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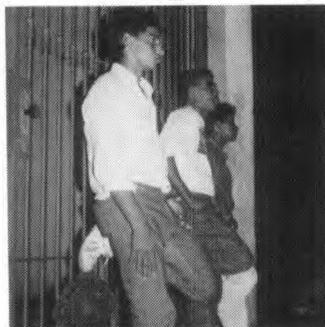
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Remember Chernobyl? You will when you read **Graham Stein**'s harrowing account of the children who are dying there. **Graeme King** and **Ian Maxwell** have been looking at two other aspects of children's lives - bullying and how to stop it and helping children learn to say 'no' to abusive adults.

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Paulo Henrique Longo talks about how his project with boy sex workers in Rio de Janeiro gives the young men the skills to teach others and to take control of their lives.

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To mark World AIDS Day, 1st December, **Wendy** and **Angela** share some of their thoughts about living with HIV and AIDS and how it affects their families.

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Christopher Harvie isn't sure if a 'middle-aged' parent is the best judge of future trends but, looking forward to 1994, he's feeling pessimistic.

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Forbes Masson

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CLASS
5 page proper

Terror walk to murder of little James

No one helped crying toddler, QC tells jury

NO YEAR-OLD James Bulger was killed and buried in a terror walk of horror as a horrific murder at the hands of two children, a QC told a jury yesterday.



James Bulger was killed and buried in a terror walk of horror as a horrific murder at the hands of two children, a QC told a jury yesterday.

again by the boys, Obe has been dragged along with him.

Mr. Howatson said: "I must have been very clearly very distressed and appeared to have a sad view - she is a delivery was two days with one of them and were using both their hands to drag him in a way that made him move as if he did not want to."

The van drove long walk across Liverpool on a shopping trip which ended in tragedy.

They visited various shops.

City broker admits 'stupid Scottish'...

A CITY investment broker... admitted that he had been 'stupid Scottish'...

Bulger trial told of many sightings of three boys

A WOMAN walking her dog... told of many sightings of the three boys...

Elegant manner of lookir



The Power to Punish

By the time you read this magazine, Scottish Child will have run the Don't Hit Kids conference in the Pearce Institute in Govan - our second conference this year and as well attended as The Imprisoned Family, run in the same venue in May.

'Don't Hit Kids': there's no note of compromise in that sentence, is there? Some people, hearing the title, have asked us, "Are you going to have someone there representing the 'counter-argument'?"

We have to sort out our ideas about this. We have to be clear that it is as unacceptable to hit children as to starve them, neglect them or otherwise harm them.

Children can be all the things we adults are: difficult, tiresome, cheeky, dangerous to themselves and others, dishonest and lazy - but just like the rest of us, they learn better not to be that way if they learn with love not with blows, reprimands and humiliation.

There are groups like EPOCH which campaign to make the smacking of children illegal. Scottish Child takes a slightly different stance, believing that it's more helpful, from where we are just now, to start by discussing why it's better not to hit children rather than to start by putting in place laws which make it illegal to do so.

Making legal change the starting point seems to suggest that people will only stop hitting if they are coerced into doing so. The consequence of 'give legal teeth' to the campaign against the physical punishment of children, is that sanctions can and presumably would be used against an offending parent or carer.

Is that what we want - to punish the punishers? Perhaps, since there are already at least some laws to deal with the more extreme forms of adult punishment of children, we should concentrate on getting the message across in a more positive way, rather than

simply by saying - "Thou Shalt Not Smack". There are plenty of children around to tell you that preventing teachers from belting pupils in the class didn't suddenly make some teachers into 'non-punishers'.

The phrase, 'giving parents permitting circumstances' also comes to mind. It was first coined by Erica de'Ath and Gillian Pugh as a shorthand way of saying that parents need, and are entitled to, help with parenting.

Despite the alternative agenda of the children's rights movement, it's really more helpful to think of the rights of parents and of children as intimately interlinked. That's not to say that children are the property of their parents, merely to acknowledge that the welfare of each depends on the other.

Meanwhile, far from Govan and the conference, the trial of the two boys accused of killing James Bulger goes on in Preston. Notwithstanding our horror at the description of how that little boy was tortured and killed, we need to remind ourselves that the children in the dock are not monsters, although the acts they are accused of are monstrous.

We know that some adults saw the boys with the crying, bruised child before he died. We've read why those bystanders didn't really intervene. We've all seen children being spanked, shouted at or shaken in public by other adults. What have we done about it?

However much you shy away from the idea, there is a connection, a direct connection, between the brutal murder of this child and our tolerance of adults hitting children.

Forgotten Children

CHERNOBYL

Disasters, natural and anthropogenic, are brought to our attention by the news media almost daily. With each new catastrophe, previous ones fade from our thoughts but their problems persist.

It is seven and a half years since the name **Chernobyl** was on everyone's lips but though the fear and outrage caused by that nuclear accident have receded, the disaster continues. Tumours and other cancers take time to develop and only now are the consequences of that fateful day becoming apparent.

In Kiev, just sixty kilometres south of Chernobyl, the Oncology Institute of Ukraine is the country's elite - and only - centre for the treatment of solid cancers. In its children's ward youngsters lie dying without painkillers to relieve their distress. These are the forgotten victims of an accident which once touched us all.

Watching a dying child, emaciated and in pain, the feeling of helplessness is soon replaced by anger. While the West finds hundreds of millions of pounds to keep eastern Europe's decrepit and dangerous nuclear reactors running, it appears that the cost of basic drugs for these children is too much to pay.

Diagnostic facilities in Ukraine are poor and most of the children who reach the Institute have third or fourth stage cancers - their

chances of survival are virtually nil. Earlier diagnosis, together with adequate treatment, would save lives.

Most Westerners would be horrified by the state of the Institute's hospital: blood-stained mattresses, obsolete equipment and few drugs. Although the medical staff are well trained, they have to work with the available resources. Even 'disposable' scalpel blades are used again and again.

In the nuclear medicine unit, there is little activity - the supply of radio-isotopes from Russia has stopped and much of the aged equipment is broken. One corridor is half-blocked by the disassembled parts of a huge gamma camera, a second-hand gift from the United States which even the resourceful Ukrainians have never been able to get working.

The gloomy corridor of the children's ward, lit only by the daylight from a window at the far end, gives a depressing first impression of the department but this is misleading and, all things considered, the atmosphere on the ward is pleasant and relaxed. Most of the children have their mother or grandmother living and sleeping in the ward with them, and many mums cook meals for their children in the rooms, preferring this to the poor-quality hospital food. With up to eight beds in rooms sixteen feet square, conditions are cramped but the mothers make the best of it

and are grateful for the care their children receive from the dedicated staff.

With Ukraine's capital city dependent on electricity from two of the remaining reactors at Chernobyl, its government is keen to play down the effects of the disaster, but the staff at the Institute fully expect that Chernobyl contamination together with chemical pollution, will increase the numbers needing treatment.

As well as expansion of the present children's ward, one floor of a planned building - to be financed by the country's Chernobyl Institute - will be for children.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian economy has taken a battering. For political reasons, links with their traditional trading partners have been disrupted, but they cannot afford to buy goods from the West - the average Ukrainian wage is just eight dollars a month. With oil and gas supplies from Russia restricted, Ukraine, the former 'breadbasket' of the Soviet Union, does not have enough petrol to harvest all its crops.

Heavy and light engineering have declined rapidly in the past few years and hyper-inflation has left the currency - coupons - at 12,000 to the dollar. A small tin of fish costs 2,000 coupons. That's only ten pence but it's half a day's pay. Somehow the people survive, and there are just about enough

staple foods to go round; but the quality of the food, together with industrial pollution and the effects of Chernobyl all have their impact on people's health.

Ukrainians have a strong sense of community and society, with law-breaking generally confined to black-marketeering and corruption. However, the influence of the West and the lure of dollars are undermining the old values.

The country's best hope must be that western companies can help them re-establish their industry and, through barter arrangements or short-term loans, allow them to open up new trading links. In the meantime western aid is urgently needed but will have to be carefully targeted and supervised if it is to benefit the people who need it, rather than line the pockets of a few.

Ukrainians are proud people, and the doctors at the Institute are keen to promote their own medical developments - though they cannot afford to patent, let alone develop and market them. They desperately need drugs and equipment to survive.

Graham Stein

*The **Alix Spurling Memorial Trust**, which sends medical aid, clothes and toys to the children's department of the Oncology Institute, Kiev, can be contacted at Burnfoot, New Galloway, Castle Douglas DG7 3RZ (tel: 06442 717).*



Graham Stein



Staying Safe

SEX EDUCATION

There always comes a time when children start being old enough to play in the street, round at their friends' houses or in the local play park. Because parents are naturally anxious about their children and want them to be safe they teach them survival skills like crossing roads, finding their way about and being wary of strangers. These messages are reinforced when children start school through programmes involving local police forces.

Although the last message, "beware of strangers" is simple, some research shows that children are still in danger of being abducted if the incentives offered by a stranger are strong enough. In order to protect them we need to explain to children what might happen if they were abducted and this means talking about sexual assault and murder. This is very difficult for parents to teach. In Scotland in 1993 we are still reluctant to discuss sex. To talk about the dangers of sexual assault is for many parents even more embarrassing and raises issues of children growing up too fast and losing their innocence.

Some important facts that parents need to know are that the majority of sexual assaults against children do not come

from strangers. Most victims know, live with or are related to the perpetrators. If they have never talked about sex or sexual assault with their parents - think how hard it may be for children to broach the subject if they have been abused. Abusers of course know this and attempt to bind their victims to silence with threats, bribes and the knowledge that disclosure may be difficult or even disbelieved. Although accurate figures for sexual assault against children are difficult to get hold of, current estimates in this country are that eight per cent of males and twelve per cent of females have been sexually assaulted at some time during their childhood.

An international study in the late 1970s showed that we constantly underestimate children's capacity to understand human sexuality. A look through the range of soaps on television, watched by large numbers of children, will give some clues as to where children might get their information. We also know that nowadays children are reaching puberty younger, with some girls menstruating as early as nine. There is clearly a need for sex education before the onset of puberty and if this is tied into the framework of personal and social development in the primary school it must include personal safety.

Over the last three years

Lothian Region has been making great progress in trying to make children safer in the community. After extensive evaluation it chose a Canadian package called "Feeling Yes Feeling No". This has now been implemented in almost all the region's primary schools with in-service training for staff teaching the programme. It is aimed at primary six pupils because they are able to understand the skills and concepts taught in the programme and because statistics show them to be a vulnerable age group.

The programme is preceded by a series of lessons on sex education and is designed to prevent the sexual assault of children. It equips children with the skills and knowledge to assess potentially dangerous situations very quickly. "Feeling Yes Feeling No" teaches children how to be safe from abduction and sexual assault either by a stranger or by someone they know. As part of this process it builds self-esteem and self-confidence.

"But does it work?" many parents ask at parents' evenings in schools when the programme is introduced. In a number of pieces of research here in Scotland and abroad, the programme has been shown to be effective. If parents are actively involved in the programme and discuss the

lessons with their children, uptake is likely to be even better.

In one study, Sue Hamilton, the co-ordinator of personal safety in Lothian Region, tracked fifty-five children after they had been trained and found that five had to use the skills they had learned to prevent attempted abduction. There was another case where an attempt to abduct and rape a child was made. The girl successfully used techniques she had been taught and the perpetrator was convicted of assault with intent to ravish. He was sentenced to seven years imprisonment at the High Court.

Lothian Region is not alone in Scotland in introducing a school-based child sexual assault prevention programme. Strathclyde Region has been using a British-produced kit called "Kisdcape".

It's obvious the local authorities are taking the matter seriously. Still, they do need the support of parents and carers to supplement the work that goes on in schools. So those of us who are parents or have the care of small children need to take on board the idea that caring about children's safety means we have to try harder to overcome our inhibitions about talking about sex with our children.

Graeme King



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Talking Tough

ANTI-BULLYING

"If you are going to be effective in reducing bullying, people have to talk and listen."

That's the simple message underlying the work of Andrew Mellor, the world's first national anti-bullying development officer. In his view, talking about bullying can build bridges and improve the relationship between parents and school, and help clear the air for discussion about other thorny topics such as relationships, abuse, sexuality and drugs. If bullying takes place it should be treated firmly, but it is good to talk about it in a safe and friendly way before it happens. Parents' meetings about bullying can come up with excellent ideas, but calm and dispassionate discussion is impossible if parents are angry and frustrated because their own children have been bullied.

In the first seven months of this pioneering Scottish project, he has been doing a lot of talking - to education authorities throughout Scotland, to groups of parents, teachers, pupils and school ancillary staff, to Scottish educational and parent's organisations, to organisations

such as the School Chaplain's Association, Victim Support, Children's Panel members and to lots of children.

The Anti-Bullying Initiative is funded by the Scottish Office Education Department and based at the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE). Andrew has been seconded to the project for a year from Dalry School in Dumfries and Galloway, after having carried out his own research into bullying.

Awareness raising has been the main aim so far. Sometimes head teachers are reluctant to raise the issue as they feel their own schools will be seen as having bullying problems, hence the need to persuade education authorities to take the first steps and put bullying on the agenda. All regions are now actively involved, the star performers being Tayside, with a three-person anti-bullying team.

Bullying is a problem for a large number of children. It is estimated that about one in eight children are directly involved, either as bullies or victims. A bullying phone line operated by Childline for three months attracted 7,600 calls. When SCRE published its first Anti-

Bullying Pack in January 1992 the national education departments were so keen on it that copies were bought for free distribution to every school in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Now SCRE have issued a second Anti-Bullying pack, "Supporting Schools Against Bullying", containing two booklets and a set of support materials. The first booklet, "School Action Against Bullying", by Pamela Munn, shows schools how to involve families and non-teaching staff in the fight against bullying. This follows on from the first SCRE pack, which concentrated on raising awareness among teaching staff and developing a school policy on bullying.

The packs have clear and simple messages about the problem and some telling statements by victims. As more than one sufferer explains, bullying can take many more forms than being 'duffed up' on the road home:

"I have been picked on. People think I'm nothing and say anything they want to me. Every day I feel rejected. It's not that people use violence against me but I feel as if I'm treated as a dustbin. I do want to come

forward about this but as I'm leaving in a few months I don't see any reason to do so. I haven't got the courage either."

In looking at ways to tackle the issue, the pack discusses techniques such as mapping possible bullying trouble spots and using drama to explore the emotions and dilemmas experienced by bullied children.

"Bullying and How To Fight It", by Andrew Mellor, is the second booklet in the pack. It is intended for the families of children and young people who are involved in bullying, whether as victims or bullies. Topics covered include spotting the danger signs, getting advice, helping victims, contacting the school and last resort action.

Under the heading 'Ostrich Schools' Andrew advises on how to cope with sand-encrusted school heads: "... ask them what happened to the bullying pack when it came into the school".

Ian Maxwell

The first and second anti-bullying packs cost £6 and £10 respectively, and the family guide costs £3.25 on its own, all post free from SCRE, 15 St John St, Edinburgh EH8 8JR (031-557 2944).

Kate Geogre



IN BRIEF

A word about the work of **SOLAS**, mentioned elsewhere in this issue of **Scottish Child**. The centre opened in November 1991, offering support and information to people who are HIV-positive or who are living with or caring for other people with AIDS. The word 'solas', taken from the Gaelic, means light and comfort and that's what the centre aims to provide: a warm and welcoming place with a positive approach to staying healthy and living well.

In March this year **SOLAS** launched its new Scotland-wide Information Service to help to keep all sections of the public up to date with current knowledge and thinking about HIV and AIDS.

It's worth recalling the statistics on those known to be infected and the numbers that have died in Lothian, Scotland and the UK.

	HIV+	AIDS
Lothian	1012	193
Scotland	1971	425 (283 deaths)
UK	20035	7699 (4794 deaths)

The figures shown are cumulative up to June 1993 and were compiled by the Communicable Diseases (Scotland) Unit, Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow.

The Information Service offers a confidential enquiry service responding to individual HIV/

AIDS information needs - by telephone, letter or in person; a referral service - setting up appointments for people or referring them on to the service most able to help; an information surgery offering weekly appointments for more in-depth and private enquiries; a reference library providing a wide range of factual information.

There's also a cafe, a creche for children under eight years of age, a programme of activities for older children, a youth club, an arts programme, complementary therapies, support, training, movement and exercise rooms for hire.

You can go along on 1st December 1993, World AIDS Day and visit the Information Centre which will be open to the general public between 10.30am to 4pm. The person to contact to know more about the work of **SOLAS** is David Cameron, Information Worker, **SOLAS**, 2/4 Abbeymount, Edinburgh EH8 8JE. Tel: 031-659 5116.

Remember the **Scottish Community Services Agency**? It's come to life again as the **St Enoch's Training Centre in Glasgow**. The headman is David Meechan who also runs MI Technologies. Mr Meechan oversees the work of the trainees, in between running his own business. Two of the trainees set up a Women's Health Exhibition, which went on show for a week in mid-November in the Pearce Institute, Govan. Exhibition organiser, Frances Schoppler, worked against considerable odds to put this display together. Her decision to make it a 'women-only' event for the first four days

was criticised in the press, who accused her of sexism. Frances defended her decision on the grounds that ordinary women still need to chances to 'reclaim their own bodies' from health professionals, without men around.

Despite all the effort that's gone into collecting and setting up the exhibition, **Scottish Child** learnt that there are no plans to take it elsewhere at this stage. 'Basically Alison, who has been dealing with the media, and I are just 'dolies'. We get £10 extra on the dole money to be an employment trainee. That means we can't make too many demands on the organisation. It's got to be done on the cheap.' Sounds familiar?

Scottish Child has had a number of anonymous notes from Fife in the two months since September and our report on the suspension of Robin McLean from his post at **Rimbleton House**. (see also Fife Replies - letters page this issue).

Care Weekly has also been investigating and carried a report about BASW's concerns for one of their members. In that article Mr Cassidy, Fife's Deputy Director of Social Work, denied that Mr Bowman had been asked for a report by the council leader, John MacDougall.

Other people, including **Scottish Child**, obviously know something he doesn't, since one of the items which appeared on our desk is a letter from Mr MacDougall to the area officer of Unison, Mr Waller. Dated 29th October, the letter says, 'The Director of Social Work will produce a detailed report on the specific points of complaint which you raised'.

To understand the seriousness of the situation in Fife and the extent to which the management methods of the Social Work Department seem, to some of its employees at least, to be as 'intimidatory' as ever, it is worth quoting at length the text of an unsigned submission to BASW's meeting on 27th October.

"As a group of concerned social workers employed by Fife regional council, we would appreciate the opportunity to express our views, with the knowledge that we would be safer doing so in an anonymous fashion, given the level of senior management intimidation which we feel exists within the social work department in our region and the effect this has had upon child care in Fife.

One of our main concerns is the manner in which some of our colleagues have been treated by senior management in recent years. The tactics they have employed are those of the bully and coward and bear no relationship to those professional ideals which social workers are bound by in their duties to the community. Some of these tactics have already been exposed publicly in **Scottish Child**.

We are aware that the conduct of certain managers is presently under investigation through the involvement of the trade union with the regional authority and we fervently hope that at long last some action is taken to curb their intimidatory and dictatorial practices.

Although morale is not traditionally high in our profession, it would be true to say that in Fife it is at an all time low within the children and family



sector. Despite the findings of the previous child care inquiry it seems that the social work department is oblivious to the problems that still exist, due to its misguided and simplistic application of child care policies.

The residential child care sector is in total disarray, with an overspill situation arising through management negligence and a knee jerk reaction of panic measures being introduced to cope with the situation, to the serious detriment of children and workers involved.

There is an urgent need for our employers to take serious heed of the inability of its own social work department to manage the statutory obligations which Parliament has placed upon it.

We can only hope that our own professional and union organisations can provide the support required to change things for the better within in Fife, otherwise we fear that the situation will deteriorate to an extent where irreparable (sic.) damage will be done to an already overburdened workforce and a damaged group of vulnerable children."

Commendable stuff - but weak. Despite the Kearney Inquiry, or maybe because of it, Fife social workers still seem to think someone else is going to sort things out for them. They have to have the guts to challenge the 'bullying' directly, not just through the official union channels, which after all were used extensively in the last Inquiry. They have to dare to name names and risk the consequences. **Scottish Child** supports anyone who fights intimidation of any sort but we can't do much unless we

November saw the first-ever national event run by the **Traveller Heritage Project**: a week of discussions, craft-work, music and story-telling in Lothian. The main venue was the Stepping Stones Theatre (what used to be the Traverse Theatre until it embraced its new identity in the plate-glass surroundings of Saltire court).

The Heritage week was the brainchild of a group of traveller women based at the Duddingston site in Edinburgh. They got the help of the Edinburgh University Settlement and thus was begun a new venture to raise the awareness of the public, break down the barriers which still exist between the travellers and local people and

put firmly on the agenda, the need for more sites, especially transit sites, across Scotland.

The women decided to take action following instances of bullying in schools their children attended. The bullying goes wider than the schools, however: in small communities, travellers can find themselves banned from local shops, refused entrance to the cinema - or in one particularly graphic example, put out of a taxi 'in the middle of nowhere', as happened to a group of girls when they gave the taxi-driver the site address as their destination.

There are, according to the Scottish Gypsy Travellers Association, about 50,000 traditional travellers in

Scotland. The Scottish Office figure is much lower: they quote a figure of 900 families. Whichever way you look at it, however, that's a sizeable number of people, with specific needs and a specific contribution to make to the life of the general community. Scottish Child would like to hear from any children who took part in the week. Tell us what you think about the situation of travellers and traveller children and what you learnt from meeting travellers.

If you want to know more about the Traveller Heritage Project you can get in touch with them at Stepping Stones Theatre, 11 West Bow, Grassmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2HH. Tel: 031-225 4472.

get signed letters and 'on the record' statements.

● At this year's **SEAD** conference '**Shifting the Balance of Democracy**' delegates might have expected to discuss 'democracy' and listen in admiration to speakers from the Third World telling us what they had achieved under dreadful conditions. But what a shock to be given a 'central task' - each group had to come up with the single thing we could best do now to shift power back where it belongs?

Speakers from Nicaragua, Georgia, South Africa and the Philippines, outlined their education

programmes for citizenship, their use of the law, direct action and scarce resources. These impressive women seemed understandably puzzled by our inertia.

Few campaigns described in the speeches or workshops had been an unqualified success. Thus Judith Gillespie spoke of stopping school testing 'in its original form' and the Timex strikers having refused to take the lowly terms offered to keep their jobs gained solidarity, political education and moved their campaign onto the international scene when the factory closed in Dundee.

Proceedings entered the realms of parody when we were asked to 'sell our idea in the marketplace' (group members taking it in turn to

persuade other delegates to vote for their idea). Over the weekend numbers dwindled and in our group we lost those individuals who had expressed opinions most at odds with the rest of us. Bearing this in mind it's not so surprising that the conference reached such a degree of consensus on what was required: shared vision, widespread political education, 'ownership' of problems to remain with those affected, networking and trust.

We had been taken on a worthwhile journey through the minefields of political consciousness-raising. No doubt for many of us it was painful to realise the relatively powerful positions we held. And if we slip back into slumber?

HE IS MY BROT

Paulo Longo talks about AIDS and 'Pagação', the project he runs for boy prostitutes on the streets of Rio de Janeiro.



In the summer of 1993 there was a major international conference in Edinburgh on the effects of HIV and AIDS in mothers and children. Clinical psychologist Paulo Longo travelled from Rio de Janeiro as a delegate to that conference. He became increasingly disaffected and angry as he witnessed first-hand the playing out of traditional relationships between the rich and poor countries of the world on the conference platform and in the workshops.

"My work in Rio is with boy sex workers. I wanted to present a paper at the conference about this street youth but it was not considered. They didn't even bother to respond to my abstract on the subject. You have to understand the perspective of most of the people who attend these big international conferences: they are so protected from the reality of poverty and homelessness and their conferences reflect these safe, rich-country assumptions about resources and research grants.

"For example, at this conference all the sessions were related to children in hospital or children at school. I went to a whole day session on education and prevention. It was all related to families with parents. They had materials about how you should talk about AIDS with your children - the games you can play with your children, in a nice furnished room, with a

heater on and food in the cupboard and so on.

"I kept trying to intervene, to say 'can we talk about AIDS and homeless youth? It's not just a problem in my country. There is so much data to show that AIDS is a problem especially of poor people. What are you doing for that sector which is so badly affected? I am here to share with you some results of the work we do in Brazil.'

"But they did not answer me. People didn't want to talk about it. This was a conference about children and mothers but very little of it was about poor children and mothers. In my work I have children who are already mothers. How can I be interested in the details of how to manage 'opportunistic infections' with some sophisticated new equipment or drugs? In the country I work in we don't even have aspirin in the hospitals. We lack the most basic of medical supplies, even in the national AIDS centre in Brazil.

"In Brazil alone there are six million homeless youth. These people are getting HIV faster than you can imagine. We know that 90% of the AIDS cases are in the Third World and 95% of the resources are in the First World. What AIDS are we talking about?"

The short answer seems to be 'it depends who's doing the talking'. "You quite often hear AIDS researchers from the rich countries discussing their programmes and they'll say things like 'we've been doing a piece of research but unfortunately we only got 500,000 dollars which really isn't enough for what we hoped to do.' I want to shout - 'with 5,000 dollars we can work for months uninterruptedly, hire a team of twenty people who'll work full-time for us, and feed a whole group of children at the same time.' Similarly you hear of projects where they've been given thousands of dollars to produce one leaflet which they then don't even circulate because they don't know where to put it. It's this that makes me so angry - the waste and the imbalance between the rich and the poor countries."

Paulo Longo's understanding of the needs of street youth and the problems of the boy prostitutes stems from his own experience of being a sex worker as a sixteen year-old. He studied at the same time but had no special plans to work with people who have AIDS. At

the age of twenty-one he found himself, a new graduate from university, based in the main public hospital where AIDS patients were being treated, many of them knowing nothing about what it meant to be HIV-positive. "Then I found that boys working the streets as I had worked, were turning up with AIDS symptoms at the hospital. I also began to hear about what was going on in other countries where workers were getting out onto the streets and reaching people directly who might already be infected or who were at risk of infection. I realised that nothing like that was being done in Brazil and I decided to do it myself."

And that was the beginning of Programa Pagação working with boy hustlers, aged from as young as eleven up to the young men in their twenties. It's now in its fourth year of operation. "We managed for the first six months with very simple resources: a few condoms, some brochures and our own discussions. After six months, as the numbers began to build up more and more, I realised that it had to become 'more serious'."

Funding from a Dutch agency allowed Paulo Longo to stop other work he had been doing at the university so as to concentrate on the work with vulnerable youngsters.

"There are two strands to what we do. We provide services like condom distribution, referrals to the health system and legal aid and we do counselling. We talk a good deal about the concept of citizenship and about self-esteem and we aim to generate in the boys the desire to protect themselves against illness and death.

"At the start of the project when we were talking about AIDS and they'd been hearing on television that AIDS kills, they'd say 'OK AIDS kills. So what? The police kill. Hunger kills. My parents kill.' It doesn't take much discussion for the kids to realise that this is an unacceptable state of affairs all round and we can go on from there."

Although they have had great success in reaching the boys and gaining their trust, it has been hard to recruit individuals from among them to become educators. Paulo Longo thinks this is partly because of power struggles in the youth sex industry, linked to rivalries and the economic insecurity that is inherent in such a way of life.

HER

There are plenty of difficulties in that respect but he is fighting on another front as well. "We have a constant war against the indifference of the international establishment which justifies its failure to help the poor and homeless by saying that homeless people are 'hard to reach'. Hard to reach? For me the health authorities, the scientists and the funders are hard to reach. They are often beyond reach - in offices which exclude you and with staff who are paid to keep demand at bay.

"The concept of 'peer educators' can also be a dangerous one because it may allow the health care and education authorities to evade their responsibilities. They say, 'We know that the best educators of marginalised people are the marginalised themselves, so that's OK. We'll let them get on with it and we don't need to approach them.'

"Our experience with peer educators has been very good in Rio though. The average age of the boys who use Pagação is between fourteen and seventeen. Most of them are young runaways from the districts surrounding Rio and sometimes from further afield. Quite a lot of these boys still have links with their communities and in these communities it used to be very hard to persuade people to use a condom with a 'non-commercial' partner. Using a condom was taken as a sign that you had something to hide or to fear. We started asking these boys to go into their communities to do peer education about the risks of unprotected sex."

As an example of the confidence-boosting effect of this peer education work he recalls an occasion when he took a bottle of champagne which he'd been given onto the streets one evening. "What should we celebrate with this bottle? One of the boys stepped forward: 'I have something to celebrate? This afternoon I did a lecture but do you know where? At the school that refused me as a pupil!'"

In recent times the focus of Paulo Longo's work has changed. His role of project leader has obliged him to spend more time on raising funds. He has also been busy in a new area of work: finding ways of reaching the boys who work in closed conditions, in saunas, private apartments or on 'hot lines'. ■



Denise Reis

First Announcement from BASPCAN

British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
10 Priory Street, York, YO1 1EZ, England
Tel: 0904-613605 Fax: 0904-642239

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"These boys don't mix with street youth but we know there are lots of them. We see their ads in the newspapers. Our own resources for reaching them are so limited that we had to find some other way. So we invited managers of these places to come and see us. Some did. We found through our contact with the managers that there is no need for the condom service that we operate on the street. They buy them for the boys and also clients bring condoms with them. What is very important is the counselling component of what we offer.

"The boys usually work in groups of about fifteen in the same apartment. There is a room where they wait and one room where they go with the client. The tension in the room where they are waiting is very high. It's been found that this is an excellent time to talk to them about AIDS and HIV and much more - they'll often speak very openly about their feelings about what they are doing and the clients. We are building on that at present and the results are very encouraging."

The work that Paulo Longo and his colleagues do with boy prostitutes goes on against a background of official denial mixed with the prurient curiosity of the media, keen to find a salacious angle to exploit. As he explains, "If the media is interested in us at all it is to

maintain the perception of street boys as 'criminal marginals' who kill rich gay men."

The political and social background to the exploitation of children in Brazil has been well-documented: a country rich in natural resources of all kinds but with a massive international debt; a population polarised between the very rich and the grindingly poor; the co-existence within yards of each other of luxury houses and apartments and some of the largest, ugliest and most insanitary 'favelas' in the sub-continent.

Paulo sums it up: "Do you know my frustration? Let me explain it like this: I am a good cook. I have all the skills to make a good meal. But I have no meat, no spices and no heat to cook on. I have an image of the meal I can make but I cannot make it. Programma Pagação is well-known, so well-known that even the BBC bothered to come to Rio to film us. We have written and published papers. I go to conferences like the one in Edinburgh. I am a consultant with the World Health. And yet, let me tell you we have nothing. Since June when our funding came to an end I haven't had even enough money to put a stamp on a letter.

"Before I go back to Brazil where my people will be waiting anxiously to hear if I have been successful, I shall have to try to explain to the powerful fund-holders why we need their money and why Programma Pagação makes good use of it. Many of them will look at me with arrogance and suspicion in their eyes but I shall have to try to persuade them because so much depends on my success. So many children depend on me.

"We do not publish leaflets or carry out the kind of research which fits neatly into their programmes. Our resources are the people who work on the streets. Our successes are not to be found in statistical tables but in the increased control young people get over their lives. To measure this you have to leave the sheltered environment of your office and come and see for yourself what it is we are doing. But as long as those offices remain as far geographically, culturally and politically from where AIDS is raging through the community, poor children will go on getting infected with the AIDS virus and their death toll will go on rising." ■

Donations to the work of Programma Pagação can be sent to: Nucleo de Orientacao em Saude Social, Bank: UNIBANCO, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro - Account no: 114.172-4.



Denise Reis



Life-lines

For some people thinking about AIDS happens once a year, on December 1st - World AIDS Day. For others like **Angela** and **Wendy** it is a constant preoccupation. They agreed to talk to **Rosemary Milne** about living with HIV and AIDS

Both Wendy and Angela use the resources of Solas and Milestone House in Edinburgh. Angela is herself HIV-positive, although so far with no symptoms. Wendy is not but two of her brothers are now ill with full-blown AIDS. One other brother has already died from the virus. Both women are mothers, looking after their families on their own.

Angela talks first: "Since I've been HIV, telling people has caused me a lot of difficulties. I told one friend for example, and she told other people. I've had problems with the family too. To begin with my sisters' families didn't want my kids playing with theirs. You just have to go along with it - say 'fair enough, if that's what you want.' They've settled a bit now but the ignorance and prejudice is unbelievable.

"I was first told in 1986 that I've got HIV, although apparently the doctors knew two years before that. I was told when I was pregnant. I didn't think about it a lot then but after I'd had my daughter I did find it really difficult. I kept thinking once she was born, 'oh no, what if something happens to her.' I think it was maybe made harder in that way because I'd already had a child that had died."

Angela began using heroin after the death of this baby who was killed in a house fire. "It was my fault that too - well, that's what my husband told me. He was a violent man and it was him who started me on smack. I remember I'd been off to visit her grave - it would've been her birthday - and I got back feeling really depressed. I wanted to go out for a drink just to get some relief but he wasn't interested because by then

he was using and he tended to stay in with his pals who were doing the same. So he said to me 'here have a snort of that, it'll cheer you up.' And I did. it was only weeks after that when I started using a needle."

Telling the two older children about being HIV-positive has been very difficult. One dropped out of school after hearing the news, the other has responded by, as Angela explains it, 'sort of closing down' on her. The youngest one has yet to learn that her mother has the virus. It is an ever-present preoccupation - who to tell, how much to say, when to say it. The decision to tell her eldest was hers alone and although there was counselling available afterwards for him, to her regret he didn't keep it up.

"I decided to tell my second child when he was younger. I didn't want to go through seeing another one getting into difficulties at school because I left it too late. His reaction has been quite different. He'll talk about HIV and AIDS in general but not in relation to me. I noticed too that he began doing things without asking me. It was as if the message to me was, 'I don't need you now. I'm going to have to fend for myself in the future so I may as well get on with it.' Now it is changing a bit but it's hard going."

Angela admits that it helps a lot that so far she's no symptoms and lives a full life, doing all sorts of talks and conferences about HIV and AIDS, as well as looking after the kids. "I used to be so aware of it all the time. But now I get on with life and try and live like anyone else. I really enjoy life. Solas made a huge difference to me. Before that I went to another project for women with HIV. I decided I wanted to live differently and I took the step and broke with my husband. It took me about three years to do it.

"I think your upbringing has a lot to do with what happens later. I went from a trapped childhood into a trapped adulthood. My mum hated me. She was very cruel to me. I had five sisters and a brother and she treated them fine. I think she hated me because I was premature, well, either I was premature or she tried to lose me. I was put in a home as well. For a long time I actually thought I was in a home from being a baby. It turns out though, that she put me in there when I was three. I've seen my records now and they show that I was taken into care because she wasn't even feeding me.

"My mum's been dead for ten years. I never really got the chance to say any of what I felt to her because I think I was always too scared. I was really frightened of her. I can remember I felt a kind of relief when she died. My dad and mum divorced when I was about seven. I know my dad really loved me. He was soft with me. He left being hard to my mum. After they split up he took me to stay with him but I remember

I got taken back to my mum's because she won custody."

Angela hasn't found it easy to build a better relationship with her sisters who treated her in much the same way as her mother. They now know she is HIV-positive, since Angela decided to tell them when their only brother died of the virus a few years ago. Seeing her own recollection of the treatment she got from her mum confirmed in the official records of her childhood has helped her to talk to her sisters about what went on in the family and, as she puts it, "It's still very slow but we're getting there."

"I do get depressed, I admit but I don't feel bitter. Solas and Milestone House have helped tremendously. I've used Milestone twice. It was quite a shock the first time because you see people there who are very ill and you're looking at what might happen to you - that's scary.

"I'm glad, in spite of everything, that I've had the life I've had, because it's opened my eyes and I see what's wrong and how people don't want to know what's going on around them. That's hard but it gives me something to work for. I suppose it gives you a kind of purpose in your life."

It's Wendy's birthday and her brother is getting married. It should be a day of celebration but this is a birthday and a marriage taking place in the shadow of illness and imminent death. Her brother will be married from his bed in Milestone House. He is weak and getting weaker. Will he manage out of his room for it? Another brother is in a hospital ward not far off, also battling with the virus. "I've already lost one other brother to AIDS. He died in Milestone. My brother who is there just now is in the same room as my brother who died two years ago. All three of them got HIV through using drugs."

In between looking after her own children, two of whom are very young, Wendy also cares for her father, himself a sick man, and keeps a daily vigil at Milestone House. She looks tired and worn but you get a sense of her immense strength and her will to keep everything together for everyone else's sake.

"It's strange. I don't feel strong at all but I suppose I must be. It's so hard to know that your brother won't see his little one grow up. And there's the added difficulty that his wife has the virus too. She isn't ill yet but I worry about the wee one and how it will all affect her. It's not something we can talk about very much because my brother isn't accepting that he's dying. We can't really talk about the wee one's future and who might look after her.

"How will we manage today? There's a lot of sadness. It's quite hard to cut away from it and feel differently.

"My mother's not coping very well just now although she is quite strong too. It does come over you in waves - the devastating effect it's having on a big part of the family. I've got some spiritual belief and that helps a bit. I do try to be still and quiet, to reflect on things. Saying that, I admit I need some escapism too: I need to get out on a Friday night with pals.

"I keep coming back to that word 'hard'. It doesn't really describe what I mean but in a way it's impossible to find the word that would fit for what we're all going through at present. We just have to do what we can. I remember so clearly when my first brother died at Milestone. I was massaging his feet when he drew his last breath. I think that's what you do - you go on giving care until the last minute, until the last breath is drawn."

Names and some details have been changed in the article in order to protect the identity of the adults and children concerned. Wendy's brother died a few days after this interview.

Scottish Child extends its deepest sympathy to her and her family.

Milestone House

Milestone House is Scotland's and indeed Europe's only purpose-built refuge for people infected with HIV and AIDS. Situated in the grounds of the City Hospital in Edinburgh, it has been designed all on one level with access to the gardens from each of the private living areas. Families can withdraw to the privacy of these 'bungalows' or, if they wish, join in the bustle of the main concourse, where most of the daily life of the community goes on. Beside the full range of medical services, there is a creche and full-time social work support for families.

Milestone House has already seen many deaths but it also offers to those who have the virus but who are not showing symptoms of AIDS, the chance to take a rest and comfortable and welcoming surroundings.

Milestone House is run by Waverley Care Trust and needs your support to continue the valuable work it is doing for AIDS sufferers.

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73: Iain Crichton Smith



FEAR OF THE FUTURE

Writing from Germany at the turn of the year, 'middle-aged parent' **Christopher Harvie** takes a sombre look at the way things are for European children.

"Because we are too many." This is almost the centenary of what many thought the Victorian age's most unacceptable book. Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* was called "*Jude the Obscene*" when first published in 1895 and its reception effectively ended Hardy's career as a novelist. It was the murder of his brother and sister, and then suicide of 'Old Father Time', Jude's and Sue Bridehead's son, which really shocked the Victorians. The dying child was touching and morally instructive; the child as depressive and murderer was not.

'Because we are too many.' There can't be many who haven't heard kids coming out with a line like that, looking at the bits of the TV news that can be stomached. The wizened little near-corpses in the sun of Somalia or the Sudan, the refugees of Bosnia; Bangladeshi kids drying themselves out, getting back to the business of survival, succeeding until the next catastrophe. Not to speak of the riddled bodies in the Georgian streets, the hooded women keening over some confined martyr in Srebrenice or Haiti or Belfast. Kids don't seem to be hit by such scenes, carefully kept from me when I was a child. (I remember reading a description of the execution by electric chair of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg when I was nine, and being upset for days).

But there is a sense in which future problems are getting through. The opinion polls register a high level of concern about the sort of issues to which kids can be expected to relate: the dangers of the thinning ozone layer, the destruction of animal species or of the rain forest, the human impact of famine abroad and pollution at home. Kids are suffering from bronchial or skin problems to do with traffic pollution; and most parents know the 'you can't paddle in that, it's filthy' syndrome as part of the British seaside holiday.

In the recent 25-year celebrations of Blue Peter most commentators went on nostalgically about how little had changed: the same mix of dogs and reassuring presenters. The problem is that these days the presenters have to be reassuring, and the explanations rarely are...

As in one recent Blue Peter. My daughter's

primary school class were to be given a crack at John Patten. They sat mute in the studio, as he insisted on 'balanced' schools; but the Patten glad-handing and smile had no effect on them. 'He was patronising, and at the end he just said "No more questions!" like that'. That kids have wised up enough to see through a crouton like Patten is reassuring, but persistence in this sort of maturity might only bring problems. Not just 'Where is the world going?', but 'Will there be a job in it for me?'

Many primary school children are politically as mature as adult voters, but, lacking any sort of authority, frustration seems to be programmed. The response to this seems to be 'why bother them with all this serious stuff? Kids are meant to enjoy life.' But this in turn implies subordination to a media culture many of whose values aren't serious in a civic sense, but gratuitously violent, exploitative and morbid. Take just one example - the movies, dominated by the modern Axis Powers - Arnie the Terminator and Rambo Sly. No wonder dinosaurs seem human! And everywhere these sad posters of Monroe, James Dean, Elvis, most of whom would be using their bus passes had they lived. Here moreover is a culture in which death is not metaphorically (as in religion), but actually (as in AIDS) present - and prematurely so.

Always be wary of this pessimism about present-day mass culture and its effects on the next generation. Hasn't this sort of thing been going on for years, with horror comics and Davy Crockett-mania in the fifties stirring the same protests? But not on this scale, with whole media industries inducing the need to be on a consistent high, to be winning. From the Gameboy freak to the sixteen year-old tripping on Ecstasy to the deafening racket of house music, the highs are individual, not collective.

Solutions? Much of the video-TV-Gameboy problem stems from the fact that, up to eleven or twelve, kids no longer go out on their own in urban areas, no longer socialise spontaneously, away from their peer group, as part of the learning process. Are the streets too dangerous?

The situation in Britain seems the worst in Europe, with a lack of pedestrian areas, and lorries and dogshit everywhere. What we require are towns and districts within towns which are open to kids, and a range of facilities like libraries, sports centres, cinemas and resource centres that they can make use of by themselves, as is the case in the 'greener' areas of Germany.

Why not give children a real stake in politics? In Finland kids have votes for school councils, even at the primary level, and as those are run on party-political lines there are effectively infant socialists, liberals, conservatives etc. We need not go this far, but there are certain key local authority committees which ought to have kids as representatives, or at least as advisors - not just education but transport (notoriously run by men between twenty-five and fifty, all of whom are motorists), environment, libraries, housing and recreation.

This might count against the principle of 'one man one vote'. But since the principle tends to mean exactly that, is this any great loss? We've had four years of triumphant democracy in East Europe and, as was pointed out in *October's Scottish Child*, this has worsened the condition of women and obviously of children as well. So perhaps it's better to enhance a more pluralistic form of representation, in which real needs can count.

A middle-aged parent might not be the one to prescribe. Neil Gunn wrote in *Young Art and Old Hector* with great insight about the mutual delight in each other's company of the young and the old. One of my daughter's closest friends is a retired Welsh teacher in her eighties - sharp and witty and always with something to tell or to show. Kids often seem to have more spontaneity with old people than with their parents.

All in all, this is one of those areas which benefits more from the wisdom of Marx, Groucho than Marx, Karl. Faced with a jammed door, or safe, or anything puzzling, the great man called out, "A child of three could solve this ... Bring me a child of three!" ■

A Foot in Bo

For some families our notions of 'defence' are more than an abstraction as **Aileen Bruce** found out when she spent some time at the Faslane Peace Camp and the Army's married quarters at Dreghorn in Edinburgh. Faslane photos by **Patsy Forde**. Dreghorn photos by **Thomas O' Donnell**.



Jane, Jim and their son Ben, 5, lived at the Peace Camp at Faslane for three years together but now live in Helensburgh. They continue to provide a 'safe house in the town' for the camp, somewhere to take time out or to watch television. They describe the camp as an extended family with someone trustworthy always on hand to look after Ben.

We pick Ben up from school in Rhu, a pretty village a few miles from the base. Once a month the nuclear convoys carrying Trident warheads go right past this little school. MOD guidelines

in the event of a nuclear accident urge parents within a five kilometre radius NOT to collect their children from school but to leave them in the care of the police. It is advice that Jane meets with derision.

Around a third of the children at the school have parents working at the base. Some are Navy personnel, others are civilians, many with local connections. With few employment alternatives in the area it's not surprising that Jane has friends and sympathisers on the other side of the fence. Since Ben started school she has found that things are less clear cut, less 'them' and 'us'. She counts several Navy wives among her close friends and is fiercely loyal

towards them, recognising that these women have few, if any, opportunities to express their anxieties. Ironically it's because she is very open about where she stands that they feel they can speak to her. The insights she has gained have strengthened her conviction that families dependent on the base are 'economic conscripts'.

As the Navy man approaches Jane draws our attention to his grey pallor, the result of being on patrol, submerged for up to three months; hundreds of men living close together, breathing filtered air. During this time the only contact with home is by 'familygram', the chance to tell only 'good' news in thirty words or less, with no replies from the men. Jane has witnessed the

th Camps

emotional departures and reunions, the children frightened of their own fathers, the wives crying with relief, and says, "Even if the nuclear deterrent worked I would rather take my chances than have someone do that on my behalf." It makes her aware too of the stress the submariners are under, and raises questions about the likelihood of an accident occurring at sea.

Ben is delighted to be visiting the camp. He sets off on a tour past colourful caravans, wind chimes and a tree house where he operates his own campaign office. He has even been caught trying to charge small visitors for using the slide! We pass a big bubble of a tent made of thick polythene with lots of fat sofas inside around a central stove, tool shed, toilet shed and the all-important boat shed housing its 'star' occupant, 'Ursa' originally so-called because she always points to Polaris. As we pass by we are greeted with warmth and Ben trips along happily enjoying good crack with his friends. Joined by Malcolm and Jake we settle down inside the caravan marked 'visitor info.' Jane describes their daily activities:

"We watch the base, because they're so secretive. They don't tell you anything about the danger to us of having these weapons on our doorstep."

Periodically they blockade the base and cause a security shut-down. They are at pains to stress that despite reports to the contrary their actions do not result in 'violent clashes' with police. They describe their experiences with enthusiasm but curiously it sounds quite 'safe', almost routine, and perhaps that's how it is. They have struck up what sounds like good relations with many of the police officers and security staff and are treated well, even when they broke into the base and wandered around for three hours before being caught.

What about reaction from local people? The camp is a legal site and after twelve years is well established. Having had children living there with doctors and health visitors calling they've never had problems with hygiene regulations. They believe there are also deeper reasons for local acceptance. They provide a lifeline for families, a way of dealing with the fear of not knowing or of knowing what's at stake here but being sworn to secrecy.

But what about the large-scale protests of the early eighties? They acknowledge that many former activists have moved onto other environmental campaigns like opposing road building or saving trees. We talk at length about

the way these are linked not just holistically but in a more 'profane' way. For example the road-building firm, Tarmac, was one of the main contractors when the base was built. But they have had a very positive response from the public for their 'Nukewatch' campaign which alerts people to the convoys as they travel from Reading to Coulport. They believe they are succeeding by opening up the debate and challenging the assumptions made 'on high' that individuals have no choices to make about the way that they and their families are protected by the state.

Like most people they no longer believe World War Three is imminent. They are more concerned about about an accident on a

submarine at sea or to a convoy than an accident at the base. Jake explains that they have some respect for the expertise of the personnel there to handle emergencies. Jane goes as far as to say she thinks the Peace Camp is a great place to bring up kids. I ask her if the children at the school discuss it much and she smiles:

"Well, my son talks about it all the time because it's his life. Give him Lego and he'll build a convoy. He plays games in the playground where they run around and arrest people! But obviously he's learning from their experience as well. I expect there will be a rebellious phase in his future when he'll hate all this. We've given him a lot of freedom. I just hope I never hear myself say 'You're not joining the Navy!'"





Over at Dregghorn families of the Queen's Own Highlanders are returning from six months in Munster. We are meeting two families in one of their homes to talk about bringing up children in the army. The army captain must remain in attendance throughout, although he is content that the children speak in a back room away from the adults' gaze.

The three children - Janice and John's daughter Lyndsay, 13, and Marion and Charles' two sons Charlie, 11, and Michael, 9, - tell me

what's special to them about life in the army: "Your dad has to go away all the time," Michael says, and Charlie adds, "And you keep moving around." What's it like when dad's away? "Boring!" they laugh. Charlie goes on quietly, "Everyone else has their dad at home and ours is away and I miss him." So what do they do when he's away? Lyndsay answers, "When you're with dad you all go out a lot. You just stay in all the time when mum's here." What sort of things do they do with dad? Charlie describes the fairs they went to in Germany with some enthusiasm but with dad away it seemed they stayed in and watched television. They are looking forward to a better selection of programmes here. Families were just starting to

install satellite when they left. They are more interested in going out and exploring at the moment. Michael doesn't know why his mum won't allow it. His brother points out that they've only just sorted their furniture.

So what about school? They've all just finished their first week. The boys like their new school because the work isn't as far behind as at the school they left and because "small schools are better...you can't get lost in them." Lyndsay is more reticent having just started third year at secondary at a school she will only describe as 'different'. She thought coming here would be 'good' but so far she's been disappointed. But it's early days.

Marion begins, "In Germany the children were kind of more protected. You were in your own little community. You didn't know what was going on back in the UK. I wouldn't dream of dropping them off at the pictures in the town here." Janice agrees. But they admit that once they settle that might change. Already Marion's boys don't want her to take them to and from school.

John shares their misgivings, "Our quarters in Germany were not inside the camp, there were Germans round about us. The weans were out playing and we never felt they were unsafe. There were incidents, but very little." So why do they feel different here? "It's as much the television as anything. Every time we turn on the news there's something awful happening in Britain." There was no UK news coverage in Germany on the available English channels and few families spoke German. Are they saying that they think they've brought their families back to a more dangerous society? "Yes!" John exclaims. "Well-I don't think so," Marion says, "It's just more worrying." Janice agrees. John reckons that once the other battalions are here and "virtually all Queen's Own" they'll settle down. But at the moment they insist on the children being in as soon as its dark.

Captain Givens announces that they are building a community centre within the camp and will run a youth club. "We're trying to encourage the children to go inside rather than hang around street corners."

They believe their children are able to make friends more easily than most. Army families are coming and going all the time as fathers finish their commission or get posted. It is usually harder for the children who leave than those left behind and Marion tells a heart-rending story of a little boy's unanswered letters to her son. But typically the long-distance phone calls quickly become letters which soon stop. It would be very unusual for children to maintain a long-standing friendship under these conditions. Likewise for their parents. Janice says, "Sometimes I think the children cope better than we do."

John and Janice's son has joined the army. Was it always on the cards that he would do that? There is a very long pause as Janice and John look at each other and shake their heads.

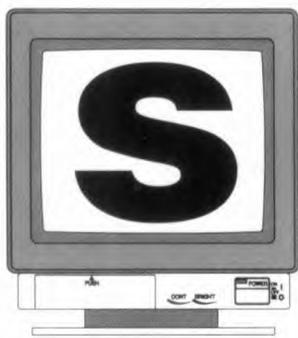
Finally John says, "OK, when I was in the Gulf, that was when he went through it all. He signed on while I was away. I really didn't have any influence on him when all that happened. I wasn't there." Janice explains, "A lot of his friends were joining you see." He was seventeen and a half. John goes on, "I don't think he ever wanted to be in the army!" This had been a very

difficult period for the family. Their son had expected to join the same regiment as his dad, but since he was too young to go to Northern Ireland, which was their next posting, he was left doing guard duty at the barracks and sometimes went absent. But he's settling better now. John ends by saying, "I don't know why he joined the Queens Own. I mean I don't know if it was because it was the only life he ever knew." Janice says, "Yes, but he got the choice." He dismisses this saying, "Aye, but always being in the army, I don't know if maybe the thought of coming out of school and becoming a civvy frightened him."

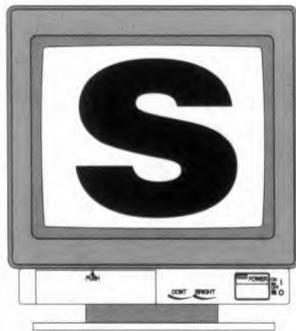
Marion is clear about how she'll manage the rest of her sons' education: when they move to Inverness next year that's the last they'll move, although for her husband it's a two year posting. It falls at a critical time when Ryan, their youngest, starts school, Michael reaches secondary and Charlie starts his 'options'.

They consider themselves fortunate to have had six years in one place. For many two years is the norm, playing havoc with the children's education. While abroad they attend service schools and in the UK they attend local schools unless they board. Every school that looks at the last school report seems to say their children are behind. The Scottish system is singled out for both praise and criticism on these grounds: their children have most difficulty 'fitting in' with the curriculum but that the standards are very high in comparison to schools elsewhere. The Captain believes it's time the Scottish system was brought into line with the rest of the UK. But the parents admit it seems unreasonable to change the system to suit 'a few hundred army families'. In the meantime the children have to get on with it and sooner or later they'll adapt. ■





Switched on



Schools

Fed up with being pestered for a SEGA for Christmas? **Stephen Naysmith** looks at the more constructive role played by computers in the classroom.



You might think that all these technological advances mean to children are bigger, faster, more violent computer games. If you're thinking about the single-purpose games machines such as the SEGA and Nintendo this is the case.

The battle for the home market has been lost, at least temporarily, to consoles and other 'closed box' systems which can only be used for game playing. However, it is a different matter in schools, where machines designed for business use are increasingly gaining a grip. So can schools tap into the enthusiasm children have for computers? If kids are familiar with computers for games can this enthusiasm transfer to learning from computers in school?

I went to a primary school and a secondary in Strathclyde to try to get the measure of what use is being made of computers. Both Christie Park Primary in Alexandria and Castlemilk High School in Glasgow are well equipped, but beyond that the story couldn't be more different.

At Christie Park pupils are introduced to computers almost as soon as they start to learn to read. With the help of their teacher they can write using special 'concept' keyboards. These are blank pads used instead of the normal typewriter style keyboards, which are overlaid with templates of differing complexity. In the simplest versions, the templates have areas with shapes and colours on them, which can be pressed to select options that match with items shown on the computer screen. These are used in nursery schools to teach about patterns and simple numeric skills.

For reading and writing practice, the pupil will have a more complicated concept keyboard offering a choice of simple words. By selecting these words they can turn their thoughts into written sentences long before they have mastered handwriting. As children advance up the school the keyboards become increasingly complex until they can make the leap onto the standard computer keyboard.

Maths is practised with games and puzzles on the BBC micro while packages for the Apple

Pressing Forward

Computers are getting more powerful but also friendlier to use. Within a few years, for instance, you probably won't need separate television, video, hi-fi, fax or telephone sets. If you want, a personal computer will handle all of these functions, plus perhaps the central heating, alongside more traditional computing tasks such as word-processing.

Some people follow all this with great interest, most are at least vaguely aware of it. However, the great potential for using such technology in the interests of education, rather than for leisure and convenience, is less well known.

An example is the latest break-through, the use of compact discs to store computer information. The same CDs which have taken over the music industry can be used to store massive chunks of information. The entire Oxford English Dictionary (previously 20 hardback volumes) can be placed on a single disc and called up on the computer screen.

Encyclopaedias can likewise be transferred to a computer. An electronic encyclopaedia has significant advantages over a printed one. The reader can search through in a matter of seconds and find all the references to a chosen topic. Pictures can be included as well as music and speech, and short sections of film can be placed within the text. A child can call up information on the eagle, see a film of it in flight and hear its cry as well as reading about it.

The personal computers used in offices and for design and other creative tasks are advancing by leaps and bounds, and school users should be able to benefit from improved graphics, higher memory capacity, faster operation and systems which no longer require complicated commands or programming languages. You don't need to type in commands any more, just point at an option on the screen and press a button. In some cases, the

computer will even respond to spoken commands.

Making good use of computers in schools is still not straightforward. First of all there is the problem of money. Schools do not always have the cash to buy lots of computers or for high quality, up-to-date software (the programmes that run on them).

Another doubt is whether teachers will actually use the computers if they are put into the classroom. They may not have time, or may be put off by the fact that many pupils can teach them a thing or two about the machines they are using.

There is also the problem of what type of computer to buy - and how it will match with those bought in the past. While much of the development and advances are currently taking place for computers such as the Apple Macintosh and the PC, most schools have invested in the older BBC microcomputers which are increasingly being left behind. Having a range of different types of computer in schools doesn't help much. Because different makes have been bought by different departments over the years, teachers and pupils can find themselves needing to get to grips with very different ways of working. Even a simple example can demonstrate the problem: The command for advancing to the next stage of a programme is different on various computers. You might press 'c' for continue, press the space bar, press return or enter, or you might disregard the keyboard and use a 'mouse' to point at the command on the screen.

This makes a difference - If a pupil is arriving at secondary school to meet twelve new teachers, it helps if they don't have to get to know six new computer systems as well. This problem will lessen as computers become more and more harmonised, but at the moment it is another factor impeding development.

"I talk about the three C's: Children, Curriculum, Computer. The computer comes last of all - nothing is done on the computer for the sake of it."

Macintosh are used to spark off whole projects or to generate sophisticated artwork. Indeed the walls of the school are decorated with both handwritten and computer-set text and pictures both painted and printed.

According to head teacher Fiona McCormack, even if teachers are not entirely comfortable with the machines to start with, they soon see the benefits: "The problem is that teachers take a little convincing. If they know the Apple is a bigger, more powerful computer, they assume that it must also be harder. You can tell teachers until you're blue in the face that the extra power is used to make things simpler but you need to convince them. You put the machine in the classroom and say 'you're using it' and by the end of the first day they're saying: 'You know this is easier'."

As for 'expert' pupils, Christie Park makes use of them too: "That is difficult for teachers although it happens all the time. But there's no loss of face in asking the children to help. A primary three teacher will send up to primary seven and say 'can wee Jimmy come down and tell me what I did wrong?'"

The teachers do seem at ease with the technology and they have noticed greater motivation among their pupils. An example is in written work. Teachers are able to work with a child on a piece the child has written and ask them to go back to it. The technique is known as drafting and redrafting, and previously nothing was as guaranteed to turn a child off as having to return to a piece they had already written and redo it. Now children can do class work on punctuation, and then re-examine its use in their own work, or recheck for spelling or narrative colour, and improve their piece without having to laboriously copy it all out again.

I can imagine right wing educationalists being outraged at time being taken away from the three 'R's, so I ask: "Doesn't writing on the computer take time away from learning handwriting?"

Fiona McCormack looks baffled - disappointed in me that I should ask such a question after all that I have seen in the classes and around the walls: "That question doesn't make sense. The computers in here are enhancing the curriculum."

"I talk about the three C's: Children, Curriculum, Computer. The computer comes last of all - nothing is done on the computer for the sake of it."

Castlemilk High School was suggested to me as one of the best-equipped schools in Glasgow in terms of new technology. They have dozens of personal computers, including BBCs, Apples, Archimedes and others, they have a video editing suite and use information stored on CD Rom in the library and for geography. However my overall impression was far more equivocal than



Stephen Naysmith

at Christie Park.

Certainly the computers offer some remarkable opportunities. Along with other schools in Glasgow they have a CD database as part of the Europe in the Round project. This

enables them to call up on screen details of anything from the size of a country's gross domestic product and its population to a list of the opportunities for Scots youngsters to go and work there.^{ES}

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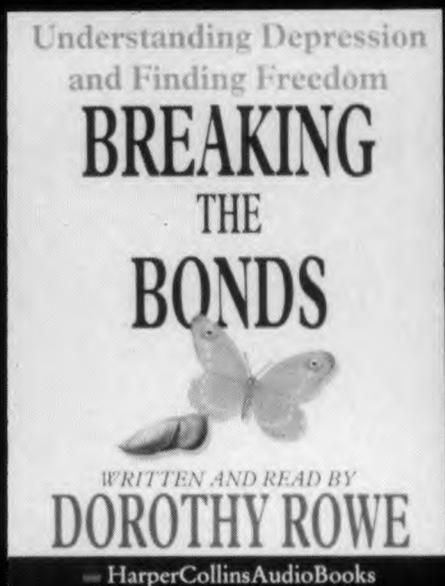
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Stephen Naysmith

The languages department can call up a French computer network and pupils can work on real French texts or communicate with European pen-pals.

But in almost every department of the school, from geography to the technical subjects, from physics to home economics, time and time again I was told that the computers weren't being used to capacity, and teachers seemed half-hearted about the electronic revolution. So what are the reasons?



or a start, it is harder to produce computer programmes for secondary schools that will fit with the requirements of the curriculum. Several teachers told me that there wasn't suitable software to help them. There would be useful parts in various packages but no one ideal choice.

Buying several programmes to use only the useful parts would cost too much.

Also the pressures of time are greater at secondary school. If pupils have to complete a series of modules before exams there may not be time for the teacher to work computer aids into classes. Some teachers felt they didn't have time to get used to the machines themselves, or enough training available to back them up.

There was also greater dissatisfaction among staff and pupils with the limitations of the computers the school had bought. The BBC micro, still used in hundreds of Scottish schools, is now outdated and doesn't look the wonder it was eight years ago. This doesn't seem to be so much of a problem in primaries. However in secondaries, whether from a teen obsession with the up-to-date, or simply because they are more discriminating, young people seem to be more judgemental. Enthusiasm for the BBC micro, in this age-group, went out with Adam and the Ants (a long time ago). Nowadays, if a computer doesn't have sharp graphics and sophisticated sound, it simply won't compare with what kids have at home - even if their machine only plays games.

Primary schools have a different method of teaching from secondaries, which I think helps explain the difference between Christie Park and Castlemilk High. The topic based approach used in primaries, with a topic on Hallowe'en encompassing everything from science and maths to art and creative writing, can perhaps more easily stretch to include work done on a computer.

This flexibility means that, as at Christie Park, a teacher can begin with a computer programme and develop a whole topic exploring the themes raised by it. One package used in this way at the school is Dreamtime, a relatively unsophisticated BBC micro package which consists of two adventure stories. The pupils progress through the story by means of problem solving and language work using an overlay keyboard. One teacher at Christie Park had used Dreamtime as a start point and taken the work from there with the class producing pages of colourful imaginative work incorporating art, writing, reading and more. Meanwhile another class, after going out to investigate local wildlife and parks, used the computer as an optional extra, comparing their experiences with scenes from a computer programme set in a park.

The way forward for secondary schools probably involves increased flexibility too. At the Scottish Council for Educational Technology this is the way research is going. The council works with teachers, developing new programmes with them and adapting them according to their needs. Once a package has been developed it is made available to schools.

But the method favoured now is not to design software for specific topics, such as mapping the path of a pendulum, or analysing a Mozart concerto, but instead to develop tools with which teachers can design their own lessons. Thus their current projects, Chronicle and Expressions can be customised and used for anything from home economics to German. Only the Explorers Club, a programme to encourage reading, is tied closely to a particular curricular area.

Chronicle enables the teacher or pupil to design a time-line charting events across periods of anything from a few seconds to a thousand years. The example on show at SCET depicts 'Yeltsin's Battle for Power', running from his

rise to prominence under Gorbachev to the Russian army's recent storming of the parliament building, with photographs, newspaper clippings and other information available at the click of a button.



in a school this tool has obvious uses for history lessons, but equally a science class could use it to chart the progress of light through a camera, or pupils could work on a history of their school. If the technology is used to its full potential this could incorporate photographs, speech and even clips of the school's orchestra or sports teams performing.

Expressions is a similar programme, but even more open-ended, allowing teachers to organise and present information or tasks and questions in a framework which they design. Both packages would be useful but look as though they might be labour intensive for the teacher. As with all classwork preparation, however, the work can be kept for re-use in future years. The advantage the computer offers is that it is much easier to adapt your materials for future classes in the light of its success or otherwise in the classroom.

A final limitation of computers will become more obvious as the demands become greater in secondaries. Computers cannot replace teachers. Specifically, they cannot mimic the range of responses and the understanding a teacher brings to the job. They cannot mark an essay, for example, or tell a French student that they recognise the phrase the student is trying to use, but that there is a better one that is more 'French.'

Computers are great for marking sums and spelling. They can even make the learning of these things more fun. They can model scientific experiments which could not be measured any other way. They can let pupils tap into a communications revolution which is only beginning. But the rules for making judgements are still largely beyond even the best computers. Teacher knows best. ■



Rona Sutherland experiences how democratic protest is policed in 1990s Britain.

BRUTE FORCE



Douglas Robertson

The demonstration, beginning in Winns Common, marched through the streets of south-east London with protestors calling for the closure of the BNP headquarters. Calls for black and white unity and 'Smash the BNP' rang through the crowd. The march had taken us through one main street where every possible exit along the way had been barricaded by police, dogs and horses. Even the most ingenious of the marchers could not help but be aware of the highly antagonistic police standing at the ready.....

Violence erupted when two protestors - a survivor of the holocaust and a victim of a racial attack in the area - requested that the police allow them to leave the official route which went to the left, to make their way to the BNP headquarters. Mounted police charged a previously peaceful crowd, consisting of old men and children, young men and women. Police attacked indiscriminately pushing over old men in wheelchairs and beating women with their children watching helplessly.

I had travelled down with a friend, both of us

marchers walked miles and spent hours looking for their coaches which had, in effect, been arrested by police. Drivers had been moved to one area and forced to remain with their vehicles. This policing measure meant drivers had to drive their passengers home having had no sleep.

Protestors, some with children, wandered for hours looking for their transport; many were in danger of a violent backlash from BNP members. People, like us, coming from as far off as Edinburgh and Glasgow were left stranded when, with their own timetables to keep, the coaches were forced to return home, many only half full. The coach we had come down on drove around street after street looking for its passengers in the dark. We watched helplessly as lost groups huddled

A collective of thousands, coming together in unity against violence and racism, were branded a 'rioting mob' by the mainstream press

These days it appears to be the fashion, within whatever group or collective of people, to claim allegiance to equal opportunities and, in particular, anti-racism. Indeed no local authority establishment is without its equal opportunities policy. Yet how credible is this support in the light of recent events in London when tens of thousands of the public, both black and white, gathered to protest against racism and found two of the countries most powerful institutions ranged against them?

16 October 1993: thousands of peaceful demonstrators surrounded by 7,000 police in full riot gear, some mounted, others with dogs, gas and truncheons. Marchers gathered in response to both an upsurge of violence in the area coinciding with the BNP setting up headquarters there, and because the danger of complacency had been firmly blasted home all over Britain with the election of a BNP councillor in Tower Hamlets just a few weeks previously. What had to many seemed unimaginable had come to pass.

hoping to make a visible stand against racism. We stood shocked, having never witnessed such a fearsome misuse of power before. Stewards called for calm and asked the frantic crowd to move to the left. Police truncheoned them and blocked the agreed route. The mass of people were then trapped!

As more and more unaware protestors came in from behind the crush became intolerable. The deadlock remained. Marchers desperate for refuge climbed the wall alongside, only to find themselves forced back into the panic by threatening police moving forward with dogs. A small obviously trouble-bound group emerged from amidst this chaos and police activity. Five or six young men, wearing balaclavas and brandishing sticks, had gathered on top of a bus shelter at the front of the demonstration. They were easily accessible to the police but the police made no efforts to remove them. These aggressors seemed to provide the 'desired' element of violence. They were later used in the news bulletins and press reports, as representatives of the whole demonstration, for the onlooking world, serving very nicely to validate the police version of events.

More confusion was to follow the end of the demonstration when exhausted and cold

together for protection and warmth.

How can so large a gathering of the public, exercising their so-called democratic right, be so outrageously mis-handled and misrepresented? A collective of thousands, coming together in unity against violence and racism, were branded a 'rioting mob' by the mainstream press. The media at large vehemently proclaimed the march as a bunch of unruly troublemakers. A more sceptical reader may have noticed however that, with such a mutinous band of aggressors, even the most fantastical reports claimed only eleven arrests - some riot!

What is disturbing is not only the physical violence of the police on the ground but the government's willingness to manipulate the genuine concerns of ordinary people - about jobs and housing - for its own ends. The events of October 16 are directly linked to the speeches of the Conservative Party Conference when ministers sounded off about foreigners scrounging from the state to enthusiastic ovations. How can we possibly fight against racism when the government uses the strength of false propaganda and feeds it to the rest of the country? How can we fight a racist government? We did try on October 16 - where do we go from here? ■

Something Li

Moira Burgess

On Thursday after school Pat and Selma scrupulously wait for the green man, reining their buggies back from the kerb. Selma's five-year-old daughter and Pat's six-year-old son fidget beside the babies, especially when a thin pale-faced little girl, about their own age, comes running up behind them and dives across the road with only a quick glance to right, left, right.

There isn't, in fact, a moving vehicle to be seen. Selma emits a little scream, however, and Pat clicks and tuts.

"Far too young," Selma mourns.

"It'll be many a year," pronounces Pat, "before mine are allowed to come home alone. Many a year."

"You'd think she could pop the twins in their buggy and run along to school. Like the rest of us," Selma has to add. The she in question isn't the little girl, as they both understand.

"It's not as if she's too busy," Pat confirms what they've long ago agreed.

The green man blinks on and she calls her son out of a reverie. They straggle across the road, turn into the avenue, and halt opposite a closed-looking house where the small pale girl is attacking the rusty gate-catch. The overgrown winter garden is empty, though there's a fine drying breeze. "She hasn't put a washing out all week," observes Pat.

"Maybe she's got a tumble-dryer."

"Selma, she just doesn't bother her bottom," Pat corrects. The little girl wins her struggle with the gate. Its hinges squeak drily in the cold air. "You know, I can hear that all the way through in the conservatory. Her husband ought to fix it," Selma says.

"Think there is a husband, do you?"

says Pat, who raises the question of her own

great need for a conservatory thrice weekly at foreplay time.

The little girl runs round the side of the house and disappears. No conservatory sheltering that peeling back door. Pat's son drops his schoolbag and the strap bursts. Whimpering slightly, expecting blame, he falls to his knees and begins to shovel things back in.

"Get up! Look at your trousers! Stuart Sanderson, is that a crisp-bag?"

"I swapped my apple," says the truthful child. He grabs for a squashed paper-chain thick with glitter. Pat's hand forestalls him. "That goes in your room and nowhere else. It's beginning!" she sighs, rolling her eyes.

"Began in our house the day after Hallowe'en."

"Oh, I don't allow it," says Pat, "till school stops. Take that indoors! Don't let me see any glitter on the carpet! Then all hell breaks loose. I'll have to bake tomorrow. Last chance before they're all under my feet."

"Two weeks! Husbands as well!" Selma hangs on the brink of suggesting that it's kind of fun.

"I can't stand it," Pat instructs her, which settles that.

They look again at the house across the avenue. "What does she do in there all day?" Selma wonders.

Pat frowns at the flickering colours in the front room. "Watching that junk!" she says. "Couldn't she get a wee job?"

"Well, with the twins on her hands," Selma allows.

"And I tell you what," says Pat, "I think she's pregnant again. Saw her out at the bin the



ke That

**new voices,
new writing**

other day. The way she was walking. You know."
"Must be a husband somewhere then."
"You're so charitable, Selma," Pat says.



On Friday at coffee-time Selma follows her nose to Pat's kitchen, where delectable smells waft from trays of gingerbread men, crunchies, melting moments, brandy-snaps, laid out to cool. "Mine prefer Mars bars," she complains, hitching herself plumply on to a stool and accepting a steaming mug.

"I've never given mine the chance," says Pat austere. She's forgotten, as usual, that Selma takes sugar.

Should Selma reveal what Pat's Stuart eats on Saturdays in her house? She helps herself to a brandy-snap instead. They gossip away the last moments of peace before Christmas seriously sets in. After two crunchies and a melting moment, Selma returns to the brandy-snaps. Pat rises and begins to pack away the biscuits in plastic containers with snap-on lids, matching her fitted cupboard doors.

She accompanies Selma to the gate, perhaps apprehensive that her guest will double back and raid the gingerbread men. "I don't think that wee one opposite is at school today," she says, hugging herself in the frosty air.

"Lots of mums don't send them on the last day. They don't do any work anyway."

"I won't stand for that," says Pat, folding her lips. "I've told mine. Don't try it, I say! If the school's open, you go."

"Unless they have colds," suggests Selma.

"Even then."

Selma considers the empty garden across the street. "Maybe the twins have got colds," she says. "Not out playing on a bright day like this?"

"No, no," clucks Pat. "She'd have to dress them, undress them, too much like hard work. She sits them down in front of the telly. Look, you can see it's on."

They watch the colours chasing each other in the bleak midday room.

In the other half of the semi the storm-door is shut and the blinds half-drawn. "Mrs Tyrrell's off to her daughter's for Christmas," diagnoses Pat. "Well, I hope she's left her heating on, that was some mess last year."

"Wish it was me," sighs Selma. "Sit back and be waited on! I've got everybody coming. Aunties and all."

"Me too," chirps Pat. "But I'm not grumbling! A houseful! It's a great time of year!"

"You said yesterday you couldn't stand it," objects Selma.

"Ah well," says Pat piously. "Blood's thicker than water. It's the family time."

Surely the frost has lost its dry cold bite. Clouds are banking up behind the quiet house opposite, yellow-grey like an old bruise. Selma says "I think it's going to snow."

"That's all we need!" Pat cries. But Selma suspects that she's ordered snow specially to set off the holly-wreath which annually decorates her door.



On Saturday before breakfast the snow is three inches deep in the gardens, the avenue rutted only by a milk-float's wheels. Pat's children and Selma's children are up and squealing and out.

"Snow on Christmas Eve!" says Selma fondly. "They'll always remember this."

"If they walk that stuff over my carpet they sure will."

"Oh Pat, it's Christmas time!"

"I'll kill them, that's all," Pat maintains.

Pat's garden and Selma's garden are soon laid waste, trampled into dirty slush, with drunken snowmen and a depressed igloo. On the other side of the avenue, in the garden of the half-deserted semi, there are no children's tracks in the snow.

"She's gone away for Christmas," Pat explains.

It's always quicker just to agree with Pat. Selma really doesn't know why she questions the decree. "Did you see her go?"

"Well, no, but it's obvious."

"But Pat," objects Selma, "we were decorating the tree in our front window. All evening, till late. And then the kids were up at the crack of dawn. Never saw a taxi or anything." She pauses. "Never heard her gate squeak."

Pat stands cross and overworked with her arms full of wellingtons and mistletoe. "Tom was working on the car," she admits. "He wanted to come in and watch the film. Finish that car, I said, it's your mother you've got to collect! Spitting mad he was, because he could see the telly flickering over there."

It's still flickering. Shrieks of laughter, excited voices, the beat of the Christmas number one. All on the box, locked up in the bright screen. Craning and tiptoeing, Selma can't see anyone in the room.

Pat says she has more than enough to do, thank you very much. It's never any use arguing with Pat. Selma runs across the avenue, apron and all. Snow soaks her fluffy slippers as she presses the doorbell, a long wild peal, enough to wake the dead.

No reply. Round the side of the house, finding two days' milk on the shabby back doorstep. The doors are locked; she shakes them and feels the strong bolts hold. "Selma? Selma!" she hears Pat cry as she runs back across the road, indoors, upstairs to disturb her husband's Christmas lie-in. She can't make him understand. She gets the ladder herself, wrestles it across the avenue where people are beginning to stare, climbs up to the bedroom window like a woman gone mad.

Pat, protesting, stands among the snow-capped straggly cotoneasters steadying the ladder. She sees nothing, looking up, but Selma's massive behind in terrible purple corduroys. She hears nothing at all. After a while she has to throw her full weight against the ladder, because it's shaking so.

"The children too," says Selma again and again, half an hour later in her suddenly crowded kitchen, where a policewoman is stacking the dirty breakfast dishes and making a cup of tea. "The children too."

Pat keeps her head. Somebody has to. Unshaven husbands are shuffling about in dressing-gowns, and any minute now Tom's mother is going to phone. "I can't imagine a person doing something like that," she says. "Can you?"

Selma stumbles over to the sink and vomits till she's hollow, because, belatedly, she finds she can imagine very well.



Colin Chalmers

Difficult Times

Goliath - Britain's Dangerous Places

**Beatrix Campbell
Methuen £9.99**

Travellers - Voices of the New Age Nomads

**Edited by Richard Lowe and
William Shaw
Fourth Estate £8.99**

Colin Chalmers

A lot of young people growing up today don't have a very rosy future to look forward to - already a quarter of all British children grow up in poverty. The NHS is on the ropes, social services often a joke and basic legal rights are

under attack - all against a background of grinding unemployment and poverty for many communities in Britain.

What do you do if you are growing up on an estate where it's a novelty to have a job and the place is falling to bits? How do you live in a society that consistently excludes you and tells you it's your own fault that you're excluded?

In **Goliath - Britain's Dangerous Places** Beatrix Campbell looks at how people in some of Britain's poorest estates have reacted to chronic poverty. In particular she looks at the 'riots' that spread through some of Britain's poorest communities in 1991 as the police invaded 'lawless' estates from Tyneside to Cardiff.

Unfortunately Campbell subjects us to what she calls a 'feminist analysis' of the events that tells us a lot more about Beatrix Campbell than about the people on the estates. Her 'probing' of 'lawless masculinity' leads her quickly to a condemnation of unemployed, 'lawless' young men that would not be out of place at a Tory party conference. As she puts it,

'The argument of this book is that neither manners nor mothers are to blame, but that there is an economic emergency in many

neighbourhoods where the difference between what women and men do with their troubles and with their anger shapes their strategies of survival and solidarity on the one hand, danger and destruction on the other'.

Or more straightforwardly,

'Crime and coercion are sustained by men. Solidarity and self-help are sustained by women. It is as stark as that.'

This is if anything clear - when things get bad women cope and men go mental. Now there is of course quite a lot of truth in this; women are the backbone of poor, working class communities. They do ensure that the communities survive, that the children eat, often with little help from their men. This would be a useful observation if it was used as a basis for trying to understand how communities are better able to stand up for themselves, turn anger into organisation and bitterness into empowerment. But this is not Campbell's agenda - the poverty is a given for her, she offers no way of challenging it. It is all about coping, managing, containing protest into channels that change nothing.

The 'riots' of 1991 were not organised affairs. They were contradictory, chaotic events that did, however, at some level give voice to the anger of communities destroyed by poverty.

Campbell completely misunderstands the nature of riots. For her, 'historically, riots express a crisis - the impossibility of politics and of protest. They are the moment when challenge becomes chaos, when disorder becomes danger.' In fact, riots are historically often the messy, often aimless, *precursor* to protest, politics and challenge. They are a sign that a community is in some way challenging the oppression it suffers under. Often they achieve nothing, or worse. But they are a sign that people want a voice, a voice they have been denied.

The events of 1991 largely took the form of conflict between young men on the estates and the police. The police, after all, are the most visible and most obvious representatives of those-who-have against these communities of those-who-have-not. The police do not live in these areas; they are comparatively well off; their purpose, when all is said and done, is to protect the status quo against those who would change it. If you are young, poor, male, and worse of all black, you will find it very difficult to like the police because you are likely to be in frequent conflict with them.

Campbell doesn't see it this way of course. She does not side with poor communities against a hostile police force but with women in both camps against the men. So the SUS laws, used by the police to systematically harass black youth were not about state racism; rather they 'gave young white men many opportunities to overpower black men'.

Goliath offers an improved 'feminist' approach to keeping the poor in their place. The subtitle of the book - *Britain's Dangerous Places* - gives a clue to her worry that things are getting

out of hand. If only they would suffer in silence; if only they would cope! The riots, not the everyday suffering of the poor, are what worries the likes of Campbell.

Look at what she says about Broadwater Farm, an estate in North London that suffered appalling police racism for years and eventually, after the police murdered a black woman Cynthia Jarrett, erupted into anger at the police:

'By then Cynthia Jarrett was dead. Almost immediately the police surrounded the estate, and so began the swift descent into disaster that night when, in a massive confrontation between the police and the youths, a white constable, Colin Blacklock, was murdered, hacked to death.'

The disaster was not the day-to-day racism, poverty and police harassment on the estate. The disaster was not Cynthia Jarrett's murder. It is only when local youth fight back against the police that there is a disaster.

Her criticisms of unemployed male youngsters at times conflict markedly with the views of the people she talks to from the estates. On one Oxford estate which was invaded by the police in a supposed attempt to stop joyriding, Campbell quotes some local people's views on the joyriders: "There's nothing else for the kids to do"; "The kids were just interested in cars, they weren't breaking into houses"; "He doesn't rob banks, he doesn't hurt old people, and he doesn't do it for profit". She patronisingly describes these views as 'pragmatic rather than moral' simply because the residents seemed less concerned about the illegality of stealing cars than about the police's attitude to their community.

Campbell's middle class feminism is not really concerned with doing anything to end the oppression that the women of these estates have to put up with. The book's main aim is to show that a more 'female' approach to problems is what is needed and that agencies working in these communities, notably the police, need to listen more to people like Campbell. At times the book reads like a police training manual.

Beatrix Campbell's is the voice of 'respectable radicalism' in Britain today. Her kind of opposition is quite acceptable because it appears very radical while offering nothing to those who are actually trying to make things better. She is always there to play the 'left-wing' balance on endless chat shows with Andrew Neill, David Mellor and other right-wing talkalots.

The convoluted language she uses is typical of intellectuals who seek to mystify rather than clarify issues, who are more concerned with 'being taken seriously' by those who run the media and getting a piece of the action for themselves than challenging the whole rotten edifice. When she writes that 'The crisis of the estates is spatialised when the young men assert their dominance by flooding the public domain, primarily the streets, with their own, exclusive,

coteries' what is she really saying apart from 'I can use big words that most people don't understand'?

Not surprisingly, Campbell can see no way out of the problems faced by the men and women she writes about. 'There is nothing in the political economy of Britain that will make any difference to the people living in a state of emergency on the edges of the cities... By the end of the century the children who entered society when they started school during the riots will be entering their *dangerous* (my italics) years when they become teenagers... Their futures are already ancient history.'

Goliath - Britain's Dangerous Places does not identify with the communities it looks at. It is one thing to recognise the cruelty and backwardness that exist amongst the oppressed in any society - be it a Newcastle housing estate, a South American shanty town or a South African township - and quite another to write off the future by denying the possibility of resistance and change. Campbell, of course, does just that - giving this book an unsavoury flavour of voyeurism.

Campbell, who helped lead the Communist Party in this country into self-destruction, once said that 'It's only nutcases in ever-declining political organisations who think the only political act is to go to a meeting'. Her seemingly pro-women standpoint offers nothing to the women whose oppression she dissects because she doesn't actually see their communities as having any hope. Her contempt for the idea that people can actually challenge oppression runs through her book. I'm sure she'll make lots of money from it; I doubt those she writes about will have much to thank her for.

Travellers - Voices of the New Age Nomads is a very different book. It is, like Campbell's, a book about people trying to find a way to live in difficult times but it tells its story in the voices of the people it is about, the 'new age' travellers themselves.

30 different travellers talk about their lives and give us their views in this book. What is most refreshing about it is the incredible variety of their viewpoints, from down-to-earth families to festival-addicted ravers; from kids escaping the cities to travellers who have been on the road for years. What they have in common is that they live, for some of the time at least, a travelling life and that they are all, to some extent, disenchanted with a society that seems to offer them so little. As Spider says,

'You see, the sites are the last bus stop. If you don't get on here you don't get on anywhere. There's some that don't. Modern society creates some seriously fucked-up people - its values are twisted and perverse. And their idea of how our kids should be cared for is to be taken away from us and put in some fucking home. They call that care. That's not about the kids, it's about us.'

There is a general awareness that their lifestyle

is actively disapproved of by those who would rather people stayed at home and suffered in silence. They cite examples, like the Battle of the Beanfield - immortalised by the photo of a riot policeman chasing a woman and child across a field - of police violence and local council prejudice against young people who take to the road. Most see life on the road as difficult and getting harder. As Harry puts it,

'I'm sure it's going to be worse in the future than people think. It won't just be the council people coming in like that fellow, the Gypsy Liaison Officer. They'll be coming in with riot police and the social services. They'll take the kids, shoot the dogs. If they did I'd fight. I'd do whatever it takes.'

It may not be everyone's cup of tea to live on the road, and no one in this book pretends that being a traveller doesn't have its problems. For a start, not all travellers are nice. But this book's documentation of travellers' different ways of life shows that we still have a healthy tradition of scepticism in this country about what is on offer to most people.

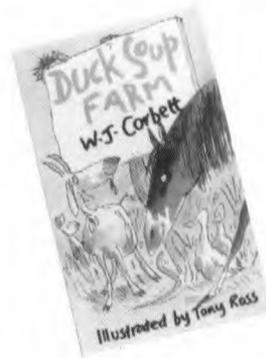
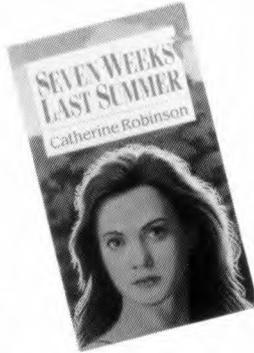
Sam, one of the Dongas Tribe who have been trying to stop the destruction of Twyford Down by the M3 extension, is saddened by most people's acceptance of things as they are. She thinks people need to look at what they really want from life and stand up for it:

'More and more people I meet, normal, straight people who have jobs and all that, are so depressed, so sad and cut off. They're just desperate to live with other people but they just haven't got the guts to go and do it... I want to really challenge what's happening with the changes to the law in terms of travellers. Not as a rebellion thing but to say that it is a necessity to live like this, a necessity to the whole ecosystem that people actually look after the land because that's our job on earth... I want travellers to change too, not just behave like mindless brew crew suffering under the system'

She and her tribe - her community - want to make a better life for themselves. They get attacked for it of course, but the growing anti-roads movement in this country shows that their stand against the M3 roadbuilders has led to a lot more people challenging things. It's really quite inspiring. She describes one battle with the road builders:

'We were running round going in front of the vehicles, getting under the vehicles and they were just coming and trashing us all the time. They were pulling us out, getting rougher and rougher so we were having to get rougher and rougher ourselves. We were doing non-violent direct action really, but we were forced into violence ourselves, to try and stop them from pulling us off... We put five of them in hospital; bollocks the size of footballs mainly and a broken arm I think. They said the women were the worst.'

Well, well. I wonder what our Beatrix would say about that? ■



This World, Other Worlds and Underworlds

Orfe

Cynthia Voigt

Harper Collins - Lions £3.50

I found *Orfe* to be a difficult book to follow and to understand, probably because of its lack of clear-cut plot and narrative drive.

The little storyline which the book tells of a young singer, and how she possesses the gift of being able to wholly captivate any of her listeners with her bewitching voice and her own songs. *Orfe*, the singer, falls in love with an ex-drug addict named Yuri, and they are blissfully happy together for a long while, understanding everything about each other and feeling that they understand everything in the world that they need to when they are together. *Orfe* and Yuri plan to marry, but, soon after they have done so, Yuri slips back into the Underworld of drug addiction and *Orfe* is left, alone and broken-hearted, until her untimely death in a tragic accident.

I failed to see a clear resemblance between the story of *Orfe* and Yuri and the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, in that *Orfe* did not use her musical gift to set Yuri free from the "Tartarus" of drug-taking. Still, the idea of taking an ancient tale and placing it in a situation of the present day is a good one, and could have worked well with the right narration and working.

On the whole, I would not recommend *Orfe* as a book which grips the reader with its plot, or, indeed, with vivid description, but, somehow, the author manages to create a relaxing atmosphere which leaves the reader thinking and wondering about the issues tackled in the book.

Marion Simpson
aged 13

Seven Weeks Last Summer

Catherine Robinson

Random House - Red Fox £3.50

This is a super book. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. It is about a summer of painful, shattering events for Abby, her sister Juliet and brother Jonah. The story is told by Abby herself which makes it seem all the more realistic. She tells us of how she and her brother, sister and

mother cope with the fact that her father has left for good. Seven weeks of painful happenings help Abby to grow up. She spills her heart out to her first boyfriend, Kit, who too finally leaves her.

I would definitely recommend this book to about 11 year-olds upwards. It is both fascinating and heartbreaking but realistic too. It is an excellent book and it is good value too.

Julia Clarke
aged 12.

Room Thirteen

T.S. Rue

Harper Collins - Lions £2.99

Sequels tend to be a bad idea to start with, and **Room Thirteen** was no exception - a disappointment after reading the first book, *Nightmare Inn*. The back of the book claimed it was a horrifying story. Well, I wasn't horrified. Nor was I particularly interested in the plot, which was pretty stupid, or the characters, who were just stereotypes - a rebellious teenage girl, a cruel, unreasonable father, and a handsome, though slightly dangerous boyfriend. Stock Characters A, B and C.

I would only recommend that you buy *Room Thirteen* if you have £2.99 that you don't want, and feel that buying a book is as good a way of spending money as any. For most people, though, I wouldn't waste your time.

Rebecca Yearling
aged 14

The Tree House

Gillian Cross

Methuen £7.99

The story of the tree house is very exciting and interesting. There is a boy called Sprog. He is three. William is seven. I think Sprog is cute.

They have moved to a house which is very, very new, and in the garden there is a tree, bigger than any tree Sprog has ever seen.

William and Sprog think that they should build a tree house or even a watchtower. Their Daddy makes a tree house and then he goes away. He sends back lots of presents for the tree house, like torches, toffees, a rope ladder and an

umbrella. William and Sprog make a telephone with the tins left over from the toffees.

I had two favourite bits: when Sprog piled up some horse chestnuts and put them in the treehouse, and when Sprog and William got the torches out and played in the dark.

It's a very good type of book for a person of my age. I loved it.

Ellen Spaeth
aged 6 and three-quarters

Duck Soup Farm

W.J. Corbett

Mammoth £2.99

This is a story about five children and their dog who look after pets while their owners go on holiday. One of the pets was a pit-pony but it turned out to be a stolen racehorse. I liked the book very much and I liked the bit where the children said they were going to tackle their dads' workshops. The workshops were very private and the children called them "Dad's Wendy House" and "The Hobbit Hole".

Alison Nimmo
aged 6

Teachers... or Creatures?

Frank Rodgers

Puffin £2.99

The main characters are Billy and Brian. This book is about teachers but not normal teachers! When Billy and Brian realised this they decide to become detectives. While out in their disguises, they saw something *very* weird and realised they must continue with their mission. They found out their teachers were ERGS. (Aliens from planet Erga) and were quite disgusting! Their adventure was full of surprises *especially* when they found themselves inside a computer game. Chapter three was funny because the children write what they think of the teachers.

In the end everybody thought Billy and Brian should have got a medal and so did I.

This is a great book, very funny and exciting.

Laura Frame
aged 9



The story is about two boys who find out that teachers, all over the world, are actually aliens trying to take over the world.

I liked the ideas. The book was very funny. One of the things I didn't like about the book was that it was too quick. I read the book in one night. Also the idea of the real computer game was not very good, but it took up most of the book.

Since I read the book in one night, I think that the book should be for the 8-9's. Out of 10 I would give it 8.

Morven Cunningham
aged 11

**The Upside Down World of
Ginger Nutt**
Ian Strachan
Mammoth £2.99

One day Ginger Nutt, a perfectly ordinary boy, buys a tape recorder. When he gets home he discovers it can talk. Not only does he use this tape recorder, which he names Cass, in a battle against his sister, but also when his family has to cope with burglars. Yet this is only one of his adventures. In his other adventure he encounters a time-travelling watch.

I thought it was a very well written book. I enjoyed it so much I could not put it down and read it in one day.

Robert H. Nimmo
aged 10

The book was quite funny but I found parts of it difficult to read. I wouldn't buy this book.

Katie Kerr
aged 9

These pre-Christmas reviews were written as part of the book-reviewing scheme in the Children's Department of John Smith & Sons Bookshop, Byres Road, Glasgow. Thanks to all the children who wrote the reviews and to Enid Boston for gathering them together. ■

Grandparental Guidance



**Grandparents & the Law in
Scotland**

Elaine E Sutherland
Age Concern Scotland, £5.95

John Hunter

'There's a kind of special relationship between grandparents and grandchildren - it's not like the relationship between parents and children. I would hate it if for any reason I were to be deprived of that contact.'

That was my mother talking and she should know. She's a grandparent eight times over - and another on the way. I had given her the review copy of **Grandparents & the Law in Scotland** and she was giving me back her expert opinion.

'If I was having that kind of problem,' Mum continued, 'it's exactly what I'd be looking for.' Problem? What kind of problem? As Elaine E Sutherland puts it in the Introduction, 'When families are getting on together, the law usually seems irrelevant.' It's when the law becomes involved that the problems begin - or when

problems begin that the law becomes involved. And, like my Mum, she should know. She's a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Private Law at Glasgow University.

The problem - if I can call it that - is that while parents usually have a good rough idea of what their rights are vis-a-vis their children, grandparents are seldom as well-informed. It's this gap the book is designed to plug.

Grandparents & the Law in Scotland begins - where all good things begin - by catching its own individual hare. Thus, Elaine E Sutherland kicks off by defining a grandparent. From simple grandparents she moves on to adoptive grandparents and then step-grandparents and then step-grandparents who are not really grandparents at all because their sons or daughters are 'living with, but not married to, someone who has children'.

Which brings me back to another of my mother's expert observations. She was surprised at how many different kinds of relationship were covered in Elaine Sutherland's little book: children living with married parents who live together; children living with one parent of a pair who are not legally separated or divorced; children living with one parent and a step-parent; children living with a mother and father who have never been married; children living with...and the list goes on, all dealt with in turn in English free from what Ms Sutherland herself describes as 'stuffy legalese'.

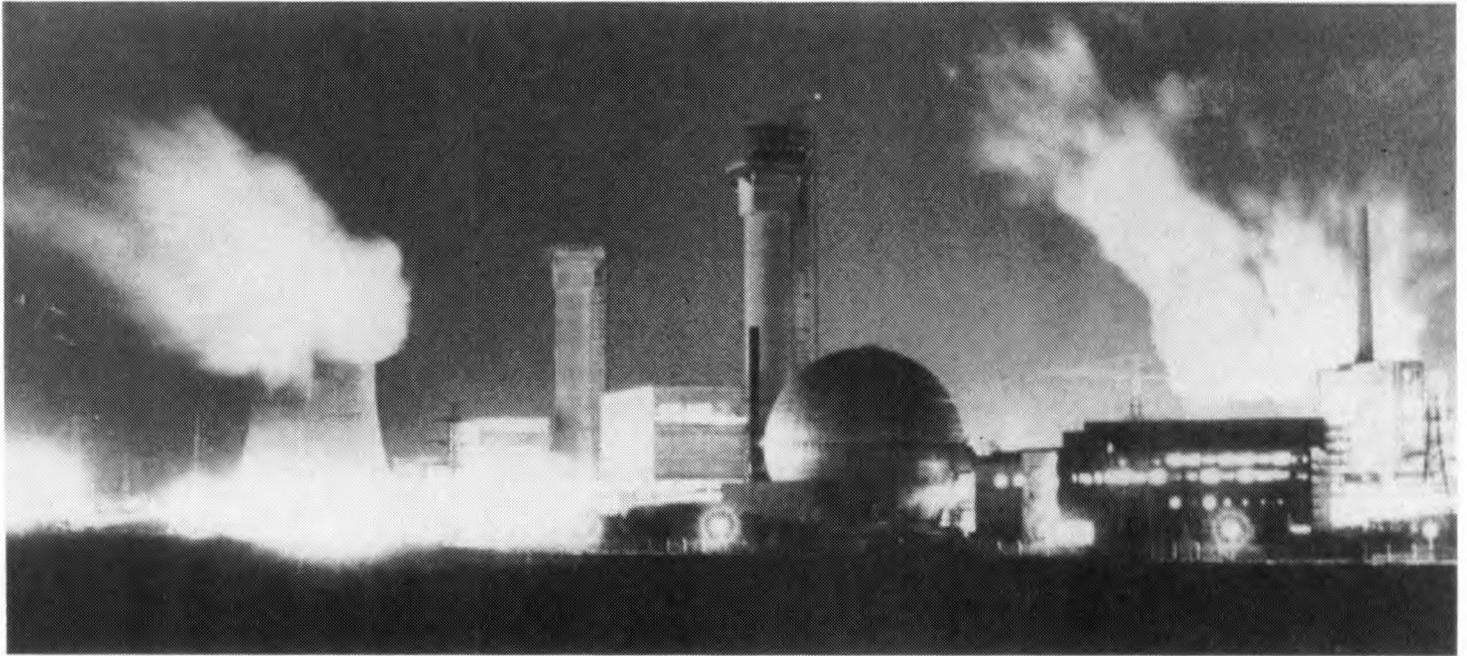
In fact, the beauty of **Grandparents & the Law in Scotland** is its comprehensiveness. Step by simple step it negotiates its way through all the possible pitfalls of 'grandparenting' in Scotland from grandparental rights to grandparental responsibilities, from what to do if you have fears for the safety of your grandchild to the role of grandparents at a Children's Hearing. In fact, so comprehensive is it that there is much between its covers which might be news to some parents never mind grandparents.

In fact, my parents couldn't think of any aspect of a grandparent's relationship with his or her grandchildren that hadn't been covered in the book. The only improvement Mum could think of was that 'maybe a wee index at the back might have helped people who had a particular problem'.

Grandparents & the Law in Scotland - an 80-page A5 paperback - in fact ends with an Appendix giving addresses of various relevant organisations and then a Glossary explaining some of the terms used in the book. Overall I'd say that at £5.95 it's a good buy - especially if you are a grandparent with a problem. ■

Among the contributors in this issue:

Moirra Burgess, born 1936 in Campbeltown, is a novelist, short story writer and editor who lives in Glasgow. **Colin Chalmers** was editor of **Scottish Child** from 1991 to 1993. **Patsy Forde** is an environmental artist currently studying at Glasgow School of Art. **Christopher Harvie** is a professor at Tubingen University in Germany. **Graeme King** is a trainee psychologist, currently researching the "Feeling Yes Feeling No" campaign in Lothian Region. **Graham Stein** is co-editor of **Safe Energy**, a journal which reports on nuclear power and renewable energy. **Rona Sutherland** lives with her son in Edinburgh and is a regular contributor to **Scottish Child**.



Nuclear Fall-out

Dear Editor,
Please find enclosed the unpaid invoice for our birthday support advert.

I feel that I can't support you in this venture because of the article by Ian Maxwell in the October issue of *Scottish Child* (Active Today or Radioactive Tomorrow). I think there are much more important issues requiring to be debated, having a more direct effect

on the health and lives of Scottish children than that as discussed by Ian Maxwell.

Indeed I have noticed an increasing trend towards such articles that have very little relevance on the lives and health of Scottish children. I will therefore have to carefully consider the Region's renewal of the annual subscription when the time comes.

I am extremely disappointed in

the apparent policy change of the magazine, finding the earlier copies of the magazine more relevant to the work of the Children's Panels.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Oxley,
Regional Chairman,
Dumfries and Galloway
Children's Panel,
Dumfries

Editor's comment:
Readers may be interested to know that, besides being Regional Chairman of Dumfries and Galloway Children's Panel, Mr Oxley is the Graphite Manager at Chapelcross Nuclear Power Station in Annan.

A 'Few Rights'

Dear Editor,
I found Margaret Murray's article about violence against women in Eastern Europe (Not Waving But Drowning *Scottish Child* October/November 1993) both moving and informative. Her account of how, in a period more easily measured in months than years, women throughout Eastern Europe have become subjected to brutality, terror and the denial of the most basic human rights makes harrowing reading. So it is a shame that Margaret feels it necessary to ritually denounce the former socialist regimes in these countries even when her own evidence points to the gains made by women under socialism in Eastern Europe.

Margaret describes the former socialist countries as 'totalitarian' and writes of 'the few rights that women had under the communist system'. Few rights? As Margaret herself points out 'under communism women did *at least* (my italics) have the right to work, to childcare, to quick divorce, to

abortion and the right to make relatively free choices about their lives'. I would have thought these 'few rights' would be considered major gains, not to say manna from heaven, to women living in the council schemes and housing estates of the 'free west'. Margaret writes that women she talked to, not surprisingly, preferred the previous socialist regimes to the barbarism of what they are forced to live under now. So why, against all her own evidence of the gains made by women under socialism, does she insist on echoing the prejudices of western governments and media against the former socialist countries?

Those western governments, like our own, that so enthusiastically waged the cold war against the 'totalitarian' socialist countries - the right to work, the right to childcare - are desperate to assert that there is no alternative to their smash and grab system of poverty for the majority and freedom for the few. They are quite happy to see women

brutalised and entire countries engulfed by war and racism if it helps them do this - they always have and always will portray any alternative to their rule as 'totalitarian' and seek to destroy such alternatives. If we learn anything from the carnage that has engulfed Eastern Europe, and in particular the former Yugoslavia, it is the cost in terms of human suffering of letting them succeed.

It is worth remembering that the cold war is not over. Cuba, a poor country with a record of healthcare, literacy and social equality that puts the rest of Latin America and indeed the United States to shame, is still under attack. It is a country without ethnic cleansing, without street children, a country that has become a beacon of hope, a sign that there is an alternative to millions in the third world. It is being called totalitarian too - and it deserves all the support we can give it.

Colin Chalmers
Brighton

Congratulations!

Dear Editor,
I'm writing to say happy birthday, *Scottish Child*, and well done! The latest magazine is better than ever. You are a great movement.

Best wishes,

Liz Storrar,
Oxford

Dear *Scottish Child*,
I'm a Community Education worker and as I'm renewing my subscription again, I'd like to take the chance to say that I really enjoy and get a lot of information relevant to my work from your magazine. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Grey,
Lumphanan,
Banchory

Scottish Child welcomes readers' letters.
Please send them to the Editor, *Scottish Child*, 130 St. Stephen Street, Edinburgh, EH3 5AD or ring us on 031-220 6502

Fife Replies

Dear Editor,

I write in reply to the unattributed item about Fife Regional Council's Social Work Department (October/November issue of **Scottish Child**). I am sorry that your journalist did not see fit to verify the assertions in your story with Fife, because what was presented was a very partial account.

In respect of Mr McLean, he has every right to expect his personal position with Fife Regional Council to remain confidential and not to be the subject of wild speculation as was the case in that article. I would have hoped that your journal could have respected this right.

Rimbleton House is, in fact, until such time as a permanent replacement is recruited, under the management of an Assistant Regional Manager, a fourth tier post in the Social Work Department. Mrs Martin, the person identified in your letter, is considerably better qualified, has substantially more

management experience and responsibilities than the outgoing Principal or indeed will be expected of someone managing this particular small twenty bed children's unit. Mrs Martin is ably assisted by three other managers, only one of whom is temporarily seconded into the unit as an Assistant Principal. This move was necessary because the previous manager is now seconded to our Staff Development and Training Section to develop training for our residential staff within Rimbleton House. Mr Thorburn, the member of staff referred to in the story, is a highly committed and experienced social worker who is leading his staff by example. Contrary to your journal's assertion, he has not been the subject of 'accelerated promotion': the post in fact, is paid approximately the same as that of a qualified social worker on the top of his scale and substantially less than a first line team management post.

In respect of Fife Regional Council's need to open a temporary children's home at Foot Place, Rosyth, this was necessary to accommodate children within Fife as a result of a 26% increase in demand for children's placements away from home experienced by this Region since January 1993. This fact is well known in Fife, having been the subject of a report to Social Work Committee and local press coverage. The staff who work there have been properly recruited, interviewed and subjected to Police and reference checks. They are being managed by a very experienced social worker.

As you may be aware, the COSLA report *Caring for the Future*, and the Skinner report, *Another Kind of Home*, commented upon the national situation in respect to recruitment, retention and training of residential social workers. We in Fife have responded positively to these

reports in terms of having reviewed Fife Regional Council's child care services in a recent multi-disciplinary child care strategy report, which is currently the subject of local consultation. We have also proposed better salary conditions for our residential social workers which are presently the subject of local negotiations with the Trade Unions.

Residential care of children is a tough and demanding task for residential social workers and their managers at the best of times. They deserve the whole-hearted support of everyone, including *Scottish Child*.

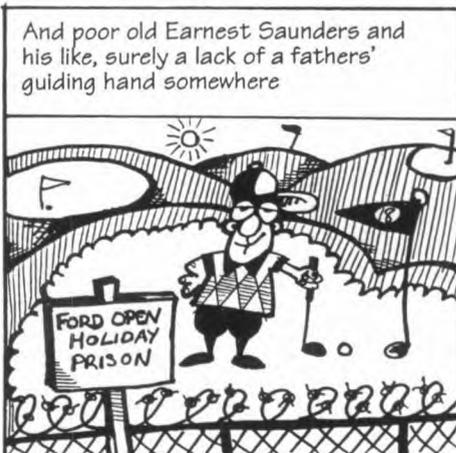
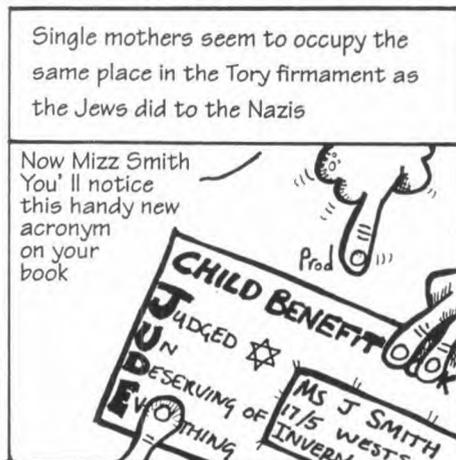
Yours sincerely,

**P Tempest,
Depute Director,
Community and Family
Services,
Fife Regional Social Work
Department.**

(See In Brief)

We Spend All Our Adult Lives Trying To Recreate Our Childhood

Coburn & Naughton



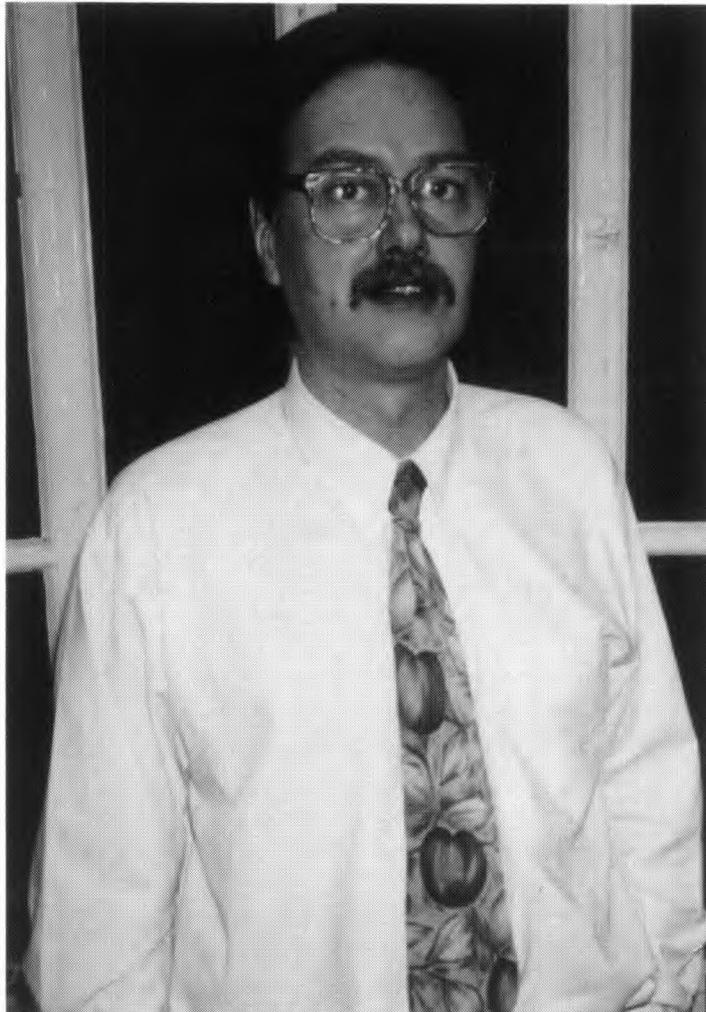
I wasn't hit much as a child. I remember one incident quite clearly, when I was running from my Dad in the street. He was saying he'd smack me if I didn't come back, but I was thinking: "He'll not do it." I got fairly clobbered and that stuck in my memory.

Like many other people I used to smack my kids until I got EPOCH literature (EPOCH - the campaign to end the physical punishment of children). Then I started to think about it and discovered that the case is overwhelming.

I don't think I ever made a very clear decision coming from college that this was the area I wanted to work in. On the other hand I definitely chose not to work in insurance or go into management of a bank or a supermarket, so in that sense I did choose social work. I always recognised that a lot of people don't get a fair deal, particularly children and young people. We don't give our young people anything like the opportunities they should have.

I am married, I would say with three children, though only two are now living - Robbie, who is four, and Janey, six. Our first, Cora, died after a choking accident. She was 14 months old. We brought her home to die and that was a life-changing experience. The accident was sudden but when we took her home it was a week before she died. The doctor had told us it might take a few days, but a human child is built to survive, and can hang on for a long time.

You cannot imagine what it is like. The death of a child is qualitatively different from any other death. You lose the future you would have had with the child. You are always thinking, 'she would be two years old now', 'she



Stephen Naysmith

The Campaigner

Howie Armstrong's on the side of children - and working for EPOCH in Scotland

would be starting school'. It's made me blase about some of the stresses and strains we deal with because it's made me aware of what the important things are.

My wife Tracy is trying to set up a network of Loss Centres at the moment. In the six years since Cora died we have realised that bereavement is only one form of loss. Loss is all around us, but we don't notice it. Any child in residential care is probably experiencing it, anyone without a job or who has never known a job. Often people don't recognise it as loss themselves and others don't understand their needs.

I trained as a teacher first, but got a job at Panmure House in Edinburgh. That was an

interdisciplinary team working with young people in trouble. After five years there I trained as a social worker and went to work in the Intermediate Treatment Resource Centre at the Quarriers' Village, Bridge of Weir. It moved to the centre of Glasgow, acting as a development agency for the whole of Scotland.

However we were on a tapering grant and had to start to generate our own income. This coincided with swingeing cuts and so the sums didn't add up and the centre went into liquidation at the end of 1990. That was a depressing period, particularly because there was a pattern to the killing off of agencies helping young people in trouble. The money taken from that area

has been given to offenders work, but the Scottish Office would deny that. Even more infuriating is the fact that the Scottish Office allowed us to sign a 25 year lease on the building which we are still liable for, at £30,000 a year. The landlords are suing the Scottish Office and they'll end up having to pay - hundreds of thousands of pounds that could have kept the centre open.

Several aspects of working for EPOCH are satisfying. It is a campaigning organisation and I haven't worked for one before. Also as it is a single issue, the prevention of physical punishment of children, it is very clear that that's all we are interested in which is refreshing.

The issue is a fascinating one. The down side is that EPOCH in Scotland means me and I am only part-time - it is potentially very isolating, but I am good at self-motivation. We are clearly having an impact which is encouraging. When EPOCH started in England there wasn't a single community care organisation which had a policy. Now another organisation joins us every month, but that's not enough. We're now trying to win the battle with parents.

Looking ahead, I would like to live in other European countries for a period of time, or organise my time so I spend a lot of it in Europe. I took my daughter for a fortnight travelling round a couple of years ago, we went to France, Vienna, Venice and Bologna. I was impressed by the lifestyle and the people. They seem to have more *joie de vivre* - that's got a lot to do with the climate presumably. Also we found that the way people in Italy treat children is so different. They are wholly part of family life, including when you go out at night. ■

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **SCOTTISH CHILD** FEBRUARY/MARCH 1994



The road safety lobby agrees that it's a nuisance for motorists to have to scrape children off their bumpers at regular intervals, so - children are restricted! Scottish Child asks why do children lose out in the quest for safer roads?

Plus - What's our response to those who knowingly commit acts of violence against children? We take a look at the work that's done with sexual abusers.

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