

Scottish Child

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 1995

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FRACTURED LIVES
Siblings in care

**DANGEROUS
PLAY**

**KIDS
& THE
COURTS**

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DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

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"Girls and Boys Come Out To Play" - the role of the male playworker



A one day training event organised by
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EVERYONE NEEDS FRIENDS!

For almost seven years, Scottish Child has been campaigning vigorously for children's rights, the awareness of children's issues, recognition of the importance of childhood - and other matters relating children and childhood both here in Scotland and in a wider perspective.

During those seven years, other radical magazines have come and gone - Harpies & Quines being one of the most spectacular casualties.

Scottish Child is an independent non-profitmaking co-operative. That means we receive no funding from outside bodies. All of our income is generated by our own efforts.

It is our firm intention NOT to become a casualty of economic circumstances. In order to make sure that we don't, we need you, our readers and subscribers, to continue to make your essential contribution to the upkeep of the magazine. Sales and subscriptions make up the bulk of our revenue.

Even better than subscribing, why not become a Friend of Scottish Child? This costs £50 per year and includes your subscription and other benefits. So instead of just renewing your subscription when the due date comes along, we'd like you to consider becoming a Friend.



Scottish Child needs Friends, Scottish Child needs you!

Figures of Fun

The other evening I walked into the living room and found my teenage daughter watching an American situation comedy called *Married with Children*. For those unfamiliar with this programme, it is about a married couple with a daughter in her teens and a son of about 12. The father is a figure of fun, not bad in any real sense, but not of any great worth either, other than as a source of cash. The show is a slighter version of the gritty *Roseanne* which stars Roseanne Barr as the cunning, coniving, but very able matriarch and John Goodman as the henpecked husband.

In British television programmes too males tend to be figures of ridicule. Think of *Men Behaving Badly* or *Rab C Nesbitt*. On reflection, it is hard to think of a situation comedy - American or British - in which the leading male is not also the leading figure of fun. With the possible exception of *Till Death Us Do Part*, with Warren Mitchell playing the arrogant bigoted Alf Garnet, the male - the father or potential father - has a hard time of it.

Why is this? It may be something to do with the fact that television is male dominated and the males who dominate it want men to have all the funniest roles. Or it may be something to do with the way men are increasingly being seen in post-feminist Western society. After all there have been some pretty significant changes. The role of the father as the family's sole breadwinner has been seriously eroded. On the other hand, the role of the mother - as principal carer for the children and cornerstone of family life - has hardly changed at all. While women have taken on some of the traditional responsibilities of men, men have been regrettably slow to seek out a new role in the family.

While women may - with reason - find a good deal of satisfaction in the portrayal of men in the media as figures of fun there is another more disturbing side to this matter. Fatherhood is under attack and we are in danger of presenting very poor role models to boys and young men growing up today. I they cannot, for whatever reason, respect their own fathers how attractive will the prospect of fatherhood be for them in adulthood? And is this important? Perhaps there will be a beneficial effect from all this, and today's young males will be strongly motivated to do better than their own fathers did. Or perhaps not.

This is of particular relevance to this issue of **Scottish Child**, in which there are a couple of articles which focus particularly on the problems associated with boys and young men growing up. In one of these, 'Give me the child', Stephen Naysmith looks at some of the traumas young men have suffered in youth organisations, particularly ones like the Boys Brigade which have a competitive ethos. In another, 'Dangerous play', Hugh Campbell looks at the way in which children and young people - particularly *male* children and young people - will deliberately seek out dangerous situations as a way of testing and measuring themselves on the way to manhood.

Issues associated with the sensitive caring man, his development, his feelings, his desires, his needs, have been largely neglected in the media until now. How many newspapers have a men's page, for example? Men are seen as consumers of news, sports reportage and so on rather than as sensitive introspective people.

However it may be that that situation is about to change. Recent years have seen the launch of a flurry of men's magazines. **Esquire** and **GQ** are the direct male counterpart of **Cosmopolitan** and **She**. It seems that sensitive men are making their voices heard in other ways too. One Parent Families Scotland, for example, traditionally (if wrongly) seen as an organisation for



female single parents, is running a conference on the role of the male playworker. Also, the National Childbirth Trust, along with the Parent Network, is to hold a conference on the changing role of fathers in society.

Fathers have had a hard time in the media over the past decade or more. In many ways they have brought it on themselves, and women cannot be blamed for smiling smugly and thinking that their male counterparts deserve everything they get. However for the health of our society it is surely important that fatherhood finds a footing equal in importance to that of motherhood. Fathers should not be figures of ridicule. They should be an important influence, where appropriate, on the upbringing of our young and impressionable children ■

in brief

Moving the goal posts

Someone somewhere is probably even now writing a PhD thesis on the changing social responses to sexual abuse through the last third of the 20th century. Meanwhile the government tries to move the goal posts yet again about this sensitive and taboo-ridden problem. And the agencies who actually do the work? Well, they keep steadily on trying to help those who have suffered or are still suffering. The government's recent directives about the change of emphasis they want to see in sexual abuse work is of course cost-driven - too many cases collapse for lack of evidence, 'wasting' court time.

That's one possible view and response. Another, in **Scottish Child's** view far more enlightened way to tackle this difficulty is to do what the RSSPCC (now called Children 1st), and agencies like it have been demanding for some time: make the legal processes less traumatising for children who have to testify against their abuser.

Earlier this summer Children 1st and the NSPCC publicised research which shows that *one in six* of today's adults was subjected to some kind of sexual interference when they were children. 'Sexual interference' ranged from full or attempted sexual intercourse or buggery to indecent exposure. Only three out of ten sufferers felt able to stop the molester's behaviour by telling an adult or reporting it to the police.

The agencies' four-point demands for action by government included making court processes more child-oriented by recognising that some, maybe many, children are in no state to give evidence, even with the help of video links and screens.

Scottish Child endorses their campaign to keep these issues high on the agenda and is fully in support of any moves to resist the oversimplifying of policy which we consider risks leaving more children than ever before on their own to manage the unmanageable.

Watch this space and the national press later in the year for more details about Children 1st's fund-raising campaign to increase services to children known or suspected of being the victims of abuse.

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Giving lip

Eagle-readers of **The Big Issue** may have been intrigued by an advertisement placed by a well-known Edinburgh charity, for a National Worker. The charity, which shall be nameless, went through the hoops to maintain its politically correct stance.

'Women only need apply...' the advertisement ran. 'We positively encourage applications from black women and disabled women (although we have two flights of stairs to our office)... We are striving towards being an equal opportunities employer.'

The phrase 'paying lip service' springs to mind.

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Depression video

Two good developments in services for women have come to our attention: the first a video made by Oasis, a mental health group in Edinburgh. The video aims to educate outsiders on the effects of depression on women and to promote an alternative way of working with depression (other than hospital admission), through the use of community group support; the second a further heightening of the activity of the Centre for Women's Health in Glasgow which has appointed a publicity and promotions officer to raise the profile of the work of that valuable resource. The Centre runs a rolling programme of discussions on themes as diverse as the setting up of a 'fat women's support group', 'women talking through art' - as well as some of the more standard topics of violence, drugs and disability.

The Oasis video can be hired for £15 from Oasis Support Group, Gilmerton Community Centre, 4 Drum Street, Edinburgh EH7 8QG; telephone: 0131 666 1606.

The Centre for Women's Health is at 6 Sandyford Place, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow; telephone: 0141 211 6700.

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Fathers do it

And there's good news for men too. The National Childbirth Trust and Parent Network are running a one-day conference on 9th September in the Cowane Centre, Cowane Street, Stirling. The title is 'Fathers Do It Too' and the object is to explore the changing role of fathers. There are good workshops as well as contributions from Alan Burnell and Neil Davidson, both of whom have written widely in this field.

The other piece of good news about this event is that it doesn't cost an arm and a leg to go. The charge is £15 for an individual, £20 for a couple. There is a creche but places are limited for that, so if you're a 'hands-on' dad with a child in tow get your booking in as quickly as you can.

Information and bookings to The National Childbirth Trust, 334 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 7YE; telephone 0141 946 3873.

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Play weekend

Looking a bit further ahead, there will be a playworkers' convention on the weekend of 29th September/1st October. It'll be happening at Kilgraston School, Bridge of Earn near Perth.

There will be practical workshops, taking in such magical and mystifying things as - circus skills, earthball bubbles (wow!), kites, wide games, drama and story-telling, puppets, jewellery and costumes, music and environmental games.

We can think of a few people, one or two of them in the **Scottish Office** perhaps, who could do with

a weekend like that. But until we finally get our act together to put something like this on for adults you can whet your appetite by going along 'as a worker'. More information from Fair Play on 0141 425 1140.

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Changing light bulbs?

And for playworkers of the *male* gender, One Parent Families Scotland, currently celebrating their 50th year in existence, are running a conference in October which looks at the role of males who, as part of their job, are looking after children. The conference, 'Girls and Boys Come Out to Play - the Role of the Male Playworker', is on Saturday 21st October at Mid Craigie Primary School in Dundee.

Among other things it will look at the assumptions and prejudices around male playworkers, such as the idea that just because they are male they will be better able to change a light bulb than their female counterparts.

For more information contact One Parent Families Scotland, Gayfield Square, Edinburgh, or telephone 0131 556 3899.

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Unsung heroine

Broadcaster Ruth Wishart was last month called upon to present a cheque for £1000 to the winner of the Sead Prize, which was this year awarded for the first time in recognition of outstanding individual achievement in the field of community action by an unsung hero or heroine.

The heroine concerned was Loraine Houston, a community health volunteer from Drumchapel, Glasgow, who was presented with the award and cheque at a Special Ceremony in Edinburgh City Chambers.

A single mother of four children, Loraine has been a volunteer in Drumchapel for the past five years. She has been involved in a number of campaigning and health achievements including 'Concrete Action', a report about the deteriorating condition of Drumchapel's play parks which resulted in the authorities creating five new child-safe parks; 'Safe Kids Loan Scheme', lending household safety equipment to families who could not otherwise afford it; and health support groups relating to agoraphobia, tranquilliser use, dieting and self image.

'Loraine is typical of thousands of community activists who seek no financial gain for all the hours they put in for the benefit of the wider community,' said Sead's Director Linda Gray. 'At a time when the public is sick of seeing the wealthy lining their pockets, Loraine's award is a refreshing reminder that there are sectors of society which share an altogether different, less self-interested set of values.'

Hear hear!



Christian education

Religion, organised and 'disorganised', sectarian and ecumenical, private and public is at the centre of how society organises itself. You may think, like they do in France, that schools should be places of solely secular learning or like the present British government that the downgrading of religious teaching in schools - for them specifically Christian religion - lies at the heart of what has gone wrong in Britain since the war. Or you may have other ideas altogether. The one almost sure thing is that you have a view of some sort and that you hold it with some conviction.

If we're right it's possible that you will be interested to attend an event which the Christian Education Movement are holding in Edinburgh on 21 September with the participation of Moray House Institute of Education. It will look at ways of supporting school religious education in the east and central European countries of the former communist bloc.

No mention of what kind of religion and no mention of what message religion gives to people who have seen their living standards go through the floor since capitalism - and Christianity - got back on top and the economy runs on guns and extortion.

But perhaps we're being too cynical. As we said, religion and the teaching of it unleashes strong feelings...

Details from Susan Watson, Christian Education Movement, 0131 332 8399.



Information gem

No connection at all with the last item of course - a little gem of information in a recent **Guardian**: 'Half a century after the end of the British Raj,

a quarter of India's rural population still has no safe drinking water. In the former Soviet Union one hundred per cent of the rural population has access to safe drinking water.'

Well, we knew that, didn't we?



Working quietly

There are some organisations which get on with the work they do quietly and with a minimum of fuss. One such is the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Society for the Deaf. They are busy just now in a multi-agency group, trying to make their guidance procedures more accessible to deaf people - in language and cultural terms.

That's the essence of work with disabled people, often not high-profile, of little or no immediate interest to those of us who are fortunate enough to live lives unencumbered by the special demands of disability. But so important in the composition of the 'caring society'.



What's in a name?

Thinking about the title of that organisation led **Scottish Child** to speculate how long it will be before they get infected by the same bug biting so many of the helping agencies. We're referring of course to the 'remaking' of an organisation through a name change, a new logo, lots of new brochures and handouts with misty photos in pale violet or blue half-hidden under text.

Two of the latest to fall victim to this disease are the Scottish Council for Parent Families - now One Parent Families Scotland - and the Scottish Council for Spastics - name change at the planning stage.

We had a little dig not so long ago at some of the others who have fallen prey to this marketisation of their services. SCAFA went first, followed by RSSPCC. As we said then so we say now - change your name if you want but don't delude yourselves that this will materially alter public perceptions of what you do or are: much as 'gay' ousted 'queer' but homophobia still blights the lives of thousands of homosexuals, the RSSPCC will probably still seem like their old friend 'The Cruelty' in the schemes in Scotland where they work with families.

To be less flippant for a moment though - we understand the impetus to change, we understand how organisations, many of them with their roots in another era of Victorian do-goodery want to bring themselves up to date. But there's more to it than that - what we are seeing is an insidious buying into the culture of commerce in areas where traditionally and *for good reason* commerce, glossy marketing, profit and loss have been kept at bay.

Are services better at the Marriage Guidance Council because they now call themselves Relate - or should that be Relate!?! Does Children 1st tell us anything at all about this vital organisation and its

role in preventing and soothing the hurt of kids? And how much clearer is a title, however much of a mouthful of Scottish Child and Family Alliance than the pithier, but ultimately meaningless 'Children in Scotland'.

Is it just us who think like this - what is your view on the matter?



Daughter, mother...and granny!

A health project in the Western Isles is bringing three generations of women together to share ideas and views relating to baby feeding practices over the past 50 years. At a recent 'Daughter, Mother and Granny' evening organised by Sonas, 26 women, some of them 'adopted' for the event, met and shared their experiences, agreeing to meet again to talk about changing expectations of pre-school provision, changing attitudes to discipline, to diet, the family, and the role of women.

Sonas is a community development project funded for three years by the Health Education Board of Scotland, who are joint partners with the Western Isles Health Board and the Scottish Community Development Centre. 'We think we have been successful in supporting local people to develop health activities which promote health,' says Norma Neill, Project Co-ordinator.

They have also carried out a survey throughout the southern half of the islands to pinpoint the provision of baby friendly public places. 'Many shopkeepers were supportive and considerate of parents needs but often didn't have a suitable place to offer,' says Norma Neill.

For more information contact Sonas, Western Isles Community Health Project, Harbour House, Lochboisdale, South Uist HS8 5TN, or telephone 01878 700437.

Letter to the Editor

I read Stuart Waiton's article in the June/July issue of **Scottish Child** with interest. However I thought his account of truancy was sentimental and romantic. It's easy to attack the status quo but, despite how tedious it might seem at times to the radical, any responsible parent knows the importance of structure and routine for school age children. While Mr. Waiton appears to have made an informed choice as a schoolboy about selectively opting out himself, the problem is serious for the children who do not have the luxury of this choice. The real challenge is how to improve and develop the mediocre systems that currently exist so that they 'include' everyone.

I look forward to some more constructive contributions in the future.

Ian Macfadven, Stirling



Fracture

Rosemary Milne looks at the problems involved in providing care for siblings while still maintaining family ties.

Seven year-old Tracy is small for her age. She has an attractive gappy smile and long silky fair hair. Her two brothers are high-energy tearaways, capable of kicking and biting their way to victory against kids twice their size.

Tracy looks after these little boys, as she has done since they were both born. Her methods of keeping order are straightforward and effective, at least in the short term. She pulls them apart by brute force and administers a few sound blows of her own. The technique works but produces its own problems: howls of protest from one or both brothers and sometimes a combined attack on her. But not often. These children know what the bottom line is: Tracy is mum, even if she's only their senior by a couple of years.

If the boys are occupied Tracy busies herself with a toy like a hand-held computer game or her Sindy doll. She finds a space in an armchair and keeps half an eye on what's doing in the rest of the room. Melvin, aged three may be wandering aimlessly around, touching and fiddling with ornaments, switches, ashtrays or whatever else grabs his attention. Meanwhile Raymond is leaping off the back of the sofa on to the piles of cushions. Melvin tries to join him. The shoving begins. The boys roll together in a spitting bundle of arms and legs. Tracy stops what she is doing and thumps whichever one's on top of the other until she succeeds in separating them.

The pattern might repeat itself endlessly but for the intervention of foster mum

These are the children of Michael and Amy. Both parents are drug addicts and HIV-positive. Home, where the children have not lived now for nearly a year, is a small council flat in a windy, rubbish-strewn housing scheme on the edge of the city. The rooms of this house are stacked out with broken furniture, items of electrical equipment of dubious origin and boxes full of what look like second-hand clothes. Access to the main room from the front door is via a narrow passage between some of this piled-up garbage. Window panes are broken, the result of a break-in several months previously. The electricity has been cut off and there is a damp chill on the air.

Tracy, Raymond and Melvin love their mum and dad. They display a fierce loyalty towards them and act this out after they have seen them with renewed violence towards their foster parents, their toys and each other.

Amy is quite ill. She has the ashen skin of a long-term addict and slightly bloated, blue veined hands. She eats poorly, sleeps badly and relies on valium and other 'downers' to keep the grim realities of her life at bay. Her speech is often slurred and her eyelids droop heavily.

Michael is a small wiry man. He seems much fitter than his wife and suggests by his own behaviour where his sons may have learnt some of their Kung-Fu techniques of conflict-resolution. When in conversation with others, he moves around constantly and talks non-stop, dealing with any other speaker by simply raising the volume a level or two.

He has routed more than one social worker, although he is also known to adopt an unnervingly conciliatory tone with some - those whom he assesses hold the real power. His conversation on these occasions is peppered with elaborate phrases like 'appertaining to', 'the aforementioned' and 'in consequence whereof' - a legacy of his many brushes with the law. Michael has a sharp native wit which he has used to defeat all efforts by the authorities - thus far at least - to remove his children from his care

forever.

At present these children live in a kind of 'care limbo'. They see almost nothing of their parents because their parents rarely keep appointments, even access appointments. The aimless, destructive play



of little Melvin is symbolic of the lack of purpose in their young lives. Everyone says 'the kids must come first' but no-one seems to be able to put the words into practice.

Nevertheless, this situation will change - in a few months, by the end of this year, perhaps even sooner. Eventually there will come a time when the authorities win against the resistance of the parents. It may happen because the foster parents issue an ultimatum about the kids' contact with their natural parents or because Amy and Michael miss so many access visits that they can no longer realistically claim to be in touch with their children or because either one or both become seriously ill with the virus or with some other drug-related infection.

Inevitably, inexorably, the three children will be 'moved on' by their social workers and prepared for a new family - or for new families. The likelihood is that they will be deemed to be so difficult that each child will be placed separately, no one family being found which can handle in the long-term the testing behaviour which these trained foster parents only just manage to keep in check.

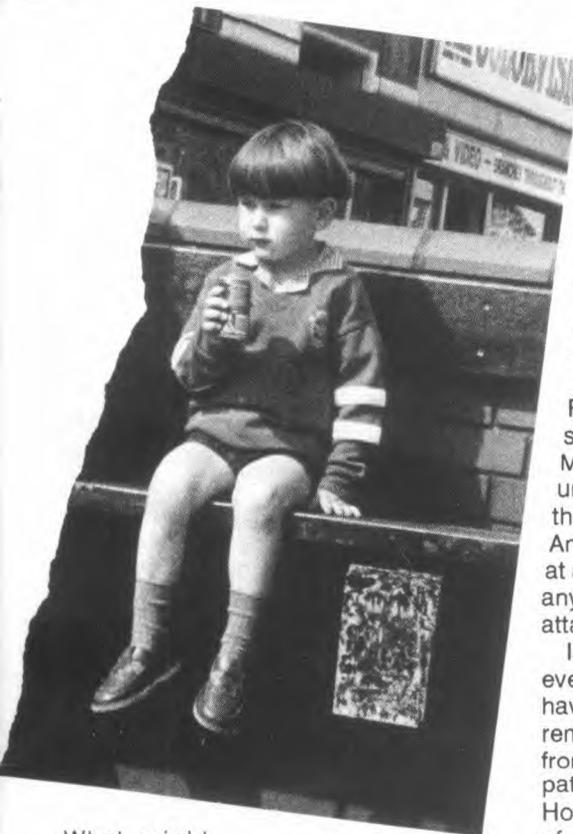
It is a classic 'no-win' situation, for the children, for their parents, for the social workers, for the eventual substitute families who will very probably struggle mightily to care for them.

...this generation of social workers has heard enough about the kinds of abuse children suffered in children's homes to be convinced that family care is infinitely preferable.

Sandra, who comes to Tracy's rescue, usually by taking the smaller child on her knee and restraining him gently until both boys find separate things to do again.

It is an exhausting business just to watch it - to be part of it must be a kind of hell.

Dead Lives



What might have made things different? Would giving more help directly to the family at an early stage have stopped the rot? Amy and Michael were both abused and trampled on as kids themselves. Michael was in and out of care from the age of three. Amy started using heroin when she was a teenager, lost a baby in a violent relationship with a man ten years older than her and was 'rescued' by Michael with whom she has remained ever since. She was already HIV-positive when Tracy was born. So was Michael and their status has always been a kind of bond between them. None of this stops Michael from knocking her about a bit himself.

Violence, noise and aggression have been the daily experience of Tracy, Raymond and Melvin from the moment they left the hospital as new-borns until the time they were moved to stay with foster parents.

In some ways there can be little dispute about the so-called best interests of the children. They need better care than they have had with their own parents but the cost of providing that will be high. It already is. Sandra, an experienced foster mum says she has never made a home for such destructive children and, in spite of all the help she gets from her own social worker, there are days when she has to work very hard on herself not to pick up the phone and say, 'That's it. You'll have to come and take them away.'

The future cost will probably be even higher because none of the children, with the possible exception of the little Melvin, will easily allow others to provide for them what their own mum and dad so signally failed to deliver. It will be a long time before they relinquish their loyalties to the worst kind of care and no care at all often enough.

Is it already 'too late' for Tracy? Will Raymond take his revenge on his lousy start in life by getting into trouble? Will Melvin prove to be so hyper-active and unruly that a special school seems like the only possible way to look after him? And if their parents do stay in touch, even at a distance, what chances are there that any of these children will make strong attachments with substitute parents?

Is the only answer to be wise after the event and to see that the best thing would have been, for the children at least, to remove each one at birth and to set them from the very beginning on a totally different path from the ones they will now follow? How does anyone assess the relative rights of parents and their children?

Amy is quite clear that if the social work had given them even half as much help as she thinks they've given to the foster family she would have the children back with her and Michael now. As far as both parents are concerned, the only problem is the poor state of repair of the house and the lack of beds for the kids. They will argue the toss endlessly about this and other misunderstandings in the past - anything to stop a discussion of the present or, more frightening still, the future.

So, the deadlock goes on, although for the social workers it's not really a deadlock, just a temporary go-slow.

The current social work belief is that small children who cannot be cared for by their own parents should, if at all possible, be placed in a family. Children's homes are out of fashion. Apart from anything else, they are extremely expensive to run and difficult to staff with skilled people, partly because the pay for residential child care is still so low relative to other kinds of social work.

The economic argument against institutional care is masked however, by a whole set of professional theories about the unsatisfactory quality of life for 'children's home children': the bulk-buying of food and clothes, the shift work done by staff, not to mention the trips out in

minibuses instead of a family car and the stigma of being known at the local school as a child in care. History plays its part too - this generation of social workers has heard enough about the kinds of abuse children suffered in children's homes to be convinced that family care is infinitely preferable.

The difficulty is that for children like Tracy, Raymond and Melvin the disadvantages of a children's home may be unimportant compared to the benefits of staying together and keeping a hold, however intermittent, on their mum and dad. That's not to say that a children's home might *always* be the best option for the three of them but it might provide some medium-term benefits that other placements could not. Because of the very things which make it suspect in social work eyes - the anonymity, the more impersonal relationships with staff for example - a children's home might well be more successful at keeping all three together for more than just a temporary fostering period. It might also allow Amy and Michael to visit the kids without feeling that someone else has taken away their last shred of self esteem as parents. The downside, because that must be considered too, is whether such an institutional setting would make the kids hold on to the hope that sooner or later they'll go back home to mum and dad.

The arguments are complex and difficult. The fact is though, that in most social work

The problem is that belonging, even to the most chaotic and damaged parents, may be better than not belonging to anyone.

departments no-one is likely to work through them, no-one is likely to consider the option of a children's home for these three children for the very simple reason that most social work departments have phased out children's homes for primary-age and pre-school children.

Children's homes are places of last resort for older kids, usually from about 12 or 13 up. Many of the kids who are placed in children's homes have 'failed' everywhere else. It's not beyond the bounds of possibility that one or more of these three may end up in a children's home but not until they are a lot further down the road of alternative 'substitute care'. They'll have to have tried several foster or adoptive placements first. The chances are that even if one or other of them does end up in

Fractured Lives

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institutional care they won't have the company of their siblings for support.

It is important to stress that this is not universally the case. There are some departments which do keep residential units going to care for groups of brothers and sisters from large families. They are the exception however, the general trend is towards recruiting and training foster parents with a view to placing children who cannot go back home in 'permanent' adoptive families.

In preparing the children for their new life, social workers will therefore begin to tell each other and the foster mum and anyone else who has an interest in their future, except of course the parents who will by then have disqualified themselves - and been disqualified by legal means - that these children will probably 'do better' apart.

In Tracy's case the arguments in favour of a separate home for her will probably hinge on the care worker's feeling that she must be relieved of her duties as a surrogate mum. Will that work for Tracy? No-one knows. Just now she worries out loud about her mum because she feels that the people round about her are worrying about her mum as well. (She says less about her dad, perhaps because she's seen him bashing her mum up so often). She still thinks that she and her brothers are living where they are because the doctors and nurses are trying to make her mum and dad better so that they can all live together again. When she acts out her disciplinarian role, she's doing what she's seen her mum and dad do and she's doing it for them.

Will she stop worrying about her mum if she finds a new family, or will she worry, in silence, about her mum and her little brothers? No-one knows but decisions will be taken regardless of whether Tracy will or will not stop worrying. They will be based on the desire of some well-intentioned professionals to 'give Tracy back her childhood'. If only it were that simple.

The same people will agonise over whether the two boys should stay together. Most likely they will finally come down on the side of deciding to split them up simply because together they are such a handful. They will try to make this break-up of the family - the second such break-up in their lives - as painless as possible by insisting that the children will be helped to keep in touch with each other.

They will not look at the figures for failure of children with substitute families because each time a social work team chooses a family for a child, they do so hoping and judging that this family is 'right' for that child. Their track record of failure to keep kids where they first place them, although undoubtedly a cause of concern, is

secondary to the implementation of current social work policy: 'a home for every child'.

Incomprehensible though it may seem, the horrific figures of foster or adoptive breakdowns for some children do not appear to provoke a crisis of confidence in social workers as regards the policy itself. It merely produces a reaction reminiscent of Boxer in *Animal Farm*: 'I will work harder'. Of course 'working harder' does also mean that social workers try to learn from their mistakes. There can rarely be any doubt that they give one hundred percent of commitment to the children in their care.



The problem is that they are trapped by the rigidities of whatever beliefs hold sway at the particular moment as well as by the real-world limitations on the kinds of families available and the numbers of care workers to supervise or help them. Welfare professionals don't break out of the circle of their thinking because to do so would open the door on too many variables, too complex to manage and with nightmarish implications for their budgets. Their work brings them face to face with chaos all the time, is it any wonder they are wooed by clear-cut solutions and the safeguards of departmental diktat?

This is not a new feature of the work of professionals involved with deciding on welfare and 'what's best' for society's unfortunates. Whether the ideological underpinnings of action on behalf of the poor are religious or secular, they have always been there and been used to justify one kind of help rather than another. Indeed it can be argued that all social work theory is taught and learnt as a kind of religion: it requires a leap of faith to plan another person's future for them when most people feel they can't even plan their own. Perhaps it's not surprising that people grumble about social workers 'playing at being God'.

Is it unfair to criticise social workers who do this kind of work on behalf of a largely indifferent society? Is it stupid to expect them to do it differently? Health and welfare managers are used to critics shouting about 'throwing the baby out with the bath water' when resources are shifted wholesale from one area into another -

when mental homes are closed down, children's homes are phased out and what is set up in their place is something called 'care in the community'. Experience has taught them that the public's attention span for this sort of change is rarely very long-lived.

Moreover those who decide to do the closing down and re-allocation of resources genuinely believe that what they are providing instead of those cumbersome old institutions is inherently better, more 'modern', more humane or more 'in keeping with today's thinking'. There is no predisposition in the decision-makers to try to hold on to the best of the past because they believe that its best was always far short of what today's knowledge, science, research and professionalism tell them they can provide.

The worker at the sharp end of contact with families has absorbed the message of modernity and progress. Higher up the line the middle manager adds the financial figures. The result is satisfactory for both: the street-level worker feels affirmed as a caring person who sees the lessons learnt at university or college being put into practice. The manager makes some savings and has the added bonus of feeling that the department he works for offers the most up-to-date child care available. These are seductive pressures.

Somewhere in the midst of all this - the indifference of society, the rigidity of social work policy, the failures of their own parents, the legacy of past abuse - are Tracy, Raymond and Melvin and many more like them. As long as they are little children they will have the painstaking attention of the care agencies. They will be described as children in need of care and protection. It is almost guaranteed that even delinquent behaviour will be assessed in those terms - but not forever. For, at some stage, perhaps at 13, perhaps a little sooner, if those kids start shop-lifting, dogging school, bullying and fighting (as they do now), there will be a change of emphasis in the reports written about them. Imperceptibly they will be classed as troublesome teenagers, 'hard to place' adolescents, disruptive pupils.

And if and when that happens will anyone ask themselves what could have been different for Tracy, Raymond and Melvin? How fat will their case files have grown? How many social workers will have come and gone? And, if their parents have finally succumbed to the virus, will there be anyone there to claim them as theirs? Anyone there to tell them they 'belong'? Because that in the end is the only sure thing Amy and Michael can give these children - a sense of belonging. The problem is that belonging, even to the most chaotic and damaged parents, may be better than not belonging to anyone. It's what we mean when we say that blood is thicker than water and it's what even the very best of substitute care cannot guarantee to provide ■

Rosemary Milne is a former editor of Scottish Child magazine and a freelance trainer and consultant on child care and related issues.

JUDGE DREAD

Many children in Scotland see the law as being a tool of adults with the money to make best use of it. They fear the whole idea of lawyers, judges and courts.

Rosemary Gallagher examines the problems surrounding the representation and participation of children in Scottish legal proceedings.

The Scottish Child Law Centre has always sought to promote the view that there is a need for children and young people to be given information about their legal rights and for at least some of the advocacy for children to be legally based.

It was in order to test this premise that the Centre secured funding from BBC Children in Need which allowed it to employ a part-time outreach worker to run a survey designed to find out how much children knew about their own rights vis-a-vis the Scottish legal system. The post ran from February 1992 to February 1994, during which time the worker met with groups of children and young people at over 60 different locations throughout Scotland.

From the work carried out it became clear both that children and young people know very little about their rights and that they perceive the law as either being not for them or as being for adults with money. It also became apparent that there is no point in having rights without being able to exercise them.

Over 20 different legal issues were raised with young people, including divorce, custody and access, abuse, care, children's hearings, education and children's representation. As a result of this outreach work and its telephone advice line, the Centre has identified an information and representation vacuum in relation a number of children's rights issues.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child set down principles of participation and representation for children in events central to their lives. The Convention was ratified by the



UK Government on 16th December 1991 and the Government has made a commitment to introducing laws and policies which promote the aims of the Convention.

Central to the convention is the principle that the child has a right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting himself or herself and that he or she should be afforded the opportunity of being heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting him or her, either directly or through a representative.

There is a presumption that children of 12 have sufficient age and maturity to form their own views.

JUDGE DREAD

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The Information Vacuum

The issues identified by the Scottish Child Law Centre research which are the core of an information and representation vacuum are:

● Access/custody disputes

Children generally are not listened to. Where a curator *ad litem* is appointed to the child, the child's views will be reported to the court, but the curator's report will be based on the best interests of the child, not on his or her wishes and feelings. This means that the views of the child are not 'advocated'.

● Children's hearings

Children and young people very rarely receive legal advice before attending a hearing. Frequently, particularly where the referral relates to an offence ground, the ground will be accepted rather than being referred to the sheriff for a proof hearing so that the evidence can be tested in court. Young people will normally be completely unaware that once a ground of referral is accepted or established this will be treated as a conviction for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

● Medical consent

The Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 gives young people under 16 the right to consent to medical treatment provided they understand the nature and consequences of the treatment - yet it is not unknown for health centres to exhibit notices stating that young people under 16 will not be seen without an adult being present.

● Exclusion from school

Education law is not taught in universities and is therefore little known or used. The right to challenge the exclusion of a young person from school is vested in the parent and there is no mechanism for young people to be heard or represented at any hearings relating to the exclusion.

The conclusion of the Outreach Report was that more and more children and young people want legal representation in their own right.

The introduction of the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 has failed to clear up the question of whether a young person under the age of 16 has the legal capacity to instruct his or her own legal representative. For example, section 2(1) of the Act provides that a person under 16 has legal capacity to enter into a transaction of a kind commonly entered into by persons of this age and circumstances and on terms which are not unreasonable.



The word 'commonly' requires interpretation and could easily be interpreted as referring to numerical frequency. As young people do not regularly instruct solicitors, any attempt by a young person to do so would be open to challenge on the ground that the young person did not have legal capacity to do so.

While the 1991 Act has undoubtedly achieved a great deal in terms of reforming the law in relation to the legal capacity of young people under the age of 18, it is clear that it has been interpreted in some cases in ways which have unnecessarily restricted the freedom of action of young people. The Government has now recognised this and amendments have as a result been made the Children (Scotland) Bill which will shortly become law.

These amendments have the effect of adding to the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 new subsections - 2(4A) and 2(4B) - which provide that a person under 16 shall have legal capacity to instruct a solicitor, and to sue or defend in civil proceedings, where that person has a general understanding of what it means to do this. One of the new subsections also says that, without prejudice to the generality, a person aged 12 years of age or more shall be presumed to be of sufficient age and maturity to have such understanding.

The Bill provides that any person taking a major decision in relation to a child in the exercise of any parental responsibility or parental rights should have regard to the views of the child, taking account of his/her age and maturity. There is also the requirement that the child's welfare should be the court's paramount consideration and that the court should have regard, so far as practicable, to the views of the child concerned.

The Scottish Child Law Centre has also had considerable concerns that, far from promoting the aims of the UN Convention, the 1991 Act is inhibiting the right of young people to instruct their own legal representatives.

It has indeed been recognised that children should be more involved in proceedings which affect them, and the Sheriff Court Ordinary Cause Rules 1993 therefore provide for intimation on a child in an action which affects that child, for example in custody and access proceedings. This rule was also intended to give effect to Article 12 of the UN Convention, however in practice what happens is that children are served with what can only be described as 'child-unfriendly' court documents which can be both confusing and alarming. We recognise that there is a need to simplify these documents and we are presently discussing ways in which they could be made more child-friendly with the Scottish Courts Administration.

As the law stands at present, where children or young people under 16 receive intimation they are placed in the position of having the potential to become a party to an action even although they do not have the legal capacity to instruct a solicitor. The anomaly is that while a child or young person is presumed to have sufficient maturity to receive intimation, he or she is not regarded as being sufficiently mature to be advised or represented by his or her own solicitor.

It is interesting to contrast the protectionist principles in relation to Civil Law contained in the 1991 act with the criminal law principles enshrined in the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975, which fixed the age of criminal responsibility at eight. Where a child has allegedly committed a crime there are no statutory limitations on the capacity of a child to instruct a solicitor, indeed a solicitor will be provided automatically for an accused child who does not already have one.

It is hoped that the Children (Scotland) Bill will make a difference to the ability of children and young people to be represented and to participate in proceedings, however the extent of the difference will almost certainly depend on solicitors making a commitment to take practical steps to provide information about the law to young

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Filling the vacuum

The main aim of the new three-year research project is to research and provide a report on the following issues:

- Legal needs of young people
- How legal services are currently delivered to young people in Scotland
- Ways in which the delivery of existing legal services can be improved to meet the needs of young people
- Gaps in these services and proposals for an alternative framework to enable the unmet legal needs of young people to be catered for.



people. The issues involved in the representation and participation of children in legal proceedings are challenging, however it is becoming increasingly recognised that young people have a right to define their own needs and should not be put in the position of having other people defining what they think these needs are with no meaningful contribution from the young person.

From research carried out by the Scottish Child Law Centre we know that young people want someone 'outside the system' to be there for them to fight their corner. Legal advice and representation are valuable resources which should not be lost in the priorities set by an adult-based court system. Giving young people the right to instruct their own legal representatives provides them with control, information and choice and it is hoped that the amendments to the 1991 Act will go some way towards enabling young people to participate in proceedings which have such a direct effect on their lives.

The Scottish Child Law Centre firmly believes that children should be helped to speak up for themselves, to give their views and to be directly supported by a trusted person of their choice. From the outreach work which has already been undertaken we are aware of at least some of the issues of concern to children and young people. The question now is how to address these issues and to help find out the Centre has again secured funding from BBC Children in Need for research to be carried out, this time over a three-year period, on the delivery of legal services to children and young people.

Consultation is currently taking place with solicitors, law centre, youth workers, detached workers, children's rights officers, the Citizens Advice Bureau and other professionals who work with children and young people in order to ascertain from the providers of legal advice and representation the issues which are of most relevance and concern.

This research is the most important piece of work which the Centre has carried out to date. The potential for setting up sources of information and representation which cater exclusively for young people is tremendous and it is hoped that accessible legal services will, in time, be more widely available to children and young people in both urban and rural areas of Scotland ■

GIVE^mme^e the

Youth organisations have been aiming to help young people fulfil their potential as individuals and responsible citizens for decades. But with membership slipping, and cases of abuse and bullying damaging their profile, what do they have to offer in the 90s?

Stephen Naysmith investigates.



For decades, organisations such as the Scouts and Guides, Boy's and Girl's Brigade, have been an important part of growing up for many young people. But the 'uniformed' organisations have been steadily losing members, with figures last year showing that membership fell by more than 4000 to 89,300 in Scotland. The very term 'uniformed' has become inappropriate. In the Scouts, for example, rules have been eased on uniforms, previously exclusive attitudes to religion and gender have been loosened and girls, for example, can now opt to participate in Cubs and Scouts rather than being restricted to the Brownies and the Guides.

The Scouts Association is not alone in attempting to reform itself to improve an anachronistic image which left a lot of young people reluctant to get involved, and occasionally leads to mocking press stories such as the (false) claims that the Scout promise would have to be changed if Prince Charles became king, because members couldn't swear allegiance to an adulterer.

It isn't just the uniform and the tendency to conservatism that turns some people off youth organisations though. There are other worries for parents and children. In June, Scottish actor Eric Cullen was convicted of offences involving pornographic videos of child abuse. The case raised the issue of abuse within

youth organisations, as the videos found at Cullen's house belonged not to him, but to Francis Currens, who had himself been sentenced to 13 years in prison for sex offences against children. Currens was a leader in the scout movement.

What does it mean for youth organisations when a leader abuses his trust in this way? How can parents know if they are sending their children somewhere safe when they join Scout, Guide, Boys and Girls Brigade troops or other clubs? What vetting procedures are applied to leaders?

It ought to be made clear that this is not intended to be an attack on such movements. In fact, I should declare an interest. I was a scout myself and continue to defend the scouts, despite the fact that they are not held in high esteem by many of my peers.

I was a cub scout and then a scout until about 10 years ago. I developed new skills, had a great deal of fun and above all learned about people. As a patrol leader I had successes and disastrous failures and it was in many ways a formative experience, one I would not have given up.

However I left my first scout troop because of bullying and I know that both bullying and abuse took place at the troop I subsequently joined. Actual abuse was the exception, not the

CHILD

'A senior scout in my troop asked me to come round to his house to watch a dirty video. When the video started, he began to masturbate and wanted me to as well. When I said I wasn't into it, he wanted to "help" me.'

norm, but such incidents are a risk wherever different ages mix and power is an issue, as the following account from 'Peter' illustrates.

'I had become very involved in my scout troop and was spending a lot of weekends there as well as attending meetings.

'A senior scout in my troop asked me to come round to his house to watch a dirty video. I knew it was going to be pornographic and I went, because I was interested, as you are at that age. I didn't realise he was intending more than just watching it.

When the video started, he began to masturbate and wanted me to as well. When I said I wasn't into it, he wanted to "help" me. I didn't let him and I went away, although I was upset about it.

'I wouldn't say it had long term effects on me, and I didn't report it to anyone, but of course he went on to do it to other boys. I later heard that he had been sent to prison for other offences, all against members of the Scouts.'

The Scout Association's development officer in Scotland, James Allan agrees that they are trying to tackle the consistent loss of members. 'We haven't quite worked out why it happens. The main drop off comes about the age of nine or ten years just before cubs change to become scouts.'

He believes Scouting does have progressive opportunities to offer young people, including work in areas of priority need. 'We have a group which started up next to the Red Road Flats in Barmulloch, Glasgow, which is one of the worst areas in Europe for social deprivation. The scout group there is flourishing, we are having to turn young people away most evenings,' he says.

The movement has recently adopted a 'safe from harm' code which commits them to protecting members from physical, sexual and emotional harm. For the most part they can deliver on that, says Allan. 'Our leaders go through stringent vetting procedures and are not allowed into contact with any young person until they done so.'

He claims abuse is very unusual. 'Bullying has existed and does go on in isolated cases. Hopefully

most of the leaders have the wherewithal to deal with the few cases where young people are abused, hit or whatever.'

Where allegations are more serious, outside bodies will be called in, Allan says, but the Scout Association prefers to keep it in-house. 'If the authorities need to be called in we will. But we would try to deal with it ourselves in the first instance,' he says.

Questions will always emerge about the selection procedure for leaders of youth groups and organisations and there will be mistakes made. But what do you do if an organisation won't accept that a leader has mistreated a child?

'Margaret', a mum from the north of Scotland was appalled when her son came home from his Boy's Brigade meeting, complaining that the leader had struck him on the head. 'Robert' was eight years old at the time. 'Robert's ear was red and he told me it was really sore,' says Margaret. She didn't know what to do at first. 'I didn't think anything like that would happen to my family,' she says.

When she phoned the leader concerned, there was no denial. Instead the incident was trivialised. 'She said it was just a clip to the head. They had been square dancing and she later tried to say that he 'swung into her hand'.'



Of course young people misbehave and meetings need to be kept in order, but whatever your views of physical punishment, blows to the head in a group like that are surely unjustifiable.

'Robert can be a pain in the neck at times, but he is a bubbly chirpy boy,' says Margaret. 'If it wasn't him I think it would have been somebody else.'

However when she tried to follow the issue up, the response was even more alarming. 'When I phoned her we arranged to meet after the next session and I went out that evening to go to a youth club which I run myself.'

'I left Robert with a baby-sitter. This woman [the BB leader] arrived at our door and started shouting at him. She said he would miss out on Boy's Brigade camps and football. The baby-sitter couldn't do anything about it.'

So Margaret phoned again, this time looking for a meeting with higher authorities in the Boys Brigade. The leader wouldn't give her their phone numbers, but eventually agreed to get them to phone her.

Again the response was inadequate: 'We met and I told them I had been doing a youth club myself for 11 years and had never had to hit anyone. They just backed the leader up and told me "We are dealing with a much more difficult age group".'

Now, Margaret doesn't know what she could have done to avoid the situation. 'The Boy's Brigade is church based - what safer thing for your kids could you have than a church-based organisation? I used to make him go - I feel really guilty about it.'

Like the Scouts, the Boys Brigade has recently instituted a code aimed at safeguarding the welfare of its members. In fact it has come into effect since the incident in Robert's company.

Among other things, the code warns leaders that they must



not permit peer activities such as bullying and initiation ceremonies, mustn't play physical contact games with young people, make suggestive remarks or gestures or encourage 'attention seeking' behaviour such as tantrums or crushes.

On paper the policy is comprehensive, but Reverend Haisley Moore, Scottish Secretary of the Boy's Brigade, accepts that it has to be put into practice to be worthwhile.

'We place great importance on the careful selection of leaders and this code is part of their basic training now.'

Like the Scouts, the Boy's and Girl's Brigades talk in terms of equal opportunities, personal and social development in an educational setting. Is even this an anachronism in the materialistic, individualistic culture we have developed?

However, he says when problems do arise they often place the Boy's Brigade, as a church-based organisation, in a difficult position.

He gives the example of a Boy's Brigade leader in Hamilton who was put on probation for flashing.

'He was no longer allowed to be a member of the Boy's Brigade. However he turned up as a parent to help with activities and that puts the church in a cleft stick.'

The dilemma lies in applying Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. 'Where does the church go? We couldn't tell his son he could no longer take part. We had a pastoral responsibility to both the victim and the accused.'

The problem was resolved, with the parent being persuaded not to compromise the organisation. It indicates how easy it is for someone who is a problem in one area to simply pop up again elsewhere and carry on where they left off.

This can't happen according to Moore. 'When something like this happens, head office is notified and if the person concerned is being considered by a company elsewhere in the country the people responsible for selection will be made aware of their record.'

In Margaret's case, however a local investigation has dealt with the matter as far as Moore is concerned. 'The local battalion was satisfied that this was a one-off, just a clip across the ear,' he says.

The Boy's Brigade is also noticing a slump in membership, however, and the problem of how to move towards the new millennium is constantly being considered. 'We are in danger of becoming a children's organisation, when our traditional strength was as an adolescent, teenagers group,' says Moore.

He is well aware of the credibility gap youth organisations in general have to contend with. 'In plain terms it is seen as a bit naff,' he says.

Like the Scouts, the Boy's and Girl's Brigades talk in terms of equal opportunities, personal and social development in an educational setting. Is even this an anachronism in the materialistic,

individualistic culture we have developed? This provides opportunities, as well as problems according to Moore. 'I think the tide is turning and we can give young people the opportunity to cultivate a sense of belonging, and the sense of fulfilment which comes with that.'

The Boy's Brigade is looking to recruit by the use of role models, with footballers Ally McCoist and Simon Donnelly and rugby's Gary Armstrong and Gregor Townsend recruited to testify to the importance of their experiences in the Boy's

Brigade. Moore is currently trying to establish that rising Scots golfer Gordon Sherry has a Boy's Brigade background: 'That would be a real coup for us,' he says.

Networking with sporting and environmental organisations is another tactic being adopted to tap into the activities which motivate young people. The militaristic side of Boy's Brigade activity is being played down. 'Drilling has been demoted and is no longer compulsory,' says Moore, conceding that this may be a factor which turns young people off. The terminology of battalions, corporals and captains still permeates the hierarchy however.

Class is an issue too. One recent study found that while the Scouts tended to attract children from ABC1 families, Boy's and Girl's Brigades had higher approval ratings among people from social class groups C2, D and E.

Moore is not so sure: 'If that was the true, we would be thriving in Drumchapel and Possilpark,' he says. In fact they are struggling to recruit in some of Glasgow's poorer areas.

But there are other aspects that concerned Margaret. The organisation fosters a highly competitive ethos, she claims. The football Robert was told he would miss out on was invested with a rivalry way beyond sportsmanship: 'It was a win, win, win attitude, and they never mixed with other Boy's Brigade teams. You could see the aggressive attitudes being inbuilt.'

The whole business has left Margaret disillusioned with the Boys Brigade, despite the fact that Robert has since joined a new unit. 'He is much happier there and it seems a more harmonious, respectful environment.'

What can parents do if they disagree with the aggressive competition and focus on individual achievement that some groups foster?

One organisation that does adopt a different outlook is the Woodcraft Folk. Founded in 1925, they are linked to the co-operative movement and aim to further 'education for social change', through activities and training in many ways similar to those on offer in other youth organisations. However they particularly emphasise equal opportunities, anti-racism and anti-sexist ideas and aim to foster international understanding.

Small compared with the Scouts and the Boys Brigade they have only 680 groups in the UK (compared with 870 scout groups in Scotland alone). Unlike other youth groups there is little in the way of competition. Do they miss out on the motivation that young people seem to get from the atmosphere of a contest?

Jim Barr, Scottish Fieldworker for the Woodcraft Folk, says there are other ways of motivating people: 'I think people work together much better than they do in competition. Once you get young people working co-operatively, they see what they can



achieve as a whole, as opposed to what one person can achieve.'

He points out that children with cerebral palsy or other disabilities will be included in activities. 'Making sure those with disabilities can have as much fun develops another important side of children's natures.' Disabled members feel involved, he argues. They don't feel left behind or feel as if they are holding others back.

Like Scouts and Guides, Woodcraft Folk members can work for badges, although the collecting of 'stripes' and awards for



your sleeves is not prioritised. 'Badge work does take place,' says Barr, 'But a lot of groups don't actually bother with it.'

Woodcraft Folk can be any age between 6 and 20, and while there are groups from Dundee to Ayrshire, the main focus of their work in Scotland is in Strathclyde where they have grant-funding from Strathclyde Regional Council.

The Woodcraft Folk were established just after the First World War had ended and youth leaders in working class areas of London were looking for something other than scouting which at the time struck them as militaristic with marching and drilling in particular, says Barr. 'But we are not in competition with the Scouts and other groups. We often use the same skills, just from a different outlook.'

As the millennium approaches, organisations which were founded 70 or 80 years ago are having to ask themselves whether they still have anything to offer to today's young people. Of course they do - for all their flaws the established organisations are respected and effective ways of working with young people.

However they will have to continue to look at how they can involve people who are disadvantaged, whether economically or physically. All the major organisations are attempting to tackle issues of physical and mental disability and racial identity.

They also have to contend with the fact that there is a great deal more on offer to young people than in the past. With more people holidaying abroad, trips and camps have to be more exotic to capture young people's imagination. Activities have to contend with sophisticated video games, theme parks and television as rivals.

As society becomes more and more sedentary, anything that encourages young people to get out of the house and interact with others, where they learn to compromise, to share and to co-operate, has to be beneficial ■

Hugh Campbell looks at how children in Belfast use risky situations to test out themselves all the way to adulthood.

DANGER

Ask yourself some questions. As a child did you ever climb a tall tree? Shoot at friends with a catapult? Ride on the back of a coal lorry or milk float? Play 'chicken' by racing across the street in front of speeding cars? Play 'splits' with a knife?

As a teenager did you ever compete in contact sport? Drink DIY alcoholic cocktails? Have unprotected sex? Become part of a gang? If you did any of these things - and many will have done most or all of them - you have indulged in what can broadly be described as 'dangerous play'. This is becoming recognised as an important part of the growing up process for young people, particularly boys and young men.

But when we talk about play we must be careful not to assume that the word means the same thing to everyone. We must ask ourselves some important questions. Do we consider, for example, how play varies from rural to urban settings? Within cities do we recognise that differences from one neighbourhood to the next impact on how children and young people play? Do we see how the configuration of resources from one neighbourhood to the next are different? When we look at children playing do we really see how play varies across age ranges in accordance with the needs of the participants and the opportunities open to them?

According to the National Voluntary Council, 'Play is a generic part of every child's life and is vital to the process of human development. It provides the mechanism for children to explore the world around them and the medium through which skills are developed and practised. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development and acquiring social and behavioural skills.'

'Play is a generic term for a variety of activities which are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen



ROUS PLAY



by the child. The activities may involve equipment or they may not, be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, be done with other people or on one's own, have an end product or not, be light-hearted or very serious.

'Every child needs to play and has a right to play, but opportunities to play are often limited by external factors - discrimination, the effects of disability and special needs, insufficient space and other environmental factors, poverty and other social conditions. Play services are the means by which new opportunities for play are created.'

In many ways, young people in Belfast are no different - and face issues no different - from their peers in other major cities in these islands. They are growing up in family structures that have changed significantly and play on streets overcrowded with traffic. Youthful desires and ambitions, the experiences of school and moving on from school, taking part in a training scheme or dealing with unemployment, falling in and out of love, having a drink and a laugh are probably similar whether you are in Belfast or Glasgow.

Where there is a difference is that young people in Belfast have been part of what Ed Cairns describes as 'the largest period of concentrated civil disturbance to have hit the western world in modern times'.

Euphemistically, we call this our 'Troubles', and they have had a profound impact on the lives of many young people. Large numbers have been witnesses to riots, shootings and bombings. Some have lost friends or family members. Others have been combatants within paramilitary organisations. Some 130 children have died in the violence. Over 1700 teenagers have been 'punished' in 'kneecappings' since 1969. These punishments have continued after the ceasefires in the form of severe beatings administered

Youthful desires and ambitions, the experiences of school and moving on from school, taking part in a training scheme or dealing with unemployment, falling in and out of love, having a drink and a laugh are probably similar whether you are in Belfast or Glasgow.

with baseball bats, fists and feet.

This violence, combined with political stagnation, poverty and low levels of academic achievement in a significant section of the youth population combine to create a harsh environment for growing up in. Within this environment, young men have continued to engage in misadventures, dangerous forms of play where they place themselves in real danger.

Bonfire building is an annual tradition in Protestant communities in Belfast. It is a male dominated activity and has its place in a wider sphere of activity with the Orange Parades on 12th July being the centrepiece. Alongside these cultural and political associations, bonfire building has some of the elements of creative play and many of the ingredients of organised adventure. It requires effort, imagination, collaboration. It is sometimes arduous and physically dangerous.

The process begins in March each year when young people in Protestant neighbourhoods throughout Belfast begin to gather material. This is deposited in an open space. Younger children play in and out of the rubbish, imitating older boys in their foraging.

This year I watched children and teenagers at a bonfire site in East Belfast as they went through several weeks of

DANGEROUS PLAY

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constructing and tumbling their bonfire. By early July they had arrived at an impressive design that rose to over 40 feet!

At the foot of the bonfire they had built a hut. This was an important space controlled exclusively by the young people. The materials for the hut are carefully selected - this one had a carpet and an old suite of furniture inside. Small groups took turns to sleep in it at night to 'guard' the bonfire itself. This fosters a great sense of power and control. There is minimal adult interference. Unlike youth clubs or play organised by adults, the only rules are the ones young people set for themselves.

As the National Children's Play and Recreation Unit put it in 1991, 'Children without toys will improvise and children without playspace will find somewhere, however impoverished or unsuitable - but that isn't good enough in a complex society that needs to look forward to future generations of well-balanced people where lifeskills have been nurtured through play'.

The young people are not sitting around 'doing nothing'. They are not lazy and apathetic. They seek meaning and purpose, sometimes in the dangerous play of building and lighting

a bonfire, sometimes through involvement in serious misadventures.

Ten years ago I interviewed 16 young men who were 'joyriders'. I wanted to understand their motivations. When I



asked them what got them going one young man's answer spoke for the whole of the group: 'Fun, excitement, doing it with my mates, to show I'm cool'.

McLaughlin and Heath (1993) say that such attitudes challenge us 'to recognise that the public ideal of leisured and paced mainstream, middle class childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, often portrayed in the media, lies outside the realm of possibility for those who grow up in inner cities anywhere in the world at the end of the 20th century'.

The government is currently running a series of advertisements in Northern Ireland featuring young people playing happily. They carry a message about the ceasefires: 'Wouldn't it be great if it were like this all the time'. One advertisement features toddlers in a nursery, another two young boys playing on a beach. What struck me is that like much of the media they convey a message that life is to be enjoyed and that childhood is especially a time for fun.

However many young people do not have access to nurseries, or beaches, or a big garden to play in. What happens on the street is where it's at for them. This means playing with public -

and often private - property.

Conflict with the public, the police and in Northern Ireland with paramilitaries sometimes follows. The young people are being 'anti-social' and 'delinquent'. Professional intervention theories interpret and label. In so doing there is a risk that we miss a key point. Within their frame of experience these young people are acting in a rational way. What they do they do for fun and excitement, to foster a sense of belonging, to have purpose, to seek out adult roles.

A six-year-old lugging a tyre over the bonfire site this summer told me: 'I'm a big boy now'.

A 16 year old who stole cars said: 'When you put the pedal to the metal you feel like you're in a movie, like one of those guys - being cool and having fun'.

These youngsters are not anti-social. They are actively participating in a society that they feel part of, whether it is a group of children building a bonfire or a gang of youths stealing cars. They may be participating in dangerous activities, but they are doing so quite naturally, to test out their own limitations and to take the necessary steps towards adult life ■



NO MORE EXCUSES

*Sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence
Male Abuse of Power is a Crime*

Z

ZERO TOLERANCE

Damp Heat

Jonathan Clogstoun-Willmott shows how children differ from adults in their response to natural therapies.

If we try to treat children therapeutically the same way as we would treat adults, we make a big mistake. Their size and stage of growth means they need special treatment. For their size, children make a great deal of noise and rush around a lot. Like small motor cars with high revving engines they easily overheat and can quickly exhaust themselves, but if they slow down they can accelerate back to speed with extraordinary facility. An engine stores energy in a flywheel: in children the flywheel is very small. It doesn't take much to slow it down, but equally it can be speeded up fast. What children may lack in endurance and reserves they make up for in adaptability: they bounce back fast.

Compare this with adults, especially older adults. Your flywheel may be strong from your teens to your 50s but unless you look after yourself your body's engine begins to lose power after that, and although your flywheel remains approximately the same in size until you are much older, your power to energise it, to accelerate it, gradually reduces. If your flywheel does lose its energy, it takes a long time to replace it.

If a three-year-old gets a cold, the effects appear fast and can, if untreated, become serious quickly. When properly warmed and fed, with sleep, however, a three-year-old body will soon be better. If an older person gets hypothermia, on the other hand, it takes longer because the body is larger and has more heat to lose. But once that heat is lost, the person can be in serious trouble because it takes several days and careful treatment for an older person to recover: the engine is weak and its flywheel is slow.

Another example is diarrhoea, bad enough for anyone, but in a child it can swiftly become life threatening because of the lack of reserves.

The same applies with a fever. A small body heats quickly, and possibly overheats, because its cooling ability is undeveloped - the flywheel is too small to steady the engine. Older people react much more slowly and may have insufficient reserves actually to achieve a 'good' fever.

I say a 'good' fever because fevers are not necessarily bad. They have been painstakingly developed by nature over several years as the best method of clearing bugs, viruses and toxins from the system. In the last 100 years we have developed drugs powerful enough to suppress this reaction effectively. But there is a price to pay, especially when such drugs are used repeatedly: by preventing the body from resolving the problem in its own way and by introducing more toxins into the body we reduce the body's adaptability, and this can lead to long-term symptoms when the body has to live with the remains of the toxin it was unable to burn out. Catarrh, glandular swellings, tonsillitis, ear discharges and skin eruptions may then occur. At a more serious level we may develop asthma and digestive disturbances.

This unresolved trace of the disease takes various forms. One of these is known as 'damp-heat', because it is like damp and heat together. It arises in a number of ways, including lack of treatment of a disease which the body cannot, unaided, get rid of, and treatments that have stopped diseases from completing their due process.

Lingering damp-heat can dog a body all its life. Often we see adults who



have chronic tiredness as a major part of their symptom picture: sometimes it has been classified as post-viral syndrome or Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), but by no means always. It can be described as clinical depression or burn-out, though I must stress that these symptoms are not always due to an pre-existing damp-heat toxin in the body. But when they are caused by it, there is often a history of glandular fever or prolonged periods of low fever and sub-acute glandular swellings or illness in childhood. Of course there are other possible reasons for this: sometimes we inherit rather poor grade body stock from our parents, or we have lived in very difficult circumstances, or have been poorly fed or given inadequate love.

In ME and post-viral syndrome, damp-heat is like a thick glue in the engine and round the flywheel. It hampers everything, from appetite and digestion to mood. Because it is so viscous, it needs a tremendous amount of energy to get it moving, and the effort of doing so can tire the patient for days.

You can sometimes tell whether it is the engine or the flywheel that is more affected by seeing whether someone is keen and eager to move but lacks staying power, which means the engine is relatively free but the flywheel is stuck, or the patient can keep going slowly for an indefinite time doing fairly monotonous or similar tasks, but lacks adaptability; here it is the engine that is stuck. This distinction can be important when it comes to treating the patient.

Generally speaking in ME children's engines are usually less affected, and the prognosis is better, but they do need rest and the right treatment. Medications such as antibiotics can initially act like oil and the patient appears to get better for a while. But because the body cannot flush them out the drugs later turn to glue. As a child reaches maturity, although the flywheel is

surrounded by glue, so strong is the engine that it seems as if the problem has gone, but later in life, sometimes much later, if for some reason the level of energy reduces (for instance because of a long period of overwork, or a debilitating illness, or because in older age the engine loses its power) the problems may return. Because of the time elapsed the later symptoms may not be connected with the earlier symptoms, yet they come from the same source and will recur unless treated.

The younger you are with this kind of disease, the more likely you are to recover, given time and the right treatment. Conversely, the older you

Fevers have been painstakingly developed by nature over several years as the best method of clearing bugs, viruses and toxins from the system.

at & Glue

are, the harder it can be to recover. It may not be impossible, but life may not be long enough to see much improvement.

Older people, unable to achieve an effective fever, tend to suffer from chronic complaints, whereas children usually bounce back fast from acute disease and may even be fitter afterwards, as if their bodies had matured and been strengthened by it.

Children's ability to warm up is usually good. Cooling down is their problem, as their cooling apparatus is immature. Hot diseases can thus lead to convulsions. Also, you people erupt more quickly in spots or rashes from external heat or from foods that are too rich, spicy or fat.

Other forms of energy, such as emotional factors, affect the child too. Not only do they lose their tempers faster, lack concentration and patience and get over-excited or frightened more easily - because the engine isn't regulated by its flywheel - but they are also easily affected by the emotions of people around them. If parents are arguing, or there are unspoken and unresolved differences between them, the child is sensitive to the atmosphere and may be overwhelmed by it.

Fortunately young children are seldom conscious of their emotional responses, so unless the emotion is reinforced regularly it just washes over them. But if the emotionally charged atmosphere is repeated too often, and cannot be satisfactorily expressed, it will dissipate itself through continuing physical symptoms such as asthma, tonsillitis or indigestion. These can be hard to diagnose, let alone treat. It requires skilful and non-threatening enquiry of the parents and may mean that the parents need help more than the child.

One emotion is particularly debilitating: fear. Nowadays we have a problem because we have grown up to accept the power of modern drugs in preventing disease. Many parents of young children have never really been ill themselves: modern immunisation programmes have meant that many of the illnesses which were once common in childhood no longer occur - and because we are not exposed to them, we fear them all the more. Indeed parents are cajoled into accepting immunisation for their children by sometimes exaggerated stories of the dangers of the diseases.

If for any reason we have been unable to immunise against it and one of these diseases - measles, whooping cough, mumps - manifests itself, it is the parents who get frightened. Their child, seeing the parents' fear, gets frightened too, which compounds the problem because, seeing the fear in their child, the parents then panic. The hapless doctor prescribes suppressant therapy all round and this prevents the disease running its proper course to resolution. The problems recur - more 'glue'.

Although we tend to think of them as separate, a baby still breast feeding and its mother are very closely linked and can often be treated as one. In one case a mother brought her baby because, unable to sleep, it screamed day and night making life intolerable for the parents. Because the baby was being breast-fed, and because the mother was distraught, the remedy was given to the mother. Immediately after the next feed, the child fell asleep and both parents were able to sleep properly, for the first time in several weeks. The child needed no other treatment.

One effect of all this is that treating children needs a lighter touch and faster reactions. If a child is going to get ill, it can happen very fast. Conversely, a child can get better with bewildering speed, given the right treatment. Sometimes a small change in diet or a light massage may be all that is necessary to avert illness in its early stages. If homeopathic remedies or herbs are given, one may need to change them quickly. Sometimes a single dose is enough to set the body on course, compared with an adult who may need a number of doses.

Another difference is that in children, particularly babies, their inner organs are immature or 'fragile' as they term it in China. Their energy hasn't settled into mature patterns and easily gets lost or 'loses its path'. By this is meant that what seem to be minor factors easily upset them. The main factors here are wind, cold, damp, heat and dryness in their environment,

If homeopathic remedies or herbs are given, one may need to change them quickly. Sometimes a single dose is enough to set the body on course, compared with an adult who may need a number of doses.

and sudden changes in the weather. It also applies to changes in the emotional atmosphere and to dietary disturbances. Children need a steady and predictable place to live - not that it should be without stimulation and surprise, but certain factors such as love and regular food of the right kind are immensely important.

Digestion for the child is paramount. It is a major problem to eat and absorb enough food to grow and be healthy. Parents are understandably concerned that their child eats enough - and some children seem quite perverse about eating. But in our society some of the most common forms of disease come from an overloaded digestion, leading to asthma, vomiting, phlegm and eczema. Unless the diet and digestion are considered, the disease will recur.

If ill and unable to digest food, children quickly lose energy and this leads to energy deficient diseases and slow recovery. Here is where foods that are nowadays thought of as 'bad for you', such as sugar, have their place: treated as a medicine, sugar can quickly supply energy again. However if the child has been used to receiving sugar or sweets in quantity when healthy, sugar for this kind of disease will be less effective and recovery slower.

Diet in natural medicine is too big a subject to go into in depth here. It covers not merely the nutritional qualities of food with which we are familiar, but the energetic effects of food too. Particularly in children with their ready responsiveness, these energetic effects are often crucial in disease and for health.

It is probably a mistake to expect the fragile digestions of children to cope with wholefoods too early, and it is easy to upset them with foods that are too heating or cooling, leading to diarrhoea and insomnia. Breast milk is high in the natural enzymes the baby needs, and if weaned too early the child may be unable to absorb what it needs from the food it receives, leading to weakened vitality. Over-eating is just as big a problem as under-eating.

More generally, other factors that affect children include over-strain and disadvantage. The former may come not just from trying to attain unrealistic goals to please parents (either at school or in other activities including sport) but from going to bed too late or watching too much TV or reading too much. Nowadays video games cause great mental stimulation and limit time for proper exercise of the body.

Children need plenty of exercise in fresh air. If they don't get it their bodies can't burn out toxins and stress the natural way and this leads to the 'damp-heat' already described. At the same time, lack of sleep reduces the bulk of the flywheel and the child gets agitated and fretful easily, disturbing digestion and upsetting parents. A measure of discipline gives a sense of security and teaches children to manage themselves in an acceptable manner.

Finally, it is the job of people interested in natural health to consider all these factors when approaching the treatment of children, because children are different ■

Jonathan Clogstoun-Willmott is a Director of the Edinburgh Homeopathic Centre and Clinic.

Alice Miller is well-known for her groundbreaking work on the causes and effects of childhood trauma. In a review of a radically new version of her first book **The Drama of Being a Child**, **Colin Chalmers** looks at the profound implications her work has for therapeutic practice.

The The

The Drama of Being a Child is Alice Miller's first book, first published in 1978 as **The Drama of the Gifted Child**. This new, completely revised version strips away the psychoanalytic jargon of the original version to expand into the deep truth contained in this remarkable book - a deep truth that has made a powerful and personal impact on many people.

What Alice Miller proposes is both profound and simple. It is that childhood traumas, caused by what is currently considered normal and acceptable child-rearing, lie at the heart of much adult pain. Because the child cannot bear the feelings arising from these traumas, the feelings are repressed, to reappear in adulthood in many destructive forms - acted out in the way we treat others, notably our own children, in violence, in self-destructive behaviour, in depression.

In this revised and vastly improved new version of the book, however, she goes further. She shows that it is possible, by mourning the hurt we suffered as children, to resolve these hurts and become fully feeling vital beings. This is what Freud failed to do. It is what makes Alice Miller a writer of historical significance.

Alice Miller points out that we are born with basic needs. She writes that 'Every child has a legitimate need to be noticed, understood, taken seriously, and respected'. If this happens it will lead to 'the unquestioned certainty that the feelings and needs one experiences are apart of one's self'.

Often, however, these basic needs are not met. Only some of the child's feelings are accepted - the rage or jealousy or simple childishness of the child is unacceptable to parents whose love is conditional on the child acting in a certain way. As Miller puts it, 'to avoid losing the "love" of our parents, we were compelled to gratify their unconscious needs at the cost of our own emotional development'.

If as children we are not loved for ourselves but for our achievements or in some other conditional way, we will have had our most basic emotional needs denied. 'The tragedy is of early psychic injuries and their inevitable repression, which allows the child to survive... In the process, we blind ourselves to our true needs and feelings. In our adult lives, this is like trying to sail a ship without a compass.' The child who was not allowed his own feelings becomes an adult without a centre, without connection to his own feelings or the choices posed by life.

Confronting the root of these hurts and fears in adulthood is not easy. Indeed in a society that considers the forms of childrearing that



...depressive feelings break through only when the stronger defences of grandiosity and acting out one's pain towards others break down. It is then...that it is possible the adult will try to resolve them by coming to terms with the original hurt.

reappear. It is only when we start, through therapy or some other form of self-expression, to make the connections between the built-up feelings within us and the source of the hurt

produce such repressed pain to be acceptable there will be many who feel fundamentally threatened by anyone attempting to bring such pain into the open. Instead 'Society offers us a rich palette of respectable alternatives to letting ourselves feel or recognise the damage our confused and confusing parents did to us'.

One of these 'respectable' alternatives is to pass the pain of unmet needs on to the next generation. Parents who have not had primary needs met as children will often try to meet these needs through their own, completely dependent, children.

There are many alternatives. Endlessly seeking to 'achieve' things, fruitlessly battling to make oneself worthy of the love one never had; projecting on to others the feelings of worthlessness one unconsciously feels about oneself through violence, abuse or condescension and lack of respect; drowning the emerging feelings with drink or drugs; or, when all else fails, depression.

Miller writes that 'Depressions consists of a denial of one's own emotional reactions' - and until the rage and reproaches underlying the depression are directed at those who are responsible for harming us it will continue to

in childhood that we can use depression to learn the truth about ourselves.

The difference between feelings of depression and other ways of coping with unmanageable feelings is that depressive feelings break through only when the stronger defences of grandiosity and acting out one's pain towards others break down. It is then, with the defences against repressed pain at their weakest, that it is possible the adult will try to resolve them by coming to terms with the original hurt.

'Experience has taught us that we have only one enduring weapon in our struggle against mental illness,' Miller writes, 'the emotional discovery of the truth about the unique history of our childhood.' Specific memories and feelings must be brought to the surface so that 'Repression can be resolved, via the release of feelings that became blocked at the time of the original trauma... The blind acting-out comes to and end'. By going through a process of 'true, deep and defenceless mourning' for the love one never really had one can resolve the trauma.

This does not mean returning to a 'paradise of preambivalent harmony'. But it does mean

rapy Game

allowing ourselves to feel and regain our vitality. We can establish 'a new empathy with (our) own fate, born out or mourning... This is not a homecoming, since this home has never before existed. It is the creation of the home'.

Much of this book is concerned with distinguishing this real healing of childhood trauma from the various forms of 'psychotherapy' that prevent this mourning from following its natural, healing course. Freud, for instance, is still a major influence on psychotherapeutic practice. Yet his theoretical legacy is based on the denial of the sexual abuse he found in his own early patients (Alice Miller uses the term 'patient' throughout), sexual abuse he found too uncomfortable to face up to. He decided, instead, that it was all 'fantasy'. The oedipus complex, penis envy, the death instinct and all the other 'innate' drives that Freud invented came into popular thinking - and medical practice - precisely from this denial of childhood pain.

Nowadays, there are literally hundreds of 'schools' of counselling and psychotherapy that retain Freud's basic denial - the denial of the fact that children suffer real emotional injury from their parents and that this must be remembered and grieved in order for the person to become well again. This denial can take many forms. There are 'spiritual' therapies, some based on Jung's bizarre writings, in which the reality of concrete injuries done to the individual child are turned into vacuous, idealistic generalisations. There are therapeutic approaches like Gestalt that start to get in touch with feelings then insist you 'return to the present' without resolving anything. There are

therapies that deal with 'dysfunctional families' rather than hurt and abused children, and where everyone has to 'own their bit' of the problem - including the abused child.

What is common to all these practices is their fear of confronting the parents - and an almost universal rush to forgive and understand the parents' point of view at the expense of allowing the long repressed hurt and anger to emerge. Many therapies see forgiveness of those who have hurt us as the very purpose of the therapy, a sign that one has 'let go' and 'come to terms' with the abuse or hurt. Alice Miller simply states, quite rightly, that 'The enactment of forgiveness brings the therapeutic process to a halt'.

Therapists who have not themselves resolved their unconscious anger towards their parents have many ways of stopping their patients from getting in touch with similar feelings - frightening feelings for such therapists as well as for the patient. Faced with stirrings of anger the therapist may decide to demonstrate tolerance so as to prevent, unconsciously, the anger from surfacing. He may explain to the patient, as he tentatively edges towards long-denied feelings, that such feelings are irrational; he may just tell the patient to calm down. This happens in psychiatric care, children's homes, therapeutic groups and counselling sessions every day.

A therapist may make himself feel useful by 'understanding' his patient better as he interprets something or other. He may even feel that he has 'marked a new stage in the relationship' as the patient adapts to a different way of repressing the pain that more suits the therapist. But any form of intervention that is not about allowing the expression of feelings, especially 'irrational' and awkward ones, does no service to the patient.

Miller describes some of these 'therapists' as 'behaving like a friend who brings a good meal to a prisoner in a cell, at the precise moment when that prisoner has the chance to escape - perhaps to spend his first night hungry and without shelter, but in freedom nevertheless'. And more than likely it will be at that 'precise moment' when the patient's connection with his childhood hurt breaks through that the therapist is most likely to want to divert, interpret or 'resolve' the hurt - because it is then that the therapist, with his own unresolved pain, cannot bear to share it. Anything but simply letting the feeling be felt.

Many therapists and counsellors enter their profession because as children they learned to put others' needs before their own. As

Many therapists and counsellors enter their profession because as children they learned to put others' needs before their own. As therapists, to whom patients reveal their inner world, they at last have the opportunity to be taken seriously and receive the rapt attention they craved from their parents.

therapists, to whom patients reveal their inner world, they at last have the opportunity to be taken seriously and receive the rapt attention they craved from their parents.

I once worked with someone whose very identity seemed to hang on her being a 'counsellor'. You could not have a cup of tea with her without feeling you were being analysed and patronised in a very particular, clingy way. While constantly listening to others, she seemed bereft of vitality, of life. Behind all the 'empowering' and 'assertive' jargon was a terrified person who had at last, in the world of counselling, found a way of feeling comparatively powerful, comparatively 'safe'. Is it likely that such a person would allow one of her clients to rage irrationally for long without making everything 'safe' again?

It is tempting, after reading Alice Miller's views on why people become therapists, to see the whole therapy game as a bit of sham. But that would be like reacting to her views on child rearing by deciding that no-one should ever have kids again. In this and her other books Alice Miller tells us that, at last, it is possible to end the cycle of abuse - that there is an alternative to taking our pain out on our children and each other if we choose to take it. She is not saying that therapy is a sham - she is saying that, at last, it is possible for it not to be ■

The Drama of Being a Child by Alice Miller is published by Virago, £7.95.

Colin Chalmers is a former editor of Scottish Child. He currently works with young runaways and with an information and counselling service for young people in Brighton.

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5 Years Dow

This summer ChildLine Scotland celebrated its fifth anniversary. How have things changed since the telephone lines first started ringing in 1990? We sent **John Hunter** to ChildLine's new city centre offices in Glasgow to interview Director Anne Houston about the organisation's past, present and future.

Q: Why was the decision taken to launch ChildLine in Scotland?

A: There were very good reasons why ChildLine Scotland was seen to be important. As well as actually answering more calls, there was a clear demand from children in Scotland. There were very basic issues around a distressed child phoning and having difficulties with accents and understanding which was only adding to the distress. There were issues around the different legislation, a different social work system and educational system. It was also very difficult, for example, for a counsellor based in London to have an appreciation of the children's hearing system. It was very hard for them to 'clue-in' to the differences. There were obviously cultural differences as well. It was also important to have access to a larger pool of volunteers, both for the service side and for the fund-raising side.

ChildLine has gone on since then. We now have a base in the north west of England and we have a base and a sub-base in Wales. Other things have developed out of that. For example, there were lines being answered in London HQ from the north east of England, dedicated lines, for which funding was available to start it off. Then they looked to have funding for an actual base to open in the north east. The organisation is still growing. In a very short time it has grown tremendously.

Q: What are the aims of ChildLine Scotland?

A: Our aims are to provide a free confidential telephone counselling service for any child or young person with any problem; to speak with the voice of children, to make sense of what young people are telling us and to be able to positively influence policies and practices that affect children; and to be a volunteer agency. If we've got one overall aim it's to answer every call at first attempt.

Q: How is ChildLine Scotland financed?

A: Initially we had support from both Children in Need and BT. We now have a fund-raising manager and a West of Scotland and an East of Scotland Area Organiser. We have 18 fund-raising groups throughout Scotland, all volunteers. We have two Corporate Friends of ChildLine groups who run large events. The Scottish Office also gives us a small grant, equivalent to about eight per cent of our running costs.



When we moved to this base earlier in the year we did not want to use money that was intended for the service to finance the move here. So we had a separate fund-raising effort for that. The corporate sector supported us in all kinds of different ways. For example, we got £20,000 from Direct Line for our training suite. We got another £20,000 of work and goods from Scottish Power. A lot of different businesses either gave us things with discounts or we paid for goods and they gave us labour free.

We also have separate funding for our project lines. For example we have the ChildLine for Children in Care, which is a separate number and that's 50 per cent funded by Strathclyde Region. Up until the end of June we were running for 15 months an anti-bullying line for and funded by Tayside Region Education Department. Unfortunately the funding has ended for that, but we're looking at the possibilities for funding a Scottish anti-bullying line. This is clearly needed. Project lines are something



n the Line

that have come as time has gone on. Another example of this is Minicom, which is a service for children with hearing difficulties. There's one of these in the London base, there's one in Wales and we're hopeful, now that we're in larger premises, that we can have one here as well.

Now, however, re-organisation is about to happen. We are hopeful that the new authorities will still see what we do as valuable but it's going to be a lot more difficult. We're very keen that children shouldn't suffer as a result of reorganisation. Voluntary organisations are going to have to work very hard to build new relationships with local authorities without any additional resources to do that.

Q: How many calls do you answer?

A: We answer somewhere between 400 and 600 calls a day in the six hours that we are open. From the statistics that we can gather it would seem that that represents only one or two out of every five attempted calls. We don't counsel that number of children a day, that just wouldn't be possible.

What happens is that one of our counsellors operates the switchboard. Callers will either be put straight through to a counsellor if there's one free or they will be asked to call back with some suggestion of a suitable time - in 10 or 15 minutes, for example. Even if they can't get through to a counsellor, the children much prefer to have a human voice rather than an answering machine or an engaged tone. We know from our statistics that a high proportion of children do call us back and do keep calling us back.

We get a lot of calls that are seconds long; they don't actually go to a counsellor. Sometimes as soon as the child gets an answer they hang up - either because the child is so shocked that they've actually got through or they just can't figure out what to say or are too scared or they're just testing to see what kind of response they get. We're counselling somewhere in the region of just over 50 calls per day.

Q: What do children call you about?

A: If you combined sexual and physical abuse, they have been the single worst problem consistently since we opened - it's currently about one in four calls, a bit higher for sexual abuse than physical abuse. Other issues that children call us about in large numbers include bullying - that has increased over the five years. I don't think it necessarily means bullying has increased over the five years, I think it's about children now seeing it as legitimate to look for some kind of support from adults. Issues to do with family relationships come up regularly - being grounded, the parents fighting a lot and children not knowing what to do about that, the parents divorcing and separating, domestic violence.

Teenage pregnancy, sexuality and the facts of life concern a large number of callers. Many children simply do not have a clue what is happening to them. We get calls from terrified girls saying 'I've got blood on my pants - am I going to die?' That really shook us. Boys call after waking up wet and not knowing what's going on. There's a lot of that. One of the things that came across was the real reticence to talk to sexual partners about anything to do with sex. Issues about protecting themselves from pregnancy are really difficult to talk about so the chances of talking about anything to do with protecting yourself from HIV and AIDS are out

'We're very very keen that children shouldn't suffer as a result of reorganisation. Voluntary organisations are going to have to work very hard to build new relationships with local authorities without any additional resources to do that.'

ChildLine: How it all began

ChildLine started almost 10 years ago. It arose directly out of two television programmes involving presenter Esther Rantzen, now ChildLine Chairman. One of the results of the programmes - 'That's Life' and 'Childwatch' - was the setting up of a 24-hour telephone helpline which received around 55,000 attempted calls, not all from adults, and it became clear very quickly that there was a need for a telephone helpline for children.

The UK service started in London in October 1986 as a 24-hour-a-day seven-day-a-week service. It was inundated with calls - around 10,000 callers attempting to get through every day - and it quickly became clear that a single base in London would never be able to cope with the number of calls. In 1988 the first regional base - in Nottingham - was opened, followed in 1990 by the Scottish base in Glasgow, which took its first calls in June 1990.

of the window. We need to find a way to educate young people in a meaningful way about these things and to help them to find a way to talk to each other so that they can protect themselves.

Q: When are you open to take calls?

A: Half past three to half past nine Monday to Friday. Two to eight Saturdays and Sundays. We have done quite a lot of research into finding out what are the peak times. For a while we opened for nine hours a day, four days a week, from one in the afternoon 'til

5 Years Down the Line

'One of the things that came across was the real reticence to talk to sexual partners about anything to do with sex. Issues about protecting themselves from pregnancy are really difficult to talk about so the chances of talking about anything to do with protecting yourself from HIV and AIDS are out of the window.'

ten at night, but we found out that the best use of time was to concentrate all our resources at peak times. There is a sudden surge of calls when the schools come out at half past three and quite a sharp tail-off at half-past nine.

Q: What sort of people work as ChildLine volunteers?

A: Our volunteers currently range in age from about 21 through to about the 60s. We have difficulty in attracting males. At the moment we have about 140 fully trained counsellors of whom maybe 10 are men. We'd like to get to the point where we could have one male counsellor on every shift so that if a child particularly wants to speak to a man we can manage that.

ChildLine is its volunteers. We work very hard to recruit, train, support and supervise volunteers. We've got volunteer counsellors, volunteers on the administration side and volunteer fund-raisers. We expect a certain level of commitment from our volunteers and in turn we offer them the training and support. It costs us quite a lot of money to train individuals. We want them to stay with us if at all possible because that way we get the value of their experience. Our retention rate so far has been very good. We still have over 50 per cent of the volunteers with us who trained with us five years ago.



Q: How are your counsellors trained?

A: There's an introductory training before anybody goes on the lines at all - a 10 week 40 hour training. It starts off by beginning to get to know yourself, what your own prejudices are. We expect counsellors to be able to get to know what their Achilles heels are in order to be able to put them on one side. That self-assessment and self-knowledge aspect runs throughout the training and is very important.

The important part is that it's a counselling training, rather than a quick-fix-sort-out-problems training. That makes it easier, because counselling skills are adaptable to whatever issues children call about.

We do skills training to do with basic counselling skills and specifically telephone counselling skills. We do some topic-based work - for example, on sexuality, sexual and physical abuse,



pregnancy. We touch on other topics through case examples. It's a training that's very much about doing rather than sitting and listening.

Q: Is the age of the counsellor an issue to the children who telephone?

A: It doesn't seem to be. Occasionally - very occasionally - you'll hear a kid say something like 'The last time I phoned it sounded like a real old woman'. But I really don't think most children stop to think - as long as they get what they need from that person, as long as they are being listened to and supported. It might be more of an issue if they were able to see that person. I think part of the luxury of being a phone service. If video phones became the norm, we would probably opt not to use them. There is an important issue of confidentiality for the child.

Q: How have things changed in the past five years?

A: It's been more about growth than dramatic change. Firstly, we've expanded. Every year we have talked to more children than the previous year. We started off as a very small tight group of people who felt like 'family'. As we got bigger it was hard for some of the volunteers. ChildLine is growing up - which is absolutely positive but nevertheless has growing pains.

One of the things that I'm very pleased about is the professional credibility that has grown over the five years. I think when we started there was a lot of uncertainty about who we were, did we know what we were doing, were we a bunch of do-gooders who were going to interfere? Particularly in Scotland, I think we have managed to establish that we are a professional outfit.

We can now influence policy and practice and things like that. People are listening to us. This is going to produce something for children on a broader scale.

Q: How do you see ChildLine Scotland developing in the future?

A: We opened initially in 1990 with three lines in our Stockwell Street premises. We gradually went up to five lines. As soon as we moved to our current premises in Albion Street we went up to six. We have the capacity to go up to ten lines plus project lines here once the funding becomes available.

But we're very clear that if we end up with too many volunteers, if the base becomes too big, it becomes quite anonymous. We would be at risk then of having a very high turnover of volunteers, people not getting that feeling of being valued and being important enough. It's all about what volunteers get out of volunteering as well as what they're prepared to give. Volunteers want to feel valued, to feel part of something. We reckon therefore that there is an optimum number of volunteers on the counselling side beyond which we really shouldn't go. Our aim is to get that base up to that optimum number. Then, funding permitting, we'd be looking at having another base somewhere on the East coast - Edinburgh or Aberdeen, perhaps. We'd need to look into where was the most sensible place. That is our development plan. Inevitably it will be funding led ■

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A disappointment

Slamming his right foot hard excited Fergus. His performance during the interview for the big Glasgow promotion had been top gear, too. As the unflinching grey of the M8 whipped under his Astra, his left hand caressed the cassette holder's black Japanese sleekness.

Plucking out his Elton John *Greatest Hits* made him feel even better. Here was another huge organisation to which he belonged... The legions of vinyl and tape and disc purchasers with the power to convey or remove star status. As for the interview, the handshakes before *and* after had been firm enough to admit him to the Rangers Board.

A bridge launched across the space between either verge of the motorway, linking one tower block sprawl with its mirror image. Fergus witnessed two groups of youths, charging at one another, merging. He sped underneath them and as his mileometer clicked onwards he gave his rear-view mirror a cursory glance. There was only the one crowd now.

But it was also less than fifty to the Newbridge roundabout. Elton sung into his car. Fergus joined in. Right now he felt hard pressed to recollect that last time that he'd felt so good.

Fergus felt bad. He scrunched up the perfunctory message on the letter and lobbed it towards the bin. Naturally he missed this, too.

He could see the car in the driveway, gleaming in the sunshine like a huge landed shark. He'd had it car-washed upon his return from Head Office. But he wanted to think no more of his jaunt to Glasgow. He cringed when he remembered those two-faced handshakes and Kelvinside accents. And smiles like TV Evangelists.

Fergus was convinced that the fact that the school named on his extensive CV had started with two little initials had clouded the whole interview like a nasty fart; politely ignored but held in revulsion all the same.

Scowling at the *Telegraph* he saw an article about a thirteen-year-old boy having been stabbed to death during a gang-fight. Glasgow again.

He turned the page over and nearly tore the paper, such was the strength with which he transmitted his petulance to the empty room.

Mark Fleming

School phobic

Each morning, I witness
his painful expulsion
from the dark womb
of his council flat;
his mother watching
from behind screening curtains
monitors his slow, painful progress
into the day.

I catch her eye for a moment
and the small gap jerks shut
spasmodically.

Head down,
burdened,
he walks alone,
his cry unheard,
his fear unvoiced.
Fists, deep in pockets,
clenched tight,
he enters by a different door;
an alien,
prematurely aged
among his peers.

Cradled
in the Special Unit,
he sits alone,
set apart,
singled out
for intensive care;
his eyes, half-focused
shun the light;
head averted,
he turns a deaf ear
to learning.

At the end of day,
the bell's insistent ringing
summons all
and in the exodus he hesitates,
hears his name,
is conscious of the stone
that rattles off the railings.
Wearily, he turns his face
to where the warm womb waits
to enfold him

Until morning.

Eve Morrison



new voices, new writing

Jumble

This frail woman makes her way across the muddy artery that dissects Harrison Park, using her handbag and a stuffed carrier bag for balance. She peers nervously towards excitable schoolboys playing Scottish-style kick and rush football.

I recognise the woman. Mrs. Docherty, one of my mother's neighbours, from the top end of the street. Though I've known her for twenty-odd years I've never known her first name.

She smiles at me when we pass. 'Jumble,' she announces breathlessly, sucking at the cold air, swinging the carrier bag.

'Good for you, Mrs Docherty.'

'Aye, son. A nice Arran sweater. Cutlery set. Two jigsaw puzzles. Giant's Causewayside. And the charge of the Scots Greys. Waterloo, I think.'

'Very good. Ensign Ewart, eh? Captured the French eagle years before that Sharpe on the telly, eh?'

She frowns slightly. 'A scarf, too.' Now she is grinning like a contestant on Brucey's show.

This is the only conversation I've ever had with Mrs Docherty. I hear her coughing away into the distance, then I switch my attention to the lads ahead who've finished their game. Mimicking their TV heroes, they swap shirts: Giggs' black for Hateley's blue; Baggio's stripes for Klinsmann's yellow.

A clatter manages to drag me from a semi-drunken stupor. We're sprawled on the bed, Jane and I, amongst a drained carry-out. I realise that she has just lobbed an empty tin over towards the TV because I can see the glistening where cider dregs have sprayed over the screen.

'Eh?!'

She is staring at the flickering images, aghast. Through my bleary eyes I can make out what look like piles of jumble: clothes, shoes, suitcases. There are monochrome scenes of men being rounded up a rifle-point. They are dressed in striped pyjamas. In the background, similarly dressed people just seem to gape. There are children amongst these spectators, children who are so skinny that they appear like tiny scarecrows.

'Those bastards,' Jane spits out. 'They're the ones who hadn't time to escape...So they tried to pass themselves off as prisoners...They tried swapping uniforms. They wanted to be prisoners. Bastards.'

'Mrs. Docherty,' I blurt out, something my mother once told me having been brought to my mind. 'I was talking to an old neighbour the day. Of my mother's. My Ma once told me about her. That she'd been a nurse during the war. They were the first females from the Allied side who sent into those camps. I've just remembered that. Mrs. Docherty spoke to me. Today.'

'Today's the fiftieth anniversary, eh? Those piles of shoes and clothes...It's like a huge jumble sale. And let's face it. All the jumble in the world used to be somebody's.'

Jane has the last word on the subject. Both of us lapse into silent disgust.

Mark Fleming



illustrations by Kate George

Craigroyston Days

The Story of an Educational Revolution

Hugh MacKenzie

Mainstream. £12.99

Reviewed by John Hunter

I have just discovered who is responsible for the present parlous state of Scottish football - A S Neill. Yes, we must lay the blame for the extinction of tanner-ba' players squarely at the door of the great (Scottish) educational revolutionary. Neill's ideas were the model, after all, for Hugh MacKenzie who took over as headmaster of Craigroyston School in the north west of Edinburgh in 1972 with the aim of turning it from a typical Scottish authoritarian junior secondary into a 'Neillian' child-centred community school.

One of MacKenzie's first tasks was to put high quality, relevant education for all 'students' at the top of the school's agenda. He had already found out 'what was deemed important - attendance and good timekeeping. Nothing about the curriculum or about the children'.

What has all this to do with football? Well, prior to his taking over as head some nefarious practices had been in force, as they presumably were in other Scottish schools at the time: 'Part of the curriculum in one department was washing the teacher's car. I had to bring the teacher to heel over this. Children being given a football and being sent out to play just to get them out of the room was an unacceptable practice.' The connection is obvious.

Craigroyston Days is a highly entertaining, readable and thought-provoking account of how MacKenzie created one of the first successful child-centred Neillian schools within the state educational system. It starts when MacKenzie is called up to do his National Service in the Army. In order to avoid the 'square-bashing' that this will involve and give him a chance of getting into the RAF, MacKenzie goes into teacher training at Moray House College in Edinburgh, becoming a teacher by accident rather than by design.

'Moray House was a shock,' he writes. 'After four years at university, the new graduates, accustomed to an atmosphere of intellectual and personal freedom, were suddenly thrust into one of control and enforced professional norms. In a sense we were treated more as school-children than students. The college system - with its rules, dress code and learning determined by a strict and compulsorily-timetabled day, harnessed to fear of those in authority - was based on the techniques of schools.'

It was in the RAF, where he finally did do his National Service, that MacKenzie was introduced to the works of A S Neill, as well as those of psychologist Wilhelm Reich, Homer Lane and the philosopher Bertrand Russell. These 'subversive' thinkers provided the material for many discussions at the normally-conservative RAF base, after one of which MacKenzie was ordered to bed by an air commodore. 'The consequences of this confrontation were made clear months later when the station adjutant, in his cups, told me that I had been investigated and my room searched for subversive literature. At this point the episode took on an element of farce, for in the meantime I had been made station security officer in charge of secret documents!'

MacKenzie spent the years following his RAF service, up until 1972 when he was made headmaster of Craigroyston - 'Craigie' as it was and is known colloquially - working in a variety of Edinburgh schools, in each of which he tried to implement as far as possible the principles of A S Neill, particularly in abandoning the idea of corporal punishment. It was during these years that he formed the idea of running a Neillian school within the state system. 'If you can do it inside the state system, then you are better than me. It will be very, very difficult,' Neill told him when they met.

It was in 1972 that he was given the opportunity to put his ideas into practice, when he was selected to be headmaster of what was then Craigroyston Junior Secondary.

Craigroyston is in north-west Edinburgh in an area of multiple deprivation. This is not the Edinburgh of the tourist and the tattoo. This is the Edinburgh that the Festival leaves cold, an area of post-war council housing schemes, home to 20,000 souls, but without most of the facilities that a town of this size would take for granted. Many of the children at the school were not interested in academic pursuits, did not wish to go into further education, and

MacKenzie was aware that the educational provision in Scottish schools at that time did not meet the needs of those young people.

When he started at Craigie, MacKenzie had several objectives. He wanted to get rid of school uniforms, prize giving and education built on competition. He wanted to abolish the prefectorial system, to reduce rules and regulations, to produce a curriculum which reflected the needs of all of the children, not just those who would go on to university. He wanted to abolish corporal punishment, traditional assemblies and dress codes. He wanted staff to trust the young people they were teaching and he wanted them to be called 'students'.

Over the next 22 years, until Hugh MacKenzie retired, Craigie became a child-centred comprehensive community high school. If you want to know how it got there I would strongly advise you to read the book. In fact, if you are interested in education at all I would strongly advise you to read **Craigroyston Days**. It is a story that needs the widest possible audience. Suffice to say that many of the principles it pioneered are now enshrined in Scottish educational practice. Craigie has been a curriculum development centre for many Scottish schools - despite (or because of?) being 'in a catchment area more renowned for its negative publicity than anything else'. And in the early 90s it won the Jerwood Award - £30,000 - in recognition of its achievements over 20 years.

No mean achievement ■

World Youth Games

Alan Dearling and Howie Armstrong

Russell House Publishing

Reviewed by Jim Balloch

Following the success of the *Youth Games Book* and the *New Youth Games Book* the authors have extended their play nets and compiled the volume under review here, *World Youth Games*.

This play manual is divided into three sections covering 'The

Torn in Two

The Experience of Maternal Ambivalence

Rozsika Parker

Virago £12.99

Reviewed by Rosemary Milne

Any mother who has ever read the bedtime story knows about the 'splitting' of the good and the bad mother into two (or more) different people. Psychoanalysis has helped us to better understand what the bad stepmother and the witch may represent in the child's unconscious. In simple terms, Rozsika Parker is dealing in this book with those same symbolic figures but from the point of view of the mother.

I am no psychotherapist and quite a few of the names and works of the people quoted are not familiar to me, but I can tell you straight away that I read *Torn in Two* with passionate interest and involvement and I rarely felt that I was getting lost in a maze of obscure theorising.

Maternal ambivalence? What are the symptoms? Can you catch it? Is it fatal to you and your child's healthy development?

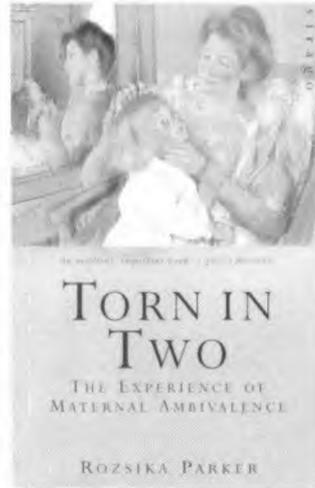
To start at the beginning - what are the symptoms? Do we need telling? Is there a mother alive who has not at some time felt torn between intense feelings of protectiveness and love and equally overwhelming feelings of rejection or rage for her child or children? Is there a mother alive who has never once got to the end of a day and felt as though she'd blown it completely, not only with the kids but with 'life'?

That's ambivalence working at full force and making you feel a bit like a field in summer with the clouds travelling overhead - dark one minute, bright the next, blown this way and that, full of poppies but also with those 'slugs and snails' which in another part of childhood lore belong to little boys - not little girls who, if you remember, are 'sugar and spice and all things nice'. It's complicated isn't it, when you start digging around in the human psyche?

Going on from there, however, the answer to question number two is, no, you can't 'catch' - in any conventional sense - maternal ambivalence. It lies within you from a very early stage, partly as by-product of the mothering you experienced yourself and partly as a consequence of how society - economically, culturally etc - does or does not support mothers in the arduous and often lonely task they undertake.

Rozsika Parker is interested in how ambivalence works itself out and is a force for creative growth in mothers and children. She does not explore the possibility of some elements of ambivalence manifesting

themselves in the non-childbearing woman as well. Perhaps this has a different name in psychoanalysis anyway, but I think myself that she could usefully take on an exploration of women's relationships with *substitute* children. I guess she'd find many of the same processes at work in such situations as she describes with such insight and lucidity here.



You already know the answer to the third question - is it fatal to mother or child? The answer to that is again an unequivocal no, in fact, rather the opposite. Far from simply writing off the angry resentful mother, the one that goes into a huff as bad as any her child can put on her or the one that gets mad as hell when her teenage daughter nicks her perfume and swans out to meet her pals smelling and

looking quite simply delicious (thanks to me! thinks mum, but what thanks do I get?) - Rozsika Parker argues that it is acknowledging that these feelings co-exist in each of us that makes ambivalence a *positive* force for growth and individuation. (Individuation: the successful development of a separate, secure identity in the child, probably one of life's most important but elusive goals.)

The basic point is that we get less than nowhere by denial. That just lets the wicked witch in - and she certainly knows how to take over. Ambivalence, that mix of love and hate, is there whether you acknowledge it or not and it's likely to do a lot more damage than good if it's left to work itself out in an underground sort of fashion. Not that this is an invitation to let rip and just go with the feelings. The key is, as in all these matters, understanding, self-knowledge. That's what helps mothers to 'manage' their ambivalence.

In other words, we're not necessarily going to settle the war within, but we may feel more in control of the conflict, less damning of ourselves for knowing it's there - and so, it's hoped, less likely to lash out in pain and anger. If you read only the parts of the book that deal with the punishing mother, the 'protective smack', you'll still get lots out of it.

I think this book is quite excellent. I love the way the author draws on literature and current real-life material from news stories as much as on the hard-won insights of practising analysts. For the first time in my life I feel I understand something of what Melanie Klein was trying to say in her incredibly obscure way. Rozsika Parker puts John Bowlby where I think he more properly belongs - and Winnicott, too often taken as a kind of high priest of child development in social work circles. She has read widely on feminist work in this field and that also greatly enriches her argument.

As I think I've made abundantly clear, I hope it becomes a kind of best seller in its field ■

World of Youth Games', 'The World of Activities' and 'The World of Relationship Games'. Each section is delightfully illustrated and contains easy-to-follow instructions on table games, board games, active games and games and exercises designed for use in groups where adults are trying to enhance the self confidence, social, linguistic and numeracy skills of young people.

This book would be useful to those working in a multicultural setting, or who are considering planning multicultural events. The section headed 'The World of Youth Games' is particularly good on table and board games from different cultures. Many games in this section require equipment, but as most playworkers are excellent improvisers in most cases things lying around the club can be adapted for use. If the activity proves successful, players can invest in the 'proper' equipment.

I have two criticisms of the book. One is that it is aimed at too wide an audience. The 'heavy' section, 'The World of Relationship Games', would not be appropriate to, say, a voluntary worker on a playscheme. I feel that if each section had been expanded, we would have had an excellent set of playbooks. Perhaps we can look forward to **The Galactic Youth Games Book**, **The Galactic Activities Book** and **The Galactic Book of Relationship Games**.

My other grouse is that the book does not have a bibliography. This would have been useful if workers wanted to expand their knowledge on a particular activity, for example, dice games, tangrams etc.

On the whole, however, this is a useful book to have in your resource library ■

Waiton

Nightmare of a man AT RISK

Glasgow's been so hot at night this week I seem to be permanently drifting in and out of sleep. The papers say there's a vicious circle at work; we don't get enough sleep so we worry about it and get even less sleep. Worry, worry, worry...

I wake with a start. Alarm bells are ringing outside my close. Still half asleep I can't quite tell if it's a house alarm, a car alarm or one of my smoke alarms - there are a lot of alarms nowadays.

Shower time, I think I caught too much sun yesterday, running low on my pH neutral soap, a few more grey hairs, better check for lumps. You can't be too careful.

Breakfast, I quite fancy a few eggs but I'd better watch my cholesterol level, the doctor says not to worry but you never know. I guess it'll have to be muesli *again*. I can't even have a yogurt with it - since that listeria scare I've gone on to skimmed milk. No decaf left and I've run out of Volvic. I might change brands anyway after that programme last night and I'm not touching tap water after that report about female hormones from the pill polluting it. I might start growing things!

Oops, nearly forgot my inhaler, my doctor says its dust, says I should get out more often. Perhaps I could open the windows, it's very hot today, but all those exhaust fumes. No, I'll leave it.

Better check my lottery numbers. Nothing again, probably just as well. I keep worrying that I won't win it and then worry about what I'd do with all that cash if I did. I don't think I'll do it any more.

The door buzzer buzzes. Who's that, I'm not expecting anyone. Better check they window and see who it is. Can't see anyone. Good, they must have gone away.

Hair gel, deodorant, moisturiser, after shave, breath freshener. Right, here goes, a blind date - I must be mad.

Bolts one, two. Yale one, two. Chubb. That's me. Yale one, two. Chubb. That should keep it safe. Oh there's that guy from downstairs. Looks a bit iffy to me, just ignore him. I'm sure his dog should have a muzzle - at both ends if I had anything to do with it. Crap everywhere. His kids always hang around in the close looking suspicious. Perhaps they're on that Temazepam stuff, you get it from your doctor apparently, can't trust anyone nowadays.

I can't understand people having kids today, who'd want to bring a kid into this world. Bad schools, bad teachers, sex abuse, bullying, nowhere to play, they'd never be safe.

Damn I forgot to check the pollen count and sun stroke times on the weather and I've got no cream. Better go back.

Yale one, two. Chubb...

OK - cream, check. Inhaler - better take it with me. Pollen count, not too bad - but what does that mean? Anyway here we go to a *blind date*.

Yale one and two. Shame you can't do bolts from the outside.

Damn, did I lock the windows, better check. Yale one...

God that sun's hot, just look at the haze. OK chemists first - sun



cream oh and some Rennies, better take two packs, oh god and some condoms. I seem to spend half my wages in this place.

Next Lunn Poly, better cancel that holiday. What was I thinking of - a coach trip to Spain - all those crashes, the polluted beaches, unknown viruses even kidnappings. Then there's the ferry, should have gone by train, but then who knows how safe that tunnel is! Next year perhaps.

Cars cars cars millions of them every day and they're getting faster, something to do with that Road Rage apparently. Don't they care about the ozone, the asthma, the accidents? Can't open my windows, can't go into town on a hot day, can't even cross the road at this rate.

On the train now. Less pollution than cars I suppose but it's mobbed and boiling. I'd better not look at that girl in front of me, she might think I'm some kind of pervert.

This is the pub, looks a bit smoky, I'll wait out here. Better watch that sun mind - a bit more cream I think.

Perhaps I should hide, see what she looks like first. What was Michael thinking about setting this up, hasn't he heard of AIDS? He says I'll never get a woman if I don't stop worrying about things but what would he know, he's probably only doing this for a laugh anyway.

My mother says I should experiment a bit like they did in her day. Take a risk she says but look what it got her, a divorce!

Now I've got indigestion. I've obviously taken too many risks already today. I'm off. Back to my house, back to my bed, at least I'm safe there and I can catch up on all that lost sleep! ■

Stuart Waiton

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF
SCOTTISH CHILD
October / November**



In the next issue

Childhood suicide

What makes children - sometimes very young children - contemplate and sometimes successfully carry out suicide attempts? And what if anything can we do about it? **Scottish Child** investigates a disturbing and tragic 20th century phenomenon.

Men who work with kids

Men who work with children as part of their daily professional lives may find they have a peculiar set of problems to deal with. Their motives may be questioned by the parents of the children they work with. They may be expected to conform to traditional male stereotypes. They may become reluctant role models for male children in one parent families. Ian Maxwell investigates the problem of being a male in some traditionally female occupations.

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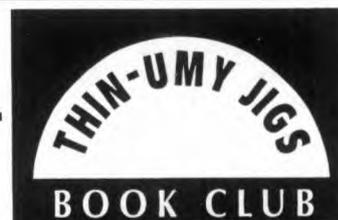
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