those alarming figures are taken from a 1992 report by Margaret Jay and Doreen Massey in *AIDS Matters*.

Sex has always been a risky business. It can bring disease, pregnancy, stigma, fear and confusion and any one of these can inflict

psychological, social and educational injury on young men and women. Now HIV has raised the stakes even further. Sexual activity is the norm among young people, yet even now a significant proportion of teenagers do not perceive themselves to be at risk of HIV. On top of that, many lack the information, the social skills and the self esteem necessary to negotiate having safer sex with a partner.

It is known from other research that for example, 52% of 16 year-olds, 67% of 17 year-

olds and 83% of 18-19 year-olds claim to have had sexual intercourse.

If we need them, there are more figures and statistics to add to this picture: 54% of 16-24 year-olds feel they are at no risk from HIV, (Gallup Survey for the National AIDS Trust, 1990) and 82% of 16-21 year old women thought their sex education at school was inadequate. Inadequate teaching in schools and elsewhere means many young people are forced to rely on information from people their own age and such



information may well be incorrect.

Where does that leave the teenager in care? The answer is not well protected at all, since he or she will very likely have had breaks in schooling or health care and in addition may have a low sense of self esteem which raises the risk further.

Education has been trying, against some powerful counter forces it could be argued, to improve sex education in schools. Nevertheless, it's still limited in many instances to biology.

Despite the apparent easing of attitudes, teenagers are given little opportunity to explore their feelings and attitudes or to become more confident when talking about sex. This generation can still expect to find parents, teachers and social workers unable to talk about issues openly and in a relaxed manner. Perhaps that is not so surprising when you think that adults - parents and professionals - are given few chances for their own personal development in this area. Instead they pass on some of the anxiety, guilt or embarrassment to which they were exposed when they were at the same critical stage of learning.

It is not hard to see a disaster waiting to happen, with large numbers of young people having sex while lacking the information, skills and attitudes necessary to protect themselves and each other. As the statistics show we are already some way into the disaster and that is bad news indeed. But this doesn't mean we can do nothing: a concerted effort now could give young people the information and the skills they need. The effect would be to protect them not only against the risks of unprotected sex but

## CCETSW Principles of Good Practice in Social Work

The general principles of social work set out by the Central Council for Training and Education in Social Work (CCETSW) apply to counselling and support on sex and sexuality

'Social work .... responds to wider social needs promoting equal opportunities for every age, gender, sexual preference, class, disability, race, culture and creed.

Competence in social work requires ... a commitment to social justice ... and a repudiation of all forms of negative discrimination.' (CCETSW Paper 30, paragraph 1.1 and 2.2.1)

CCETSW's 1992 report *Setting Quality Standards for Residential Child Care*, states

'Any attempt to itemise the rights and needs of children risks reducing their humanity: it is only through commitment and engagement with each child, through their development over time, that the complexity and individuality of their rights and needs can be addressed.'

against a whole number of other hazardous aspects of modern life.

### Whose Responsibility?

In a social work setting, it is workers who have a responsibility to give all young people the information and support they need to protect themselves. But, in order to help workers carry out that responsibility in a non-oppressive way, they too are entitled to expect clear guidelines, policy and management support, as well as training. They cannot do that if they too do not

have knowledge, skills and self-awareness.

Sian Ross, writing in the October/November *Scottish Child* showed the needs of young lesbians and gay men not being taken care of. But neglect such as that she described is not limited to the area of homosexuality. Generally sexuality work is not being done well with any young people in care. Where the work does happen it is often only because of the commitment of isolated individuals and pockets of staff who do the work without the support of their agency.

The campaigning by the 'hard-nosed bigots' referred to by Doreen Massey, Director of the Family Planning Association, in June/July *Scottish Child*, has created a climate where even well-motivated, skilled and confident staff may decide not to do the work on sexuality with young people - for fear of repercussions on themselves. Can they be blamed if they have no clear commitment from their management in the form of policy and guidelines?

### Dealing Positively with Sexuality

Attempts to scare or shock teenagers into adopting safer sex behaviour are questionable for many reasons. They may produce the required behaviour change in the short term - but with damaging effects. We do not know what the long term effects of associating sex with disease, fear and death might be. We could produce a generation which is 'sex negative' or 'sex phobic' and this could carry all sorts of other repressions, rigidity and associated mental health problems. The way to prevent this damage is undoubtedly to present sex positively, emphasising that it is good and that there are many ways to enjoy it safely.

Because sexuality is rarely covered adequately

## 1989 Children Act - Showing the Way Forward in Non-Discriminatory Practice

Section 7 of the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations says:

'The experience of being cared for should also include the sexual education of the young person. This is absolutely vital since sexuality will be one of the most potent forces affecting young people in the transition from childhood to adulthood.' (Volume 4:7.48, page 107)

it also stipulates that:

'Sexual education will need to cover practical issues such as contraception, particularly in view of the spread of AIDS. However, it must also cover the emotional aspects of sexuality, such as the part sexuality plays in a young person's sense of identity.' (Volume 4:7.49 page 107)

'Those responsible for the sexual education of young people will need to bear in mind the particular needs of different young people; the fact that young people with physical or mental disabilities have different sexual needs should be acknowledged .... The needs and concerns of gay young men and women must also be recognised and approached sympathetically.' (Volume 4:7.50, page 107)

The Act recognises the need for staff to have guidelines for work in this area in Volume

**Support  
and  
educational  
services  
in Scotland**



Scottish AIDS Monitor



Scottish AIDS Monitor



*buddy network*

*welfare rights*

*the hardship fund*

*safer sex roadshow*

*gay men's project*

*legal referral*

*advocacy*

**NATIONAL / LOTHIAN OFFICE**

26 ANDERSON PLACE  
EDINBURGH EH6 5NP  
TEL. 031 555 4850  
FAX. 031 555 4857

**STRATHCLYDE**

22 WOODSIDE TERRACE  
GLASGOW G3 7XH  
TEL. 041 353 3133  
FAX. 041 353 1699

**TAYSIDE**

c/o S.W.T DEPT.  
NORTHERN COLLEGE  
GARDYNE ROAD  
BROUGHTY FERRY, DUNDEE  
TEL. 0382 461167

**HIGHLAND**

28 HUNTLY STREET  
INVERNESS IV3 5PR  
TEL. 0463 711585  
FAX. 0463 711793

in qualification training, all staff working with teenagers have a need for training in this area. That training needs to do two things. Firstly it needs to give workers the opportunity to acquire knowledge and self awareness on issues like gender role expectations, cultural differences, lesbian and gay perspectives, safer sex, negotiating safer sex, the internalised effects of oppression on self-care, youth-specific issues, and legal considerations. Using experiential learning methods in a setting which feels safe and respectful is the best way to go about this learning.

The second thing training must do is to make direct links between the training being done and the individuals' workplace. That can be done by using case discussions which help the transfer of the new knowledge and self awareness back to participants' work.

The programme should be used as well to practice listening, counselling or group skills and to apply the CCETSW principles of good practice as summarised here. We have found

that courses which can genuinely meet all these goals need to run for three to five days so as to cover all the material and to allow for some skills development.

### Strategies for Change

Change can come about in a 'top down' manner, with senior managers initiating policy development and training or in a 'bottom up' way, with workers taking the initiative. In our experience, the latter has been one of the major catalysts for change in dealing more openly with sexuality.

Although workers often feel powerless and distant from the mechanisms of policy development, there is a lot they can do. They are often acutely aware of the needs of young people and their awareness can play an important role in making policy relevant. Workers can raise questions in supervision and at team meetings, highlighting difficult scenarios, real or potential which require clear

guidelines. They can request or arrange local training courses and form special interest groups to work on draft policy guidelines. Although few local authorities have agency wide guidelines, many individual projects or teams have developed their own and these can be passed up the line for approval or comments.

Courses can be organised on a multidisciplinary basis or with a particular team. We have seen many instances where running a local course has been the key to attracting attention to the issues and triggering the development of guidelines.

Initial courses tend to draw workers who are already committed to this area of work. They often comment that the people they consider really need the training - the most prejudiced or resistant - are not there. As an early step however, it can be argued that it is most effective to invest time in those most motivated. They will go back with more confidence and skills, not only to do the work but also to raise the issues with colleagues and managers. They will thus be more effective agents for change within their organisations.

The 'bottom up' approach described should be valued therefore and encouraged but it is not enough on its own. Workers have a right to clear guidelines and managers have a legal responsibility to provide them.

It may be useful in arguing the case for a share of increasingly pressured training resources, to emphasise that the skills which sexuality training should develop - ie. listening, counselling, cultural sensitivity, developing self esteem, assertiveness and social skills, working with the internalised effects of oppression - are all transferable to other social work issues and situations. Guidelines for good practice will similarly foster principles which are important in all areas of work with young people.

It is clear that workers and managers do have a professional and legal responsibility to do this work. All young people have a right to this assistance, whether lesbian, gay, heterosexual, black, white and regardless of any physical or learning disability or history of abuse or mistreatment. We would argue that agencies also have a moral responsibility to give young people whatever support and encouragement they need to maximise their ability to enjoy a happy, healthy sex life.

*Anthony Hillin and Jeni Bremner are freelance trainers and consultants and can be contacted on 081-521 1082. Their book 'Sexuality, Young People and Care: Creating a Positive Context for Training, Policy and Development' is published by Russell House (Tel: 0297 445024).* ■

### Age of Consent and Section 28

In Britain in 1994 the age of consent for heterosexual men and women is 16. For gay men it is 18. There is no age of consent for lesbians. This discriminatory age of consent runs contrary to the spirit of the Children Act and undermines work seeking to foster positive attitudes to homosexuality. The criminalisation of the sexual relationships of gay young men puts effective HIV prevention work with this group at risk.

Section 28 of the Local Government Act makes it illegal for local authorities to 'promote homosexuality ... unless its purpose is treating or the preventing the spread of disease.'

It is our view that it is impossible to promote the health of young lesbians and gay men without giving them some positive messages about their sexuality in order to counteract the internalised effects of homophobia.

Whilst there is much legal debate about interpreting the meaning of Section 28, its most powerful effect has been in self-censorship of some local authorities. Some local authorities have withdrawn support for lesbian and gay projects.

Michael Howard, speaking for the government in the Parliamentary debate in March 1998 stated:

'Let me make it plain that it is no part of our intention in supporting this clause to affect the civil rights of any person ... Let me make it absolutely clear at the outset that the clause in no way imposes some form of discrimination against homosexuals. The government are firmly opposed to all forms of discrimination.'

This would seem to imply that Section 28 is not intended to prevent agencies from supporting lesbians and gay men or from challenging anti-lesbian and gay comments.

# Cinders Raves on in Castlemilk

**T**he new Castlemilk Youth Complex is a remarkable addition to the facilities for young people in the area. Part fortress, part pleasure palace, once you get past the apparently over-the-top security everything else is state-of-the-art.

The building, built with Urban Aid money at a cost of £1.3 million, includes a disco, alcohol-free bar, recording studio, computer suite, theatre and an in-house radio station operated by local youngsters.

This is perhaps the most important feature of the complex. From the start it is aimed at allowing young people to run the show wherever possible. This carries as far as the managing committee which is to have adults firmly in the minority.

Scottish Child visited to see what use the theatre would be put to this Christmas, and immediately found evidence of this philosophy in action.

Jackie Troy, the arts development worker at the complex had planned for the over-16's drama group she runs to stage A Christmas Carol, but that was quickly abandoned.

The group - six girls and one boy - decided Dicken's story had too many men in it and instead decided to put on Cinderella, but with a few twists. For a start the title, 'Cinder-raver', reflects modern enthusiasms.

"It is going to be set in Castlemilk," Jamie Lee, points out. "There isn't a glass slipper, it will be a glittering Doc Marten. We are having a motorbike instead of a coach, and it is made from a scooter, not a pumpkin."

Jamie will be the narrator with Jackie Murdoch playing Cinders. She isn't set for the usual fate, however: "The prince isn't going to marry Cinderella. She goes to university while he marries her ugly sisters, Rubella and Verucca. He marries both of them and gets done for bigamy!"

While the players retire to finalise the casting, Anne Campbell, the assistant head of the complex, describes the fall of Dickens, and the birth of CYC. "With 'A Christmas Carol' the young people looked at it and said, this disnae work. But they came up with loads of ideas and Jackie put it all together.

"The production will use lots of other facilities from the complex. There is a media screen in the theatre and video is going to be incorporated. We will use the computers and the video facilities to tape some parts in advance.

"The idea is that we will actually have conversations going on between the fairy godmother on the screen and characters on the stage. The costumes will be made by each individual depending on how they see their character, using our sewing machines."

Other plans being prepared for Christmas include a group who are going to design and produce CYC Christmas cards and an electronics workshop where young people will build Christmas lights for the complex from basic components.

"There is a photography group too, and they are putting on an exhibition on the reality of Christmas and poverty. The idea is for young people to look at what Christmas means to them," Anne says.

"That may be a question of saying all the glitter is behind the glass in shop windows, or it may be that they want to say 'yes, it's a great time'" she adds.

When Scottish Child visited in November CYC had only been

---

by  
**Stephen Naysmith**

---





open for seven weeks, but they had already staged a Hallowe'en production with a cast of twenty, but as many again involved backstage.

"A drama group improvised the play but another group in the recording complex wrote the music."

The sewing machines are hardly the latest technology, but everything else in the complex appears to be. The whole project is the culmination of four years of campaigning by local youngsters, much of it done by members of Castlemilk's Youth Council. Despite the rejection of two planning applications they persevered and now have the run of the largest ever Urban Aid project for young people in Scotland.

The cafe and bar have even attracted adults to the building, but they are turned away. The attitude is that adults do enough excluding of young people from the places they like to go to. What are tables for if not for turning!

So how do the young people of Castlemilk take up all these opportunities? After a series of introductory evenings and weekend events, many have already joined. There is a membership fee of £1 to cover the cost of a laminated membership card, and those wanting to use the building have to sign a contract forbidding, among other things, violence, drink and drugs. These rules are to make the venue a safe place that children want to come to and that adults aren't anxious about. Hence the apparently rigid security with only one entrance which is always staffed and incorporates a turnstile. Those breaking the rules will not be banned however, as the complex has a no-bar policy "Barring people doesn't solve anything," Anne claims.

There has already been plenty of enthusiasm and more than 200 young people have registered in the few weeks since CYC opened. However only 50 are over 16 and while Anne would like to have a wider age range she knows it will not be easy to attract them in. "The bar here is strictly non-alcoholic and some older teenagers like to go to places where they can indulge in other things."

The shortage of 'seniors' is being tackled with trips to the local schools, Castlemilk High and St. Margaret Mary's to tell pupils what is on offer and also with streetworkers chatting to young people in the area.

There are groups for older teenagers offering DJ training, Radio Training, Drums workshops and Studio Engineering. Territorial issues have had to be tackled as well, as in a large area like Castlemilk there are local rivalries which could put some off from taking part.

At the moment the staff are still testing enthusiasm for the various activities: "We have to be flexible," says Anne, "There will always be things that young people don't want to take up." But once the introductory period is over, in the New Year, the people using the complex will get to say what they think it should do next. "Their responses to the opening 10 weeks programme will help determine what we do in the New Year," she points out. One surprise hit is Karaoke. "The juniors go mad for it, we are having to run two Karaoke evenings a week."

It will take a while however before many young people are fully involved in the running of the complex. The aim of getting a majority of them on the committee has not yet been achieved although the breakdown is currently six adults and six children. "We are going to give them training sessions before they get involved in

meetings," Anne says, arguing that young people need to be aware of the tendency for meetings to drag on and how to handle the procedures so that they know what they are taking on. When the full quota is reached the board will consist of six members of the Castlemilk Youth Council, six Castlemilk Youth Complex members, and six adults. This would give young people a fairly impressive 2-1 'advantage'.

Back in the drama room however, they are concentrating on lampooning the adults, with most of the staff being given cameo roles in Cinder-raver.

So is it just a chance to take the mickey out of the staff? Jackie Murdoch doesn't think so: "We do that anyway so it won't make much difference." But they do want to keep the end up for the older users of the centre. "Hardly anybody turns up for the over-16's events. There was a disco, but only seven people turned up."

So what attracts them? Jamie uses the Radio room "I have been doing some D.J.'ing and recording some of the programmes." The facilities are good, he says, but ridicules the

music collection, much of which was donated by Radio Clyde. "There is too much jazz and folk and not enough chart music."

Jackie Spiers is having a first read through of her part as Rubella. She fishes a huge imaginary brassiere out of her shopping bag: "It's my over the shoulder boulder holder" she cackles. "We should get the audience to shout that out along with her" says Donna.

"I'm the maist beautiful bird fae Clydebank to Castlemilk".

Continues Lisa Stephenson as Verruca, the other ugly sister. "Awe my pals say I look like Madonna".

"Aye", grins Jackie "Ma donna Kebab!"

There are only a few weeks left to pull the show together, but the Hallowe'en production was completed in a week. Will they all be able to learn their lines in time? "Give us a chance" says Jackie, "we've only just got the script!"



# From Son

**John Hunter** mulls over the meaning of fatherhood in a society approaching the new millenium.

It was three fifteen one weekday afternoon and I was standing in the school playground waiting for my ten-year-old daughter to come out, when something occurred to me. A small crowd of adults was assembling, some alone or with friends, some - like me - with other, younger, children in tow.

What occurred to me was that around fifty per cent of the waiting adults were men - thirty-something men at that, fathers collecting their children on a regular basis rather than grandfathers asked to do an occasional stand-in. Many of them knew each other, and they were clustered in groups chatting about football, the weather, nothing in particular.

The point of mentioning this is that eight years ago, when I first started collecting my children from the school gates, the proportion of fathers was much smaller. The few dads who did pick up their kids from the playground were lonely isolated figures, not part of the after-school culture at all.

Times they are a 'chargin', then. But how far have they changed? How far have they still to change? And, more importantly perhaps, exactly what direction is the change taking?

As Robert Bly, the American poet and thinker, puts it: 'We are living at an important and fruitful moment now, for it is clear to men that the images of adult manhood given by popular culture are worn out; a man can no longer depend on them.'

Bly's book, *Iron John*, from which this quote is taken, has become what *Private Eye* calls 'the male equivalent of the *Female Eunuch*. If that's an ironic comment from the magazine, it's certainly not the only one that has been made about *Iron John*, which had a mixed reception, and not only from women.

However, men have flocked to Bly in large numbers. He certainly seems to be striking a chord in some male psyches so maybe it's better not just to throw the whole thing out. Perhaps if we strip away some of the romanticism in Bly's image of the 'real' father we can then discover if something's left of value - something that will really give some new directions for fathers? Bly says it's difficult if not impossible for boys

to find a decent role model in modern society. For young fathers there is an added burden. If we assume that fathers have to be role models for their own (male) children, who do the fathers model themselves on. Their own fathers? Hardly. Many of the fathers of the boys who are now becoming fathers themselves - the current crop of grandfathers - were victims of their own times, modelling themselves on men brought up by harsh, macho and often absent Victorian and Edwardian fathers, men they scarcely knew, hopelessly inadequate figures in the 1990s, where gender roles are no longer so starkly differentiated.

Bly is trying to help men come to terms with an unsatisfactory past and put in place a better model of fatherhood. He's something of a lone voice however. You can search long and hard for positive advice for today's aspiring father, though negative comment can be found in superabundance.

Germaine Greer, for example, in her book *Daddy, I Hardly Knew You* recalls her father thus: '...during the years and years that we lived in the same small house, Daddy never once hugged me. If I put my arms around him he would grimace and pretend to shudder and put me from him. It was a joke...a tiresome, hurtful, relentless, stupid joke'. Would it still be like that for Germaine Greer, growing up now? How much, I wonder, are fathering styles and methods a product of individual temperament and how much are they conditioned by broader social attitudes and economic factors?

Just over a year ago in the pages of this magazine Margaret Murray told how in the

former Yugoslavia men of all ages were carrying weapons. 'Grown men are referring to their male children as "my little general" and sons and nephews are being given the message that men are naturally aggressive...' Perhaps those attitudes are to be expected in a country torn apart by war. It certainly suggests however, that the myth of the strong warrior male still has enormous attractions for some men and that in times of political upheaval people are much less open to new ways of relating.

Today Bill Grieve, Director Designate of the Aberlour Childcare Trust, is even more pessimistic. 'Fathering... is a disaster area,' he says. 'Studies have shown that on average fathers in the US spend about 12 minutes per day with their children, most of which are allocated to the "get your bedroom tidied up" species of interaction.' This isn't news to women. Other equally authoritative studies show that when mums go out to work they don't stop washing

**'To release the full force of fatherhood will mean breaking the masculine taboo on tenderness.'**

and ironing, hoovering and shopping, and talking to the kids - and hubby - while they do it.

Grieve drew my attention to another point we must grasp in relation to the amount and the quality of time fathers spend with their children: 'Cross cultural research shows that there is a correlation between violent cultures and those where fathers are most loosely connected to the family and have least to do with the rearing of the children.'

There is a message in there for the traditional working class Scottish family, where, even today, a man may not feel comfortable in his home and women still refer to the father of their kids as 'getting under their feet' when he's in

# ns . . . . .



the house. How much is that an issue of physical space within the home and how much a deep-rooted cultural prejudice against allowing men to be properly part of the family?

Like all the others, that is not an easy question to answer but, given that the fathers of the past, and possibly the present, no longer live up to expectations, what should we teach our own children to be like? What should today's fathers be giving to their own sons and daughters - and can they 'give' anything if their credibility is so much on the line?

What sort of man, in short, is the New Dad? In a television documentary earlier this year

anthropologist Desmond Morris maintained that since only 10,000 years - a mere 'blip' in evolutionary terms - had passed since humankind had developed agriculture, men are still hunters at heart. The floor of the stock exchange, where young men vie with each other to get the best deal is, he went on, the modern hunting ground.

By implication what fathers should be passing on to their sons are their knowledge of hunting, the habits of the prey, the best techniques. What men young and old should be sharing is the joy of the hunt.

Bly, in *Iron John*, develops this theme. 'During the long months the son spent in his mother's

body, his body got well tuned to female frequencies...now, standing next to the father as they repair arrowheads, or repair ploughs, or wash pistons in gasoline, or care for birthing animals, the son's body gets a chance to retune. Sons who have not received this retuning will have father hunger all their lives.'

We don't quite know what these 'female frequencies' are - Bly doesn't elaborate - but the thesis seems clear. It's a New Age version of boys play at soldiers and girls play with dollies. Or is it?

Angela Phillips, author of *The Trouble With Boys*, has this to say: 'Many young men are having to invent the role of father as they go along. For some, the invention will be far more positive than the role they might have learned by watching and absorbing their own fathers. Research among fulltime "primary nurturing fathers" has found that many of them were brought up in families without fathers and that their caring behaviour seems to have been modelled on mothering rather than fathering.'

This line of reasoning seems to imply that the New Dad's role in the family will become less and less distinguishable from the New Mum's role. Is that what we should expect? In this era, when more and more women are choosing to rear their children alone, rather than put up with an unreconstructed old-style dad, is the only way forward for men to become 'more like mum'? If that's the case, we can expect that both partners will perform the same sorts of tasks; both will fulfil similar needs in their children; both will relate to their children in similar ways.

While this may be a laudable and necessary change, it may be a long way off. There are still relatively few two-parent families which have truly broken the mould. Even in the playground mentioned above, the parents waiting half an hour earlier for younger children were, with few exceptions, mothers. How many men voluntarily give up work to look after the new baby so that their partner can pursue a career, perhaps a better paying career?

According to Brian McGlone, a single parent bringing up two girls in Glasgow, the traditional

# nto Fathers

# SUBSCRIBE!

## Scottish Child needs you!

Unpredictable, frank, funny, and often controversial, Scottish Child is full of useful information! Now as ever, Scotland's liveliest magazine relies on the support from our subscribers to maintain our independence and to continue publishing. So if you enjoy the magazine join us and help Scottish Child grow even bigger and better!

If you are a new subscriber joining us before the 1st of January 1995 we will give you eight copies of Scottish Child for the price of six. There are two ways you can subscribe.

**\*BY DIRECT DEBIT**

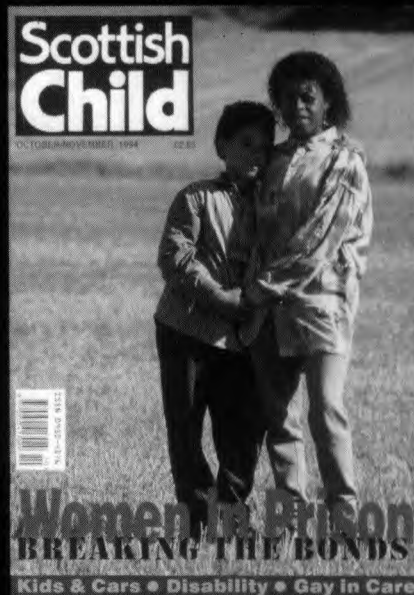
Fill out all sections of the form below and we will send you Scottish Child for just £15 per year for individuals, £25 for organisations and groups.

**\*BY ANNUALLY RENEWABLE SUBSCRIPTION**

Just fill in the mailing details on the form below and enclose a cheque made payable to "Scottish Child". Rates are just £15 for individuals and £25 for organisations and groups.

**\* BY BECOMING A FRIEND OF SCOTTISH CHILD**

The highest level of support you can give Scottish Child is by joining our supporting subscribers group. Just fill in the mailing details below and simply pledge a minimum of £50 per year by direct debit or by cheque. We will then send you every issue of the magazine, all our forthcoming publications, and notification of all Scottish Child events. Your name will also be listed at least once a year in the magazine. We cannot overemphasise how much this extra support is needed and valued.



### DIRECT DEBITING INSTRUCTIONS

### MAILING DETAILS

**BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE**

To (Name and address of your bank/building society) \_\_\_\_\_

Your name and address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

I instruct you to pay direct debits from my account at the request of Scottish Child Ltd. The amounts are variable and may be debited on various dates. Scottish Child Ltd. may only change the amounts and dates after giving me prior notice. I will inform the bank in writing if I wish to cancel this instruction and I understand that if any direct debit is paid which breaks the instruction; the bank/building society will make a refund.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Bank account in the name of \_\_\_\_\_

Bank account no.           Bank sort code \_\_\_\_\_

Banks may decline to accept any instructions to charge direct debits to certain types of account other than current accounts. Scottish Child Ltd, Reg. in Scotland No. 113283 Reg. Office 130 St. Stephen St. Edinburgh Scotland. Originator's No. 907089

**Please return to Scottish Child, 130 St. Stephen Street, Edinburgh EH3 5AD.**

Please fill this in to help us get Scottish Child to you efficiently.

Block Capitals Please.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_



roles still by and large exist in two-parent families. As a single parent, however, he is forced to do things differently. 'There's a definite difference between the roles played by fathers in single parent families and two-parent families. I have become breadwinner, carer, giver of affection, soother of all ills.'

One of the hardest nuts to crack is summarised neatly by Brian Jackson in the conclusion to his study of 100 first-time fathers in Bristol, published as far back as 1984. 'To release the full force of fatherhood,' said Jackson, 'will mean breaking the masculine taboo on tenderness.'

For McGlone, however, it's not quite as simple as breaking a taboo. 'I still feel there's an element missing in me because I'm a guy,' he says. 'I think that the maternal instinct, the tenderness of mothers means that they are naturally more gentle and caring with their kids. I think that's inherent: I don't think it can be taught.'

Ian Maxwell, a parent of young children in Portobello, has similar feelings. Despite the fact that from a very early stage he and his partner have both worked part-time and more or less shared childcare responsibilities he finds that his children are closer to their mother, Patsy.

'Their reactions and interactions with me and Patsy still seem to be quite different. They have definitely had a stronger bond with their mother. She is still the most important figure, which, in a way, is most disconcerting.' He feels that having spent a lot of time looking after them he should have achieved more.

As far as the roles of mothers and fathers in enlightened families is concerned he says: 'I'm not sure how far you can generalise. A lot of it is to do with your own character and how you react. I don't think that we're playing different roles for them in the way that happened in the past.'

'The roles seem to be there whether you like

them or not. Girls play with prams and boys play with guns. If you take that as your starting point and conclude that some of their behaviour is innate it is the character of the parents that is more important.'

In 1992 the UK government signed up to the Council Recommendation on Childcare, a European initiative which says, with respect to the care and upbringing of children, that 'Member States should promote and encourage, with due respect for the individual, increased participation by men in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women.'

What has happened in the two years since? At the most basic level, the UK government's refusal to endorse better rights to paternity leave tell us a lot about the mismatch between the words and the deeds. And if we think about the older child - the toddler or the teenager - I can bring to mind no UK government initiatives which have the effect of encouraging fathers to play a more active role in the upbringing of their children. Also, this recommendation is part of the European Union's Equal Opportunities Programme and is aimed more at freeing women up from home-based responsibilities than at the needs of the child.

That set me thinking again about how much, or rather how little, we listen to children themselves about this question of what fathers are and what they should be. So, I devised a simple questionnaire, had 30 copies made of it, and gave it to my 13-year-old daughter Sarah to distribute to her classmates. The answers made intriguing reading.

Two of the questions were 'What do think was the role of the father in the past?' and 'What do you think is the role of the father now?'. The large majority of answers indicated that the children believed there had been a substantial change. 'I think the father doesn't have as much say in things as he used to' and 'Now the father still goes to work, but the wife might go to work

now too so they'd both have to look after children, do chores and cook' were typical of the replies to the second of these questions.

One respondent was much more specific on the role of the New Dad: 'To help the mother support the family. To earn money, to cook, to bring up children, to clean the house, to be there with the mother'. But this was followed by a pointed caveat: 'This is what I think it should be like.'

Not everyone was so positive. One respondent said that the role of the father now was 'almost nothing...it's all left to the mothers'. Another, in answer to the question 'How well do you think fathers...are adapting to their new role within the family?' said 'I think if they got the chance to go back to how it was they would jump at it.'

Thirty kids is a small sample to base any conclusions on, but it is sad to see such cynicism and lack of hope in thirteen year olds and we must surely hope to disprove such dire verdicts. If we don't, what does the future hold for fatherhood?

On present evidence it seems that the most likely development is not that the roles will be again sharply differentiated, but that the very idea of mother and fathers having separate and distinctly different roles for their children will go out the window. We will move from a patriarchal society to one in which a parent's relationship with his or her child will be defined by the personalities and needs of both parties rather than by predefined and predetermined roles. And the father standing waiting for his children in the playground at three fifteen will be no more or less remarkable than the mother with a job and career which makes her the long-term principal breadwinner of the family.

But where in that case does that leave the special needs of boys and those of girls, as defined, however simplistically, by men like Robert Bly?

---

---

# NEVER

---

---

**T**he strength has to be found to break the pattern, make the change and open your eyes.

Sometimes I look down at my son sleeping peacefully and I feel anger swell inside for a mother who never protected her child, who was never there when needed most.

I often wondered why I went through so much? Why I fought for life when there were nights when I went to bed wishing never to wake.

Then on 30 April 1994 my questions were finally answered! I gave birth to a lovely 8lb 9oz baby boy. This set my mind working, thinking again about my childhood and how it was for me.

From the first moment I cradled him in my arms I vowed he would never suffer the abuse I did.

My childhood was full of violence. I recall hiding, scared and crying while my dad beat my mum. He died when I was five, leaving my knowledge of him brief, filled with violence and fear.

When I was around ten years old my brothers began to beat me - head banged off walls, fists coming down on my face and body. Constantly covered in bruises, the hits, kicks. This was nothing, meant nothing. It was expected. A way of life. Mum got it from dad, now it was my turn.

What of my mum? She ignored it, expected it and therefore condoned it. So the legacy of male violence lived on. My screams and cries were never heard, never answered. At the age of eleven my life was simply a fight for survival.

Then the decision was made to take in a lodger. I don't really know who by but it was and he came ...

His name was John and he was a friend of my oldest brother. He was in the army and not always around. When John was around he brightened up the black hole of existence I had been sucked into. Never did I laugh so much as when John stayed. He protected me, almost stopped the beatings. I believed in him, trusted him. John was the brother I should have had.

He was the first male figure I knew who didn't use violence to manipulate and control people. Never once did John hit me but he took the one and only thing I had left. The only thing that was still mine: my innocence.

John broke all trust. Violated beyond repair, came to my room at night, when everyone slept, removed my things. Raped.

Maybe I could have screamed, called for help but cries had gone unheard so many times before.

Fear has a way of taking all voice, all sound. You can want to scream so badly, open your mouth and nothing comes out.

When John stayed I was sexually abused. When he was gone I was beaten. So I retreated into a world of my own where I'd be safe, where it wouldn't matter any more, where people did what they wanted. I switched off.

Life went on like this until I was about fifteen. I knew I couldn't survive like this much longer. Going to sleep at night praying I'd never wake again. Wishing some freak accident would take me, free me. But it never happened.

The only one who would free me was myself.

I wrote to John and warned him that if he came back I'd tell. He never did come back.

Life at home carried on, the legacy of violence didn't end until I finally moved out for good at twenty years old, into Pathway Project for raped and sexually abused young women.

There the healing began, only things got harder before they got easier. It had taken many years to get to this stage and even then there were still attempts at suicide and self-mutilation. It was hard working through this but eventually I was strong enough to move on.

I have now had my own tenancy for two years but my greatest achievement is my son.

Too many people say the abused become the abusers but I know the legacy has to end somewhere. Things have to change. They must.

I shall be a mother to my son, the mother I never knew.

I find myself asking why? So many whys. Why have I brought my son into such an evil world?

Then I hear the survivor in me. I am not saying life's easy. It took years of pain and anger. There's still that child within me that doesn't understand, who's still lost, still hurts.

I know I may not have the strength to change the world but I do have the strength to give my son the life every child should have, the childhood I never had. It only takes one generation to break the cycle for ever.

## VOWS

Never.

My son  
shall never have a childhood  
like mine the pain and fear  
abuse.  
Never  
shall he have another's fist come  
down on his face  
while I stand by and watch.  
Never  
shall his dreams be shattered  
or his nightmares come true  
while I am there at his side.

Never  
shall his questions go un  
answered, or his cries, screams  
unheard.  
Never  
shall I make him feel worthless,  
feel that he never should have  
been born

Never  
shall he believe I don't love him, or  
feel I wasn't there  
because he'll always know I love  
him.

Never.

*Alice Riddell*



# When Children's Rights are

Children's Rights should soon be recognised in Scottish Law, but what exactly are they? **Stuart Waiton** works with young people at the Monkland's Drop-in Centre. He sets out his personal view that current thinking on 'rights for children' is fundamentally flawed.

Children in Scotland are about to find themselves in a paradoxical situation. Young people will be among the victims of the new Criminal Justice Act, which denies many rights of assembly and protest and criminalises people with unusual lifestyles. In contrast, when the Children Act brings Scotland closer into line with the rest of Britain, they will supposedly see their rights flourish.

Secretary of State, Ian Lang, has chosen to prioritise his Children's Bill in the coming Westminster timetable. This will be the only piece of significant Scottish legislation for the coming parliamentary session and will put the government a bit closer to meeting the United Nation's deadline for establishing a Rights of the Child Charter.

Today, in England and Wales, the interests of the child are held to take precedence over the rights of parents. Whether in considering custody between parents, or placing the child in care, the Children Act states that 'the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration' (Children Act 1989, Chapter 41).

Here in Scotland, Professor Kathleen Marshall (ex-director of the Scottish Child Law Centre) is calling for a Children's Minister, while the Association for the Protection of All Children is calling for an independent Children's Rights Commissioner. The arguments are voiced in emotive tones: '13 million citizens with no voice in government' exclaimed one article.

The theory underlying the children's right movement is that rather than treating children as being incompetent before the law, the system should start from the assumption that children are competent. Their rights can then be recognised, giving children equality of treatment with adults.

However ever since the growth of compulsory education and the introduction of legislation such as the Factory Acts of the 1800s children's lives have been regulated by state law in ways which are fundamentally different from the legal constraints placed on adults. There are rules covering when you can work, for how long and what type of work you can do as a child. It is worth noting that a child has no RIGHT to work. Similarly children have no right to drive, drink or have sex before a certain age and while

we may be a bit more liberal today most people accept this as common sense.

The first problem with the philosophy of child rights is: who do these new rights really empower? A number of sheriffs at the Family Mediation Scotland conference, Changing Families, were unsure where to turn when it came to putting children's rights first. 'Should I send a 10 year old a writ to explain his parents' divorce?' and 'Who should I ask to get the best picture, a teacher, a doctor or a mediator?' were just two questions I heard.

These doubts express the reality of children's rights. Children do not have rights, because they cannot exercise them independently. If they could we would have no need for any UN Children's Rights Charter in the first place.

If a 4 year-old killed somebody he would not (at least not yet) be charged with murder. That is because we still have, as do all western-style countries, what is called an age of 'criminal responsibility'. In Scotland that stands at eight, in England it is ten. However if someone was found sexually assaulting a 4 year-old, our reaction would be very different. The Paedophile

they understand the difference between right and wrong. We might well argue this requirement should be applied to all witnesses. The fact is however, it is a test which is applied to children only.

The Children's Society has a guardian system for legal cases where a guardian speaks to all family members, teachers, social workers etc before writing a report on what they believe is in the best interest of the child. In court, as in everyday life, a child's word is not taken as equal to an adult.

The problem applies in every aspect of a young person's life. Children cannot decide whether or not they'll go to school or what time they can stay out until or even where they can play. These things may be negotiated but it is the parents who are responsible for this.

Look at it this way: When we decide who to vote for, what programmes to watch on TV or where to go at night we expect to do so freely and independently. Put yourself in the position where you could only do these things via a mediator or a guardian - you might complain 'we are being treated like children' - you would,

## 'In the guise of defending children, courts become moral guardians of the family.'

Information Exchange used to argue that children were capable of making their own decisions about who they wanted to have sex with, they argued that the child was competent. Most people think otherwise. There are choices and responsibilities we protect children from, and with good reason.

Likewise, a child's word is not automatically accepted in court. The above Sheriffs were looking for a professional to verify a child's story or to speak for him. In cases of children divorcing their parents the child has to show he has a case to a solicitor then a Legal Aid Board and finally a judge before it can even be heard in court. For all the talk of rights, the child still needs to persuade some adult advocate before their voice stands a chance of being heard.

Theoretically children of any age can testify in court provided the judge or sheriff is satisfied

in effect, have lost your rights.

Children do not have the experience, the responsibility or the genuine freedom that they will have as adults. The very idea of children having rights is in reality a false one. But more importantly, I would argue, 'children's rights' not only undermine parents' rights, but are a redefinition of what those rights are and an attack upon them. This is the second flaw in this whole campaign: The 'rights of the child' are in reality nothing more than the increasing right of the state, (through the agency of local authorities and professionals) to interfere in our lives and decide whether or not we are responsible parents.

If children are to have 'rights' before the law, then in reality parents' rights are being handed over to the state which decides what is and is not best for parents and our children. Take divorce cases - the real rights parents once had are put



# Children's are Wrong



Pic. Julia Morris

at risk. We can no longer run our own lives and plan what happens to our family unless we can prove we are 'capable parents'. If you face the charge of failing your child, and your child's 'rights' are paramount, you will find that you can no longer rely on being innocent until proved guilty. Your right to be tried under an agreed procedure or due process so that you can defend yourself, could also go unrecognised.

Suspicion of abuse could lead - as in some cases it already has - to families being broken up. Parents investigated by the social services will no longer be able to decide what is best for

their children. This will be the job of the professionals.

So am I arguing for a parent's right to abuse their children? Not at all. Many would argue that the regulation of what was once the tyrannical power of the male head of household has been to the benefit of the less powerful members of the family - women as well as children. The state has now shifted its ground however, and is extending its colonisation of the family through the campaign for children's rights. It is, in other words, increasingly dictating its own agenda of what a good and bad parent is.

Parents, especially working class parents, are no longer deemed adequate enough to do a job they have been doing for hundreds of years, through slumps and wars. Bad parents are the subject of witch-hunts and parenting packs are being sent to schools so that teachers can teach children how to function as part of a family. Parenting classes could well be on the way. Meanwhile, violent videos are being censored to defend us all from the irresponsible parents who let their kids become 'evil' from watching *Child's Play 3*.

The authorities have set themselves up as a 'superparent' who defends all children, in the process giving themselves powers that in the past they could only have dreamed of. The child-centred court, when considering who gets custody of a child may well, as happened in America this September, decide that a woman living as a lesbian cannot give a 'normal' upbringing, for instance. In the guise of defending children, courts become moral guardians of the family.

If it were the government pushing this idea, people's cynicism might have led them to criticise what is happening. However the real driving force behind the children's rights campaign has come, not from the right, but from liberal professionals. This approach is epitomised by Dr Penelope Leach, a founder of EPOCH (End Physical Punishment of Children), a writer on child development and member of the Social Justice Commission. Dr Leach is a caring person who rejects the government's 'family values'. In her recent book *Children First: What Society Must Do and is Not Doing for Children*, she recognises that it is time and money - or the lack of it - that causes most problems within families. Yet this narrow focus on the family as an area where social problems can be solved leads to greater involvement on the part of the state.

Instead, therefore, of the rights-for-children movement taking the debate into genuinely new territory all that is happening - or so it appears - is that the parent is now cast in the role of 'baddie'. Before it was children who told lies and couldn't be relied on; now that criticism is more likely to be levelled at a parent. If professionals persist in asserting children's rights in these terms, they need to be clear that as well as emancipating children, as they see it, they are also promoting greater state interference and control over all our rights and lives. ■

# Control and Care

The Church of Scotland's Board of Social Responsibility, Scotland's largest voluntary social work agency, celebrates 125 years of work in the community this year. Scottish Child went to visit one of its schools, Geilsland School, to see how its services for teenagers in trouble are keeping up with the times.



In Scotland there is still a stark cut-off point for many teenagers who get into trouble with the police. The Hearing System has always had the powers to hold onto sixteen-plus offenders but usually hands them on to the courts and a system which puts punishment for wrongdoing (the 'public interest' - so called), ahead of education and guidance (the best interests of the child).

Children's panel members are not cruel monsters waiting gleefully to throw kids to the lions. They often end supervision requirements when a boy or girl reaches sixteen because social work departments

don't provide the resources for older teenagers.

Bearing this in mind, and all the hype that's around about young offenders, Scottish Child went to take a look at one exception to this general situation. Geilsland School is run by the Church of Scotland. It's one of their two boys-only schools, (the other Ballikinrain recently celebrated its 25th birthday). Geilsland's in Beith, Ayrshire which is a bit out of the way if you're travelling from Glasgow, although it's nothing like as remote as some of Scotland's other residential schools, built in an era when it was felt that

the best thing to do with 'bad boys' was to take them out of harm's way and give them a dose of country air and healthy living.

If you're like sixteen year-old Tommy and have a long history of driving offenses, Geilsland may not be the place you'd choose to be in but it's on another planet from either of Scotland's two Young Offenders Institutions at Dumfries and Polmont, where education, work training and leisure are all subordinated to the prison philosophy of control and discipline.

It's fair to say that even Geilsland once operated in ways closer to those which gladden the heart of Michael Howard and his ilk, looking for an 'austere' experience of incarceration. There are no fences or locked gates round this school but once upon a time it too placed a high priority on drill and the correct folding of a 'bed block'. Polmont and Dumfries YOIs still send loads of young men back out into the community able to fold their blankets better than the neatest nurse but a bit short of some of the other skills the public might like ex-offenders to have gained at the state's expense. Thankfully some institutions have moved on from that.

Geilsland's present headmaster, Randal Mair, has been there since 1988 and he and his staff have taken the spirit of the 1968 Social Work Act at its full value. The school has a relaxed and welcoming air about it and that's impressive when you consider that most of the boys would really rather not be there if they had the choice.

Choice is in short supply for many of them though. By no means all are here on court or panel orders but even those who are 'voluntary' residents may have few alternatives back where they come from.

For a start, most of the boys who come to Geilsland have been through other places like children's homes, foster homes, other residential schools. Quite a lot of them

# ntation



found themselves labelled 'difficult to manage' in those places. Ranald Mair's assessment is brief and to the point: "In a very real sense this may be the last chance to work with these boys within the care system before they are either decanted out onto the streets, or sucked into the penal system. I'm not claiming that we prevent youngsters going to jail. We don't, not entirely, but we still believe that we're doing some good if we stop them going at fifteen or sixteen, even if they end up there after all at eighteen."

He sees two main reasons why Geilsland is right to focus on older offenders. The policy fits with Strathclyde Region's aim of trying to keep youngsters out of the penal system and it makes economic sense too, since by the end of the eighties there were more places than needed for the younger teenager but far too few for the older age group.

Like any other school handling young people who have been in trouble with the law, Geilsland is influenced by the political climate of the day. "The law and order lobby keeps trying to determine the agenda, more so perhaps down in England than up here. Fortunately schools like ours are supported by the general belief in Scottish Office that the system, and I mean by that the Children's Hearing System, works. So, this far at least there is no plan for building a whole lot more secure units as

there is in England." That makes it all sound fine but Ranald hasn't finished -

"There is absolutely no cause for complacency. Scotland has a worse record than Albania or Turkey for sending sixteen year-olds to jail. Most countries don't do that. The twin poles of our culture are that you can get married or go to jail at sixteen in Scotland."

As it happens, none of the kids at Geilsland is married but they and their offending certainly come in all shapes and sizes:

"We take almost the full range of offenders, including boys who are known to have sexually abused others. Sexual abusers present special problems for other agencies caring for younger boys. Local authorities cannot risk placing known abusers where they may re-offend so we're working more and more with boys who fall into that category.

"We don't on the whole take lads who are up for crimes of violence - murder or attempted murder - but, in terms of the kind of behaviour which makes the headlines in the media - car theft, drugs and housebreaking - we have the full spectrum here.

"These boys don't come to us having taken and driven a car once or twice. We're dealing with youngsters who usually have well-formed patterns of offending and who are at serious risk of a spell in

prison."

That's the 'offending' profile of the school's population. But of course it's far from the whole picture. Many of the boys have no home base in the sense which most of us would understand that phrase. Survey after survey reveals the high percentage of kids leaving social work care in their mid-teens only to become homeless in a very short space of time, possibly getting into prostitution and drug abuse as a way of 'surviving'. These boys at Geilsland are not just some of the bigger nuisances around, as the government likes to portray them, they are also the kids who have to look after themselves because no-one else does.

That's one of the reasons why just now the school grounds are resounding to the sound of cement mixers: new units are taking shape as the architects' plans on the wall of Ranald Mair's office are turned from drawings into brick and cement reality. This transformation of the living accommodation is all part of Geilsland's wish to improve what's on offer for the boys and the staff. It reflects the church's concern about what the social work world likes to call 'through-care'. Through care means getting boys ready to be independent once they leave, assuming that for most of them independence will mean going it alone.

There's a lot of discussion about the  
Scottish Child December 1994/January 1995 27

# 'these boys aren't just the 'nuisances' the government portrays them as - they're the kids who have to look after themselves because no-one else does'

limitations of a big institution as a way of preparing kids for living on their own. Harry, one of the staff working in the unit which takes a small group of boys with learning disabilities - another dimension of the work here - says: "Getting the skills for survival is much more than just learning to cook and keep clean. Kids fail in independent living as much because they get lonely and depressed as because they can't manage their money. Social workers and care staff tend to talk about 'self esteem' as though it's something you can just get like a packet of soup off a supermarket shelf. I sometimes think we trot these words out too simplistically. Feeling OK about yourself and confident about the future is not easy for any of us and least of all for a teenager who's been passed around from one place to another."

The average stay at Geilsland is about twelve to fifteen months, although the boys in the special needs unit often stay longer. Ranald speaks of a psychological cut-off point and a loss of momentum eventually once a teenager's commitment to the programme begins to dwindle. One year is a small window of opportunity when you think how big the stakes are but the boys are adamant that any longer than about a year would be pointless. Mark's speaking for the group when he says, "You feel you're going nowhere if you can't see beyond this place. You've got to have some idea of when you're getting out."

Since a lot of the boys have failed in other places it seems reasonable to enquire what latitude there is for failure at Geilsland. Teenagers who live in their own families can fall out with mums and dads and still stay at home - not always but often. That's much less likely to happen if you are in the care system. If you have a bad run-in with a member of staff there's strong possibility that you will be moved on to a new place. And the more it happens the more it's likely to go on happening. People like Ranald talk about the boys 'internalising' that view of themselves as hard-to-manage desperadoes. It's bad news for the boys as well as for the staff they live with: failure laid on top of failure contributes precisely to that low sense of the self esteem that everyone thinks essential for well-being.

Geilsland does manage to steer boys through bad patches and not let them go. But if they get into problems once they've left the school it may be very difficult indeed to snatch them back from the criminal justice system, not least because places that fall vacant are filled very quickly.

Ranald does put a high priority on this however, as the case of John illustrates. When

Scottish Child was visiting John was just back from a six-week stay in Longriggend (the remand institution for teenagers) and the staff were under no illusions about the work it was going to take to pick up the pieces. But he was back.

Ranald describes that as one scenario they work with. "Another quite a common one is that a boy leaves a residential school at sixteen, goes back into his community, fails there and we're called in to put together some kind of a



rescue package for him, to keep him away from youth custody.

"I think because we are placed where we are in the total care system we are perhaps more aware of the implications of letting a boy go. Unlike a school dealing with the younger teenager, we can't get ourselves off the hook with 'he's outgrown what we have to offer', which is a nice euphemism for saying you want shot of somebody.

The warmth of the staff and the relaxed atmosphere mask some stern realities however. Just because it looks and feels relatively cosy doesn't mean that Geilsland's an easy place for boys to spend time in. None of the staff we spoke to were scared of the idea of confrontation and challenge. As Dave, one worker said, "You can't do anything with a teenage boy unless you're prepared to confront him about his behaviour. We do that. If we didn't we'd be failing the boys. No-one wants to wield the big stick or wave the threat of jail at them but if they really don't

succeed here there may be nothing more can stop them ending up there. Our side of the bargain is that if we expect them to make changes it should be expected of us that we'll give as much in return."

The same message exactly as we've heard from Ranald - "What kind of caring is it if we just allow boys to make mistakes which are going to be dangerous for them or others?"

"If a boy is going to run away I think we have a duty to try and stop him. If my son was running away in order to drink, use drugs, allow himself to be abused sexually I would sure as hell try to stop him, not because I wanted to control him but because that's what caring's about. I think that saying 'we're not prepared to take you on is also a way of saying we don't really care.'

"You can disguise that in different ways - talk about kids' rights to make their own decisions, especially for kids over sixteen,

but all you're really doing is saying 'I don't want the hassle of having to take that messy bit on'. I think the willingness to take on the messy bits has to be part of the whole relationship you build up with any young person and with these teenagers in particular."

Geilsland's not just any local authority boarding school. It's run by the Church of Scotland. One of the prominent buildings in the grounds is the chapel where boys and staff gather once a week for a service. In this respect as in so many however, Geilsland is a modern school with a headmaster who is clear that it's no part of his mission to 'save souls'.

"We don't preach at the boys. We don't use them as a captive audience to convert. The service is part of the shared life of the community. It's a chance to put across messages about valuing others, being valued and loved and being lovable. I think one of the great benefits of the chapel is that we are just together as a group outside our normal roles of staff or boys. Because it's got this aspect to it we've found it incredibly useful in the past. For example a boy was killed in a road accident some years ago and I think that because this school is not a completely secular environment we had ways of helping the boys come to terms with that tragedy which another school might not have had."

The chapel is perhaps the most symbolic building for that coming together of the whole community but, as Ranald explains, it cannot be the only means by which the school holds to a sense of common purpose. Once the new building programme is complete the living units will be even more autonomous than they are now. That makes the leadership at the centre all the more crucial. It's an intriguing question to know how best to delegate authority without sacrificing essential leadership. The last word on that goes to Ranald: "In a way that sums up the challenge for the whole staff group, and in fact for anyone living or working with teenagers. It's what makes the work at once so fulfilling and so frustrating - for us and the boys!"

Not so long ago schools like Geilsland were being closed at a great rate, as social work departments went through a massive reassessment of the value of removing kids from their local communities. The difficulties in being removed from your familiar surroundings are still an issue, as the boys themselves made plain. Nevertheless, everyone should be grateful for the fact that the Church of Scotland has held onto some of its residential resources, and indeed not just held onto them but revitalised what they offer so that at least a few 'problem' teenagers get what all teenagers need: practical and emotional support using confrontation and care. ■

*The names of the boys in this article have been changed.*

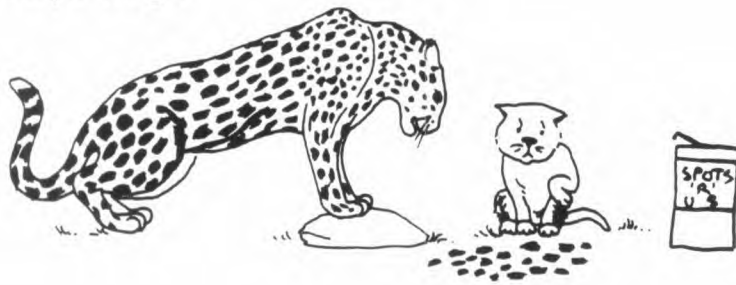


## Leopards, And Their Nature

There y'are, son  
there's yir  
clean spots  
fir the morra

Och, mum - whit's wrong  
wi the ones ah'm wearin

Noo, dinni git me  
startit - away  
an clean yir fangs.



## Miss Muffit An Thi Sojers

Well:  
Furst wi hud wir maffs  
Nen wi hud wir spellin  
Nen wi hud wir mulk  
Nwi aw shoutit:  
Fank Ewe Maggi!

Nen it wis play time  
Nwi wis playn sojers  
Nah goat kist  
Bi nanci roburts EEUCH

Nen miss muffit saze:  
WHIT UR YOUS GOIN  
TI BE IF YIS GROW UP

N patrik saze: a sojer  
Nah saze: a mulk min  
N patrik saze mulk min  
Dinni git ti kill peepl  
- Nah saze naw -  
Bit they git ti ride about  
Oan a HOARSE

N nanci roburts is gonni  
Be a nurse n kiss aw  
The deed sojers EEUCH

Bit shi willni kiss a mulk min  
Coz shi saze: mulk min  
Urni brave enuff

- Nah saze aye -  
Huv yi seen the size  
O the HOARSE

Nen last, miss muffit saze:  
HOW MENNI SHEEP  
CAN EWE SEE  
IN THIS PIKCHUR

Nah seen sivin

But thir wis  
Only five

## The Mammy Giraffe Looks Doon Her Nose At Her Somewhat Recalcitrant Offspring

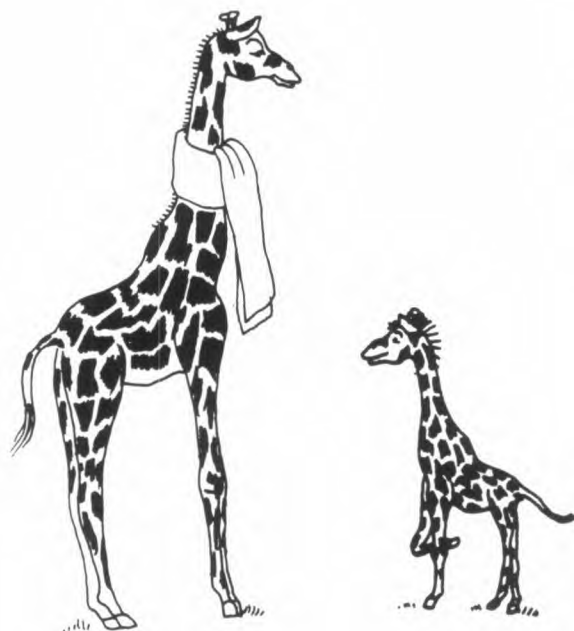
Aye

Spittin image  
o his faither

(Think he wis  
born in a field)

Will not wear that'  
scarf ah knitted him

Wanders about  
aw day -  
heid in the  
bluddy clouds.



**Mrs. Elephant's Dilemma  
(As Telt To Jumbo Junior)**

Whit a jobe  
Yir dad's goat

Ah'm that embarrassed

Still yiv goat ti keep  
thi wolf fae thi door

Atree ower yir heid

Food oan thi table

Peanuts up yir hooter.



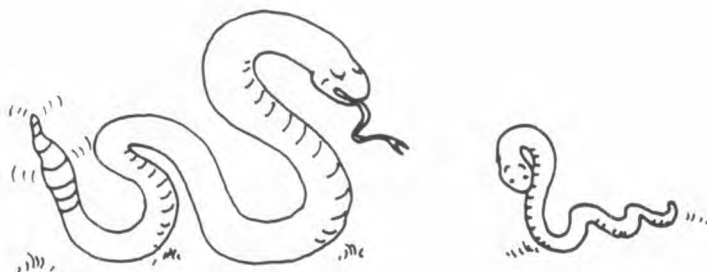
Poems by Billy Cornwall  
illustrations by Bonnie Thompson

**The Mammy Snake  
(Oan Hur High Horse)**

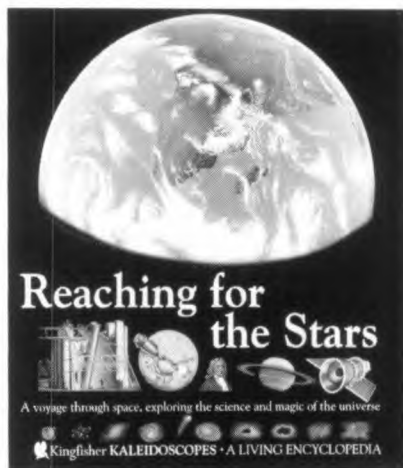
Yir bedroom's  
like a pit!

If yi dinni  
slither through there  
right now  
an clean it up -

Ah'll rattle  
yir bluddy  
lugs fir yi



## Popping Up again at Christmas



### Children's books reviewed by Katy Barnes

This Christmas there is a phenomenal range in new books for children, with a good mixture of the new, the amazing - and further adventures of favourite characters.

Amongst the familiar names are a new Kipper book - a pop-up complete with novelty light (Hodder £12.95). There's a new Stephen Biesty book of 'Incredible Cross Sections; Castle' (Dorling Kindersley £12.95).

The art of the pop-up book seems to be getting more ingenious all the time. Unfortunately the bad side of this is increased cost and in some ways, a decrease in what we think of as a 'proper' book to read. However, the wizardry is hard to resist! I love Colin Hawkins's 'Pirate Ship' (Collins £12.99). It has just one scene with a huge pop-up galleon. These is a treasure chest in which to store the figures, boats and monsters, which fold out, and a book in diary form to inspire lots of pirate adventures.

Staying with the pop-up genre a little longer - there is a whodunit aimed at the 8-12 year-old. It's called 'The Mystery of the Russian Ruby' and is by Iain Smyth (published by Orchard £12.99). What's good about this one is that the pop-up element allows the child to become the detective as he or she uncovers the clues and discovers the murderer. That might sound like a one-off read but it's not the case: the mystery can unfold differently many times so the book doesn't lose its appeal after one whizz through.

Pop-ups have even been used for reference books this year, for example in the creation of 'The Most Amazing Pop-up Science Book' by Jay Young (Watts £14.99). The book is really a portable science museum, full of information and actual experiments which include a periscope and a record. The periscope works and the record really plays.

Kingfisher have brought out an excellent new series of reference books, starting with eight titles covering theatre, music, painting, sculpture, electricity, fire, forests and stars. The books are spiral-bound using hardwearing, glossy paper with loads of photographs and

sketched illustrations. Each contains clever techniques to capture their subject matter. For example, the book about forests has a touch and feel page of different barks, while the book about stars contains a 3-D picture of the night sky. I am very impressed with the books and although at £12.99 for each title they are also quite pricey, the depth in which each topic is explored is superb.

In total contrast to the intricacy of these books for older children is my favourite Christmas book for toddlers: the new edition of Eric Carle's 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' (Hamish Hamilton £3.99). This book is printed on chunky cardboard and is virtually indestructible. Young children love to see the caterpillar scoff his way through the book.

For those who like to read picture books, Debi Gliori's new title 'The Snowchild' (Frances Lincoln £8.99) is about Katie who feels left out but makes a friend whilst building a snowchild. Typically of Gliori the story has beautiful illustrations, with lovely, child-like attention to detail. Fans will be delighted to hear that 'Lion at Bedtime' is out in paperback (Scholastic £3.99).

The favourite picture book this Christmas seems to be 'The Bear' by Raymond Briggs (Julia McRae £9.99) which has all the charm of 'The Snowman' (Penguin £4.50), combined with the dialogue-style script of 'The Man' (Anderson £5.99). 'The Bear' is the story of Tilly and the giant polar bear who enters her dreams. Tilly contends with her new friend making messes on the floor as her parents cope admirably with the concept of a bear they cannot see.

On a more traditional Christmas note, there are some good new retellings of the Nativity story this year: Nicola Smee's simple 'The Christmas Story' (Orchard £5.99) and the jolly 'Once in Bethlehem' by Martin Pierce (Tango £7.99). This one has bright, painted pictures and a fold-out manger scene.

For solo readers it is worth looking back to an

old favourite as Richmal Crompton's William returns to the television. All the 'Just William' books are available (Pan £3.99) and there is even a nifty 'Top Secret William Diary' (Pan £3.99).

Laura Ingalls Wilder's 'Little House' books are now being continued by Roger Lea Mcbride which will interest any child with a liking for pioneer stories full of details of life in the 'olden days'. 'Little House on Rocky Ridge' (Collins £3.99) starts the new series. It's written through the eyes of Laura's daughter, Rose. 'Little Farms in the Ozarks' (Collins £9.99), continues her story as the family settles down.

For older readers looking for something other than the everlasting Point Horror series (Scholastic), there is the Carnegie award winner, 'Stone Cold' by Robert Swindells (Hamish Hamilton £5.99). This is a thriller set in London with a teenager called Link as the hero. Homeless himself, he begins to realise that it is no coincidence that other kids are disappearing mysteriously from the streets.

Joan Lingard's Maggie books are available again after several years. They have been updated for the nineties and would make a good stocking filler singly - or a nice present for a more avid reader (Pan, each of four volumes (2.99)).

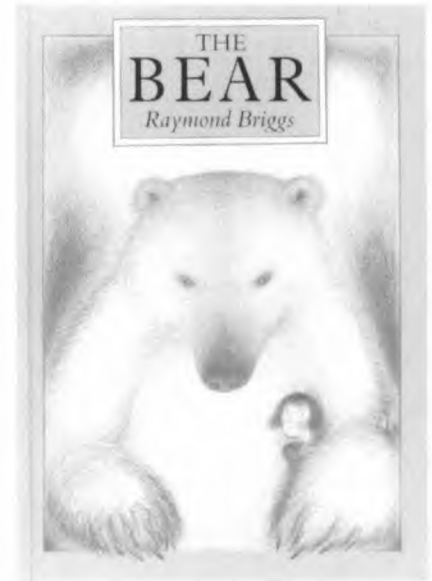
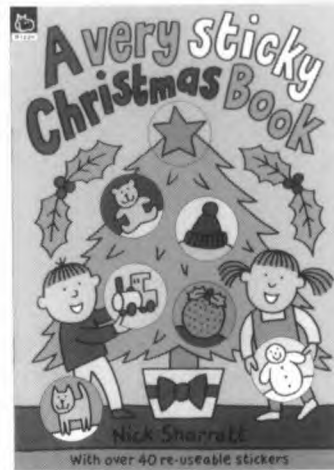
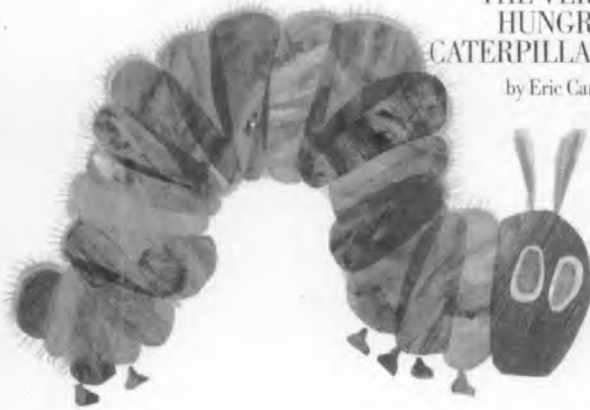
Finally a few titles guaranteed to keep busy those who get up obscenely early to open Christmas stockings... Nick Sharratt's zany 'A very sticky Christmas' (Scholastic £3.50) has over forty re-usable stickers! 'My Secret Family Tree' by Tat Small has to be filled in with details of mum, dad, brothers and sisters. There are also new 'Where's Wally' books by Martin Handford. And there are 'Wildly Wonderful' and 'Simply Sensational' activity books (Walker £2.99 each) and 'Dazzling Deep Sea Divers' sticker book' (Walker £3.99).

Something for everyone - happy reading this Christmas!

*Katy Barnes is in charge of the children's department at Waterstones Bookshop, George Street, Edinburgh.*



**THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR**  
by Eric Carle



## Words and Pictures

**“Bairns, Scottish Children in Photographs.” Iona McGregor  
National Museums of Scotland  
£14.99**

### Geoffrey Craig

When I first picked up this book I thought “Oh no, not another book extolling the hidden qualities of photogenic children.” I was surprised by my reaction to say the least. The last thing I wanted to see was Pear’s Soap type photographs which often reflected the aspirations of the parent rather than the sitter.

This book isn’t that sort of publication. The title is a bit misleading, and the book’s purpose may have been better served if it had used something along the lines of,

“Bairns, A Social History of Scottish Children”.

Surprisingly this book does not attempt to conjure up any romantic images of childhood. The text deals with the harsh reality of being a child and various attitudes that were fashionable in so-called parenting at different times throughout the past hundred and fifty years. I didn’t know for example that children were treated for impetigo by shaving their heads and then had the exposed scalp daubed with gentian violet. Life must have been really tough being a kid in those days. When I was reading this I realised that I’d unwittingly taken a lot for granted while growing up. Now that childhood seems a bit more bearable there are issues that still remain to be dealt with. I wonder if the National Museums will update this book in another twenty years or so?

The book itself is divided into chapters that

explore different aspects of childhood such as Home and Family, Education and Religion, Sickness and Health, Institutions, All Work and Time to Play. The introduction gives the reader a short insight into photography, just enough so that we can see the photographs are a cultural endpoint and not the beginning.

Each chapter sets a political and social context into which the photographs are placed. This served to strip any image of potential sepia tinted romanticism, except of course when I started to read All Work and Time To Play. Suddenly I found myself transported back to the berry fields in and around my native Dundee,

remembering coming home, shattered, with scratched hands from the tiny barbs on raspberry bushes, and if I was unlucky enough to have been caught up in a “berry fight” a bright red complexion and sticky explosions of hair matted with raspberry seeds. I started re-live childhood pranks on neighbours and friends etc. some of which I still find extremely funny. I guess I’m still a big kid at heart.

This book achieves what it had set out to do and that’s to inform. Essential reading for the budding social historian and student social worker. You might want to put one in your Granny’s Christmas stocking.



Pic. N.M.S.

December 1994

I don't know about anyone else but I know I've been sickened with the National Lottery fiasco. There are very few people I know that haven't grasped at the elusive dream and who can blame those who have, when this life is what reality offers! But personally I've had enough of empty dreams - I'm taking my chance with reality. One friend warned me that winning so much money would ruin a person anyway but given the state of my finances right now that's one I would be willing to gamble on.

Seriously though it's sickening when people are cashing Giro's in a place kitted out for the lottery hard sell. I suppose that's one way of getting some of the money back to the government. It's certainly a long way short of alleviating the needs of charities when only a tiny percentage of the takings go in that direction. You can be sure what it does do is salve consciences though - especially the government, who know they should be footing that bill anyway.

With the elusive dream in mind I was invited along to a 'demonstration' last week. The sales person was from AMWAY - offering a better and wealthier way of life if you firstly buy the starter kit and, subsequently, any tapes and over-priced products they sell. Unnamed brands at extortionate prices! And in order to meet your targets you involve friends and family. I have heard of AMWAY and people like them before and find it difficult to imagine I'd ever buy into any of it but the sales strategy was good and, when you're preaching to the poor and desperate you have to be on to a winner. Needless to say I rather resembled a thorn in the seller's side and be assured, the hard sell wasn't quite so effective that night, at least in this quarter. But there will be other nights and others vulnerable and needy enough to pay out £70+ for a beginner's kit to apparently make your fortune, when what really happens is, at the very best, you rob your friends and most probably chase them away. I sound pessimistic but I'm much more than that. I'm sick of the people who most need support being exploited - by AMWAY, on a relatively small scale, if we consider the government's exploits.

## Rona's Diary



We seem almost eager to be blindly led.

Pushing this rather depressing view of life aside, I thought I might have some time on my hands but alas my assumption that Grant would

go to my choice out of the three nearest schools to me was sadly misplaced. The Education Department, having taken what appears to be no

account of the safest pedestrian routes used by parents with small children, have dictated the school Grant's to go to (via a number of hazardous roads).

And so here I am, an application form and six pages of written explanation later, with a wait until April for the outcome. Of course catchment parents should be catered for but this is the next seven years of Grant's life and if those in the area aren't motivated enough then move over for those of us who are.

The strangest thing was being told, on telephoning the department, to register at the so-called local school anyway - presumably parents in all areas will do this regardless of whether or not they intend to send their children to the local school, causing inaccurate intake figures in April. So if I sound slightly agitated - I am!

To top it all my niece and nephew were whisked of to Germany last week by the latters' father. And while life here wasn't ideal, living with a mother with a mental health problem she claims not to have, they were at least around some sane family (me) and things familiar to them. They have been taken out of school for who knows how long by a man who is as deficient a parent as their mother. I had thought about contacting social services but it's the fear of enlisting the help of such a force that you may never detach yourself from. So I have no answers as to why they've gone, when or if they're coming back

and I'm left feeling worried and useless.

This is my last diary. Instead of moaning about it, I'm going to get on with living life and creating the kind of life for Grant and me that I know we deserve. Perhaps then one day, for us and anyone else struggling out there against what is often difficult odds, we can start to relax and enjoy life. ■

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
SCOTTISH CHILD  
FEBRUARY / MARCH**



**In the next issue**

Following on from the recent controversy surrounding the award to James Kelman of the Booker prize, it appears that the diversity of language and dialect in Scotland may be in inexorable decline. What can we do to stop it? Bert McCann investigates.

'School phobia' is a term often used to describe persistent truants. Scottish Child investigates whether it actually exists as a psychological condition or whether it's an excuse for something else.

The best way to be sure of getting your copy of Scottish Child is to take out a subscription. You can also order it from your newsagent using the form below.



Please reserve me a copy of  
Scottish Child magazine.

Name -----

Address -----

**F I L M H O U S E**

88 LOTHIAN ROAD, EDINBURGH

TELEPHONE 031- 228 2688

At Filmhouse in DECEMBER

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT III (9th - 15th)

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (5th & 6th)

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (5th - 7th)

HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR (6th & 7th)

THE PIANO (8th - 10th)

TO DIE FOR (16th - 21st)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (20th - 22nd)

LITTLE BUDDHA (28th & 29th)

RESERVOIR DOGS (28th - 30th)

Saturday Matinees:

GONE WITH THE WIND (3rd)

THUMBELINA (10th)

MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL (17th)

Look out in JANUARY for:

L'ENFER

AMATEUR

KILLING ZOE

EAT DRINK MAN WOMAN

EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES

Ticket prices from £2.20 (£1.50) to £4.00

Details and booking 031 228 2688

Box Office open Mon to Sat noon until 9pm

CAFE BAR open from 10am

**The Heatherbank Museum  
of Social Work**



Celebrating our 20th birthday by  
merging with Caledonian University.

163 Mugdock Road, Milngavie, G62 8ND

041 956 5923

**DUNDEE WOMEN'S AID**



Helping Women in Tayside

24 Hour Phonenumber

0382 - 202525

# Edinburgh's Festival of the Environment *19th-29th May 1995*



"It's a knockout" - Princes Street Gardens 1994. Thunderbirds team - Bank of Scotland. Clowns team - Tods Murray Solicitors.

## **The Environment can be fun!**

**Edinburgh's 5th Festival of the Environment takes place in May during National Environment Week.**

**1995 is a special year because it is also European Nature Conservation Year. People from all over Europe will be celebrating their environment and working towards its protection and enhancement.**

**The Festival involves the whole community with Schools, businesses, community groups, environmental organisations and local authorities working in partnership to promote existing achievements and to initiate new projects.**

**If you would like to join in and organise an event or participate in any other way contact Alison Sandford on Tel 031 529 3775. Fax 031 529 3799.**

**Environmental Services 15 Johnston Terrace eh1 2pt**