

# Scottish Child

February 1989

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The Child in History

Shopping

Helping the Helpers

Sandy McCall Smith

Profile

Yuppie Yoonies?



**ROYAL BABIES**

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# Scottish Child

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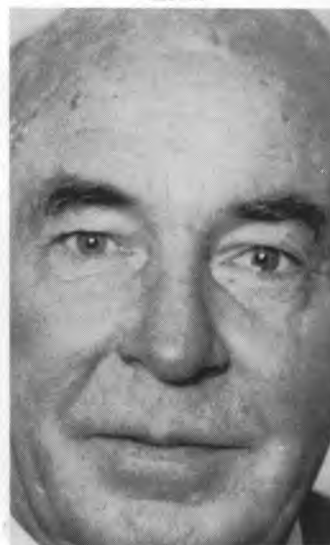
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# Editorial

## What's that got to do with . . . ?

The first anything of a new year is, if you're not already tired of it, a time for looking forward and back. It's a time to depart from old conventions – in writing an editorial piece like this at the beginning of **Scottish Child**, we ring in a change!

It's a time to look back to where we were a year, and six issues ago – at 24 pages quarterly finding its tentative way with a circulation fighting to break through the five hundred mark.

And now? This issue continues our staggering growth in recent months – at 36 pages, now bi-monthly, and with a print run of five thousand, the **Scottish Child** is looking in robust good health.

It is absorbing at a time of looking back and forward, to consider just what this success means. We could put it down to what various readers and commentators have said: it's attractively produced; it's glossy; it's populist; it's got interesting articles. We agree. We like to think though, that they are only part of the explanation. Like a new baby growing by the day, it's probably very informative in predicting future growth, to look at the environmental and ultimately cultural and political conditions that pertain.

Without wishing to jump to over hasty conclusions – we have after all in Scotland, been here before! – as we come to the end of the decade, things are starting to look interesting. After years of dreary consensus that nothing can change, Scots' government, and the way we conduct our institutional lives, look to become excitingly problematic. It is a brave, and probable foolish pundit who would claim to predict what shape our future will take.

And of course, when change is in the air, the way we look at things starts to change. 'The people know what to do before the leaders' is a truth that a moribund politics is unable to contain. The leaders of our political parties are presently engaged in setting up a constitutional convention. If this is just paper shuffling, the people will not be fooled.

In the coming months, also, the government will generate big publicity to recruit nearly 30,000 (thirty thousand) members of the new school boards, scheduled to operate from October. The scheme has had its critics, and it is not difficult, along with the newly proposed legislation for schools 'opting out' of local authority control, to get the drift of central government intent.

The real interest in matters like the school board one is what people 'know.' What people intuitively feel about what such a massive restructuring actually means. That judgement will be based on the possibility of genuine, as opposed to strictly proscribed, participation in the politics of education. We may all be in for a big surprise.

But the root issue, the thing which the people 'know', is what such constitution drawing, and committee structuring, is about. Will it really alter the balance of power in institutions? – Scots have traditionally not taken part in, and are deeply ambivalent towards institutional power. Or will new boards or committees mean another way of ensuring that things remain the same?

For the issue in this instance is how we arrange power in society. Neither the government, nor tragically the opposition have had the flexibility of mind to see it that way, and we would contend, the people know that. And how!

In challenging existing safe categories, you can put people off, of course. In the last year we've had more than one reader to come back to us and say, 'Your magazine is attractive/easy to read/

interesting, but . . . I don't really see what an article on the film industry/local government finance/homosexuality has to do with children!!'

A further variant of such category resistance has come from both Scottish and London based advertising agents, who just ask 'Why Scottish?', querying, we think, the financial sense of appealing to a 'regional' audience. But more of such morbid metropolitanism another time. It is precisely because **Scottish Child** crosses boundaries, because we break conventional categories, because we address what people truly know in themselves, that we have enjoyed our success. We have not, it has to be regretted, a lot of competition.

Much cant is indulged in over the Scots' avid newspaper reading habits. One has to wonder whether this represents a desperate search for one diamond in a mountain of increasingly finance-led journalistic dross – the bits between the adverts, that is. Unlike other media, **Scottish Child** doesn't find much to be optimistic about in our predominantly conglomerate-run press.

And people, in sifting through forests of newsprint, know that too.

So to look forward, we plan to continue our progress. We hope by this time next year to be a monthly. We can't do that now, partly because Scotland is a 'region'. We are seen to be politically remote, and economically aiming to a 'sectional' market. Distance from the political and financial centre of the British state precludes the kind of investment required to set up an independent publishing venture. No bank will yet back us. This may not be a weakness, if we can turn it to our advantage. But progress under these circumstances, has to be step by step.

We will continue editorially to break conventions. To get to readers, we will deal with what they know, in a way which breaks with how we are encouraged to fall into fragmented market groupings. Consciousness, after all, knows no such boundaries.

The contents of the current number are here for your inspection. Future issues will tackle television – government plans to deregulate in the face of new satellite technology will have repercussions for more than the already disbanded **Play School**.

He who orders the past controls the present – we start a series on the way we mythologise our history to keep things as they are.

We continue our series, How do you do it? where people involved in work with people explain just that. 'Professionals' in actuality are doing important work on our behalf. They should not operate where they are easily picked off (in the past year doctors, social workers, teachers, and nurses) on the jargonated self-important fringes. Their concerns and problems belong to all of us.

We include writers who write for a living, and people who have to be persuaded to break into print – they are all, in Camus's phrase, more than just writers.

We plan poetry and prose that seeks both to understand and have an impact on our visions – what is poetry, asks Czeslaw Milosz, which does not save nations or peoples? What is a nation that is that is not receptive to ideas?

Now what's that got to do with Scottish children? Read on!

Derek Rodger



Soup Kitchen for Teenagers – Scotland – 1989

Colin Chalmers

## Feed the Children

### POVERTY

Last year's decision by the government to withdraw Income Support from 16 and 17 year olds has left hundreds of teenagers without any legal income whatsoever – and has led one youth project in Edinburgh to open up a soup kitchen.

"It's no gimmick," says Dave Carson, a youth worker with the Wester Hailes Youth programme. "There are a lot of teenagers around who are going to find it hard just getting enough to eat." The soup kitchen has been running since November last year when 16 and 17 year olds who did not have a job or a YTS place lost their right to benefit. Thanks to a £500 grant from Lothian Social

Work Department, the project is able to offer at least some food to some teenagers.

The government's reasoning behind the changes in regulations was that all 16 and 17 year olds would be offered a place on a YTS scheme, and that if they didn't want to accept this 'guaranteed' place, they shouldn't be able to claim benefit. The reality is that many teenagers are not being offered YTS places at all, or are expected to work for exploitative employers, with little or no real training, for little more than dole money.

David is a regular at the soup kitchen. He left school in last May and recently went for two YTS interviews, but has

heard nothing. Florence lost her job recently and now has no income. "There's lots of people getting money off their mums and dads," she told *Scottish Child*, "and people are just learning to do without. One couple I know, both 17, just have nothing to live on."

One aspect of the new regulations that has provoked particular fury amongst advice agencies and youth workers is the intimate questioning of young people trying to claim Income Support under an 'exemption category'. Teenagers who have been forced to leave home because of violence or sexual abuse are being asked to give details of their experiences to untrained staff in order to get any money from the

DSS. Sometimes the questions are from behind a glass screen, sometimes over the phone. There is no doubt that this means-testing-with-a-vengeance will lead some teenagers to continue to suffer in silence in an abusive household, rather than face the abusive interrogations awaiting them at the DSS.

Dave Carson is not optimistic about the future. "A lot of young people will end up in prison if these regulations aren't changed. For some teenagers, crime is going to be their only way to survive."

Colin Chalmers

See Warehousing – life on the Y.T.S. in Mark Ogle's Diary P.8



## Out to Lunch!

### ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND 1

**Scottish Child** recently took part in STV's **Scottish Assembly Special**: a four-hour marathon, spread across two evenings of prime-time television. The occasion was a debate bringing together those presenter Sheena McDonald described as, 'the shakers and movers in Scottish society'.

Although the 100 guests were not solely drawn from senior managers and trade unionists in business and industry, these groups were strongly represented and stamped their mark upon the proceedings. Long-suffering viewers who stuck with the full four hours could therefore scarcely fail to notice the limitations of their contributions and their vision.

The most charitable explanation of our failure in both of these programmes to speak plainly about the economic and social challenges facing Scotland in the next ten years, might be that the television cameras inhibited the free flow of intelligent discussion. The very occasion itself could have driven the dozens of finance to put a bold and confident face on the future, and their trade union 'colleagues' to man the barricades on behalf of their members.

I doubt if that is the whole truth however. For the bullishness of the 'top earners' felt real enough – a psychological by-product of several years of less fettered money-making. The entrepreneur has done very well in all respects of late and is currently enjoying the experience of 'setting the agenda' in much more than merely business terms. From the word go, there seemed to be an expectation that the entrepreneurial interpretation of what is 'good' for Scotland would be the one against which all others would be measured.

Such is the sense of power among this group at present, that a lack of detailed understanding does not dissuade them from telling others at every opportunity 'how it should be done' and 'what is needed for the market'. The narrowing down of broad areas of social policy to fit within one set of definitions – primarily those of profitability – prevented large numbers of those present from making any contribution at all to matters with which they are intimately involved. So it was deeply unsatisfactory, even one suspected, to some of its most vocal advocates.

No national TV channel devotes four hours of television to a debate about the future of its country if the mood is one of total confidence about that future. One

expected therefore, to hear doubts and fears expressed. And they were. But to a great extent the do-or-die optimism that was the order of the day meant that they were never faced full on. The effect of this was that they exerted a powerful, **hidden** counter-pull against the overt optimism. Consequently the whole debate had an air of unreality.

How else can one explain the handling of a subject like education? When it came up, as it did repeatedly, it was tackled in one of two ways – either with a forceful emphasis on the 'skills-for-jobs' approach, or by a harking-back to the golden age of Scottish education. Now, you don't have to spend very long thinking about such things to know that a country's civilisation starts to be in serious jeopardy if it conceives its educational needs only in immediate cost-benefit terms. And it's as good as dying on its feet if the best it can do is to wrap itself in claims of historic excellence.

The deficiencies in Scottish education do not of course blot out its successes and improvements, but negative school experiences are a fact of life for many children, and it is denying reality for numbers of children, parents and teachers to talk as if this is not so.

There's more yet. Among our number, but silent for most of the four hours was the governor of one of Scotland's most difficult prisons at Peterhead. In spite of earnest statements about the quality of community life and the importance of the spiritual dimension in society, of which the churchmen were the chief exponents, not one of us succeeded, either before or after Dr. Andrew Coyle spoke, in evoking an image of Scotland with prisons to be proud of as well as new factories. Prisons, it seems in the enterprise world, are to be pushed further out. Nothing to do – at least not so far – with the business of making money, you see.

If it was as bad as this, why write about it at such length? Because to our knowledge no-one has so far said it publicly and because that programme is absolutely typical of the standard of public debate in Scotland at present. We have to risk unpopularity with the programme-makers and the tycoons to try to get a better debate than this.

So, no prizes to anyone this time round. Let's hope that next time the so-called wealth creators and service-providers get together, they can share a little more than the seating space and the free lunch.

Rosemary Milne



Scottish Assembly – taking the nation's pulse?

Scottish Television



## No Bull in Safety Scheme

### ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND 2

When **Kwik-Fit UK** chairman, Tom Farmer was waving good-bye one day two years ago to the three children of a customer at his firm's Edinburgh headquarters, a bad accident nearly happened.

"I was waving to the three kids who were kneeling in the back seat. Just as their dad was about to pull out into the traffic, he had to break sharp, and the three youngsters just disappeared from view. They were O.K. but it just shows you how simple it is for accidents to happen!"

Last year, 8000 children were killed or injured in car accidents, and a recent survey showed that 79% of children travelling in cars are not restrained in any way.

That episode started off some creative thinking in Farmer's mind, and last January, Kwik-Fit launched a Child Safety Scheme from 220 of their 400 UK car fitting centres.

The scheme offers parents the chance to purchase a car safety seat at a cost of £28.50, including VAT and fitting. And once the child has outgrown the seat, a full refund of the original price will be made when the seat is returned, in

good condition, any time after the child's fourth birthday. The safety seats meet British Standards Institute requirements, and the scheme is supported by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

"The scheme," according to Kwik-Fit P.R. consultant, Anne McMunn, "has been extremely successful. The take up from the public has been phenomenal."

So is their a catch? Why should a commercial company initiate and run such a public spirited venture? "There is no catch," assured Anne McMunn. "The whole scheme has been costed out, and it is commercially viable.

It stands on its own, without subsidy."

Clearly such a venture has to have its promotional spin off – getting motorists onto Kwik-Fit's forecourts. Also, as the Motor Vehicles Act 1988 becomes effective this year, obliging parents to restrain children in cars by seatbelts, there will be no shortage of demand, and Kwik-Fit, true to their name, have got in early.

But when so much of business is unimaginatively bullish, it's good to see someone making money, when it's not at someone else's expense.

**Derek Rodger**

### IN BRIEF

Charity Trends, the annual publication of the **Charities Aid Foundation**, revealed that for the last tax year, large corporate donors maintained their recent level of giving.

Readers of **Scottish Child** may remember the figure from last year. The percentage of pre-tax profits given by the Top 400 corporations was . . . 30%? Well, . . . not quite.

. . . 10%? Getting closer, but still miles off.

. . . O.K. In this age of giving back to the community some off what you've raked off, it can't be any less than 5% of pre-tax profits!

Wrong again. You're going to have to be told.

Big companies equalled their giving for the previous year by donating 0.2% of profits.

Small businesses, those with less than 100 employees and with a maximum annual turnover of £10m, gave an average of £200 (two hundred) to charity.

The publication, containing these and many other fascinating facts, can be had from: Charities Aid Foundation, 18 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2PL Tel. 01 831 7798

The **Catch Theatre** Company, featured in a recent issue, are doing the rounds again with a new show and theatre workshop sessions for children. Kate and the

Big Crunch is an adventure story in which Kate, who's 'bored' meets Izzy Fizz who introduces her to a monster who eats books.

The company are touring at the moment, mainly around community centre venues in the Edinburgh area. But they still have some dates available.

Contact Sarah Cook on 031 447 9034

Possilpark **Befriending** Scheme publish a report of their work this month. They're not boasting about them, but they are starting to produce figures which show how befriending can be a useful thing in keeping children out of statutory systems.

They've been finding volunteer befrienders for youngsters, living in the Possil and Milton areas of

Glasgow, who are likely to be put on supervision, or received into care. Not all the work goes to plan, but the kids and volunteers quoted in the report talk highly of what they've got out of it.

The Possilpark project is a joint initiative, funded by Save the Children Fund in conjunction with Strathclyde Region. The report is well presented and, unlike many other similar publications, is easy to read.

Mind you. We'd have to say that. The report was produced by Scottish Child Ltd. It's amazing what can be done when people are put in touch with each other! Copies of the report 'You Need Friends!' are available from Possilpark Befriending Scheme, 42 Allander Street, Glasgow G22 5HD Tel. 041 336 2439



# THIS DIARY

## Warehousing

It's 9.10 a.m. at the annexe of a Further Education College in Edinburgh. I'm standing in for a lecturer who is off sick, and I'm looking for the class. They are warehousemen doing communication as part of their 'off the job' training, on day release from their firms.

'Oh no them!' groans the janitor. 'Animals. Un-con-troll-able,' he states with great emphasis and relish. Rampaging down corridors, fags in the toilet, harassing the girls. He looks at me as if I'm going to my execution. 'Maybe they willnae turn up,' he adds hopefully.

So I find a room, arrange chairs, kick my heels for 20 minutes, and then they start to drift in, bottles of juice and crisps in their hands. They seem human enough to me, though their demeanour suggests that they've decided what degree of co-operation £29.50 a week entails. And a college lecturer they've never met before is a curious hybrid, with neither the authority of a teacher, nor the power of a boss.

And for the first few minutes it's school that they want to play again. Sit at the back of the class, safe behind their desks, scrumple up sweet wrappers and flick them, make fun of the teacher; a nice safe game with all the roles well established. I have to do some pretty brisk busking to get everyone seated in a circle so that we can all talk to each other; and I have to busk even harder, as it becomes apparent that I know nothing about warehousing, and they know next to nothing, and getting them to write is not really a feasible option.

They're truculent but fortunately suggestible. It's a performance for a while, getting their attention, holding it, varying the speed, varying the register. Shock, challenge, amuse, anticipate.

'How about trying some poetry?'

'Aw no. You're jokin, no poetry!'

'A guy called Tom Leonard wrote this.' A dozen heads bend over.

'Up cumzthi wee man  
beats three men  
slingzowra crackir

an Lennux  
aw yi wahntia seenim  
coolizza queue cumbir . . . . .

and for a few moments they're amused, diverted. One reads the poem with a better accent than mine. Suddenly the group seems to be working, and if I'm quick I can slip in a quiz, a questionnaire, a newspaper article, a communications game.

It's light entertainment all the way, and everyone goes away happy. And it would all be hilarious if it weren't for the sombre shadows falling on our morning's enjoyment. Shadows like the far higher death rates on Youth Training Schemes than among other sections of the

**'Christmas just passed, for a  
lot of 16 year olds, has  
proved to be childhood's end  
in a pretty brutal way.'**

workforce, and the scarcity of safety inspectors. And then there is the withdrawal of benefits even from young people who are trying to get a Y.T.S. place, but can't, because the places 'guaranteed' by the government are simply not available.

And then there is the plight of young people who are emotionally disturbed, psychologically very fragile, who are being forced onto schemes that they can't handle, in order to keep a roof over their heads. And kids having to submit to interrogation of the most intimately personal type by strangers; the growth of the black economy, and crime born of desperation.

Christmas just passed, for a lot of 16 year olds, has proved to be childhood's end in a pretty brutal way. Just a few months ago the Queen's Speech, a wonderfully archaic piece of wrapping paper for legislation that takes away what little employment protection 16-18 year olds had. 'To stimulate

employment' so the government spin doctors tell us, but it seems to me a pretty obvious way to young people to work longer, more antisocial hours, for less money.

Take the case of Darren (real name withheld in the interests of job security), 16 last July, a Y.T.S. trainee butcher. He lives outside Edinburgh and comes into College once a week. He's on the basic £29.50, and it costs him £2.80 in bus fares to make the journey. He can't claim that money back because it's under £3.00, so his 'off the job' training leaves him substantially poorer.

Normally he starts work at the butcher's shop at 9 a.m. but on college days he has to be up an hour earlier to travel in, and he doesn't get home till after six. Normally at the butcher's he knocks off at 5.30. His boss at work, having got to hear that College finishes at 4.15 to 4.30, has said to Darren that he owes him another hour to an hour and a half's work each week, which he should make up by working to 7p.m. another evening.

If he doesn't turn up to college, he gets docked, then sacked. This stick wielded by the government is the only 'incentive' driving Darren to participate in Further Education. He's sitting in the classroom, telling me this. He knows and I know that if we make a fuss about this, the only result will be that Darren will be out of a job and will have zero to live on.

Meanwhile he's identifying some of his strengths and weaknesses, his likes and dislikes, part of the 'Personal & Social Development module' he does with me. He counts one of his interests as being space travel.

Small wonder. Beam me up from the warehouse, Scottie!


Mark Ogle



**Travelling without  
a safety seat could  
cost him his life.**

**Thanks to Kwik-Fit  
the cost  
could be nothing.**



SUPPORTED BY  ROSPA

Last year over 8000 young children were killed or injured in road accidents in Britain because they were not safely restrained.

Yet, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has evidence that 79% of children are not restrained in any way, and of those that are, 6 out of 10 restraint devices are wrongly fitted.

That's why Kwik-Fit decided to institute the first co-ordinated national programme to install child safety seats in cars.

We'll only charge you £28.50 incl. VAT for the seat including fitting\*—and if you return it to us in good condition when your child has outgrown it, normally after your child's 4th birthday—we will refund every penny †.

With Kwik-Fit's help you can give your children all the protection they need.

**Contact your local  
Kwik-Fit Centre (you  
can find us in Yellow Pages or  
Freefone Kwik-Fit) and we'll fit a  
quality child safety seat in your  
car for free.**



**KWIK-FIT CHILD  
SAFETY SEATS  
ONLY £28.50  
INCL. VAT  
PLUS  
YOUR MONEY BACK.**

\*We can only fit Child Safety Seats to cars with rear seat belt anchorage points.  
†The refund only applies to Child Safety Seats.



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**Also Available:**

**KWIK-FIT BABY SEATS—ONLY £34.95 Incl. VAT. PLUS: £5 KWIK-FIT GIFT VOUCHER.**

**KWIK-FIT BOOSTER CUSHIONS—ONLY £7.99 Incl. VAT.**

# *Skipping the Fantastic*

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There are psychological penalties deriving from membership of a monarchic state, argues **Joyce McMillan**. In order to consider real change we may need, more than any constitutional alteration, a rearranging of the psychic furniture.

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One of the things we traditionally do for our children is to pass on to them the big stories, the myths and legends and fairytales of our culture. Story-book by story-book, and pantomime season by pantomime season, the old stories still survive and are still transmitted.

Cinderella still gets her man by fitting perfectly into the tiny glass slipper of Princess-hood. The handsome Prince still hacks his way through the forest to wake Sleeping Beauty with a kiss, still smashes the (hymeneal?) glass of Snow White's coffin to restore her to life, and resolve her whole future at a stroke.

And one thing that is clear about these tremendous stories of love and enchantment – doubts about their sexual politics aside – is that the 'Princes' and 'Princesses' who feature in them are not real aristocrats or rulers. In their fantastic representation, they are you, me, the child who listens to the story. It is really the innermost and most special part of ourselves that feature in the fantasy. We are, after all, always the hero or heroine of our own life stories.

In talking to little children, we often use the vocabulary of royalty – 'lords' and 'queens' and 'little princesses' inhabit many a home. Each little child listening to the old fairytales knows that the enchantment of these stories about true love and true destiny, about finding your lost 'other half', and about happiness-ever-after is not about far away and 'once upon a time'. Every child takes these stories as being about themselves, their own dreams, their own hopes, their own magic.

Except that there is, for many of us, a substantial spanner in the works of this smooth identification with the heroes and heroines of romance and fairytale. The idea of the actual royal personage, the person imbued with more magic, more charisma, more allure, and more fascinating power than the rest of us, is not quite as fantastic as it should be in these democratic times. For in Britain we still have the real thing! – a Queen and Royal Family, a sovereign who, in form at least, sits at the centre of the constitutional structure, calling and proroguing Parliament, enacting legislation, and inviting this or that politician to

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**'... growing up in a world of real kings and queens, princes and princesses, robs us of an essential part of ourselves'**

---

form a government.

So that when the British child – surrounded by the garishly royalist media-culture of the tabloid press and the TV news – hears the stories of Princes, Princesses and Queens, the image of the real thing is bound to cut across his or her active fantasy life. And these real characters are bound to absorb and monopolise the magic, and draw the charisma and fairytale glamour to themselves.

In fact, you could say that growing up in a world of real kings and queens, princes and princesses, both robs us of an essential part

of ourselves, and binds us to it forever in a kind of fervent and hopeless yearning for the personal magic we allowed them to take and can never recapture. For no matter how much we press against the crowd barriers as they pass, or scan the newspapers for yet another revelation about the private lives of the royals, we can never regain that lost part of ourselves.

Small wonder that so many of us – according to Brian Masters in his book, **Dreams about H.M. the Queen** – dream night after night about the Queen and her family. For as any good Jungian will tell you, these dreams are not really about Elizabeth Windsor, wife, mother, racehorse owner and corgi-fancier. They are about ourselves, and their ecstatic quality – for dreams about Royals often contain a strong element of ecstasy – is caused by our regained contact with our own magical fantastical parts. In the dreary reality of a monarchy, we allow 'them' to do that for us.

Far fetched? Well possibly. But after an encounter with Tom Nairn's recent award winning book, **The Enchanted Glass: Britain & its Monarchy**, it seems difficult to overstate the impact of the royal presence on British life.

What Nairn suggests is that far from being the mere decorative ceremonial and powerless irrelevance that politicians of both right and left say it is, the monarchy is in fact, absolutely central to British life and to the maintenance of traditional power structures within it. The subtle coexistence of the idea of the nation and its constitution with the actual persons – the 'nice' attractive persons – of the Royal Family, has had a





profoundly defusing and disabling effect on the possibility of radical change in Britain this last three centuries.

The idea of Britain as some kind of mystical 'family', rather than as a formally constituted modern state, has contributed to the abiding English feeling that politics as such – that is talk about power, wealth, who has it and how they use it – is somehow slightly rude, impolite, and personally hurtful. For a start, such talk implies that perfectly nice overlordly chaps would intentionally hurt their employees and their tenants!

**T**he consequence, according to Nairn, of this curious, hierarchical, quasi-mediaeval way of thinking about the state has left the British – and particularly the English – in a childlike immature political condition. We are saddled with a mystical but basically authoritarian constitution which vests all power in the Queen-in-Parliament (in practice, the Prime Minister), obscures and devalues the diverse national identities within Britain, offers inadequate control of the executive, and fails to guarantee basic civil rights. All this while our once backward European partners, having thrown off feudalism and absolute monarchy, have shot past us into a grey suited modern world of sober egalitarianism and efficient bourgeois democracy, where monarchs, if they continue to exist at all, ride bikes around town and avoid charisma like the plague.

Now this is a thesis that might have been designed to provoke maximum outrage across the whole British Establishment, both right and left. Criticism of 'our constitution and institutions is generally seen as impudent 'lese-majeste', and definitely un-British. The Left's shifty and evasive attitude to republicanism simply cannot afford to admit that the Royal presence is of any real importance at all. Nairn anticipates that the strongest response to his thesis is likely to be outright ridicule and denial – the confident assertion that the monarchy is really just a piece of attractive flimflam that amuses the women, pulls in the tourists, and provides a decorative topknot for the political structure. The implication is that only daft old women of both sexes really care about it at all, either for or against.

But while it is certainly true that overt royalism is more a female than a male phenomenon in Britain – it's women who draw the curtains at midday to watch royal weddings on the telly; women's magazines that purvey endless gossip about Di's diet and Fergie's clothes, and endless ideology about family life disguised as information about royal attitudes; and little girls who gaze in wonderment at the silk-smothered fairytale image of a 20 year old Lady Di giving up her life for her Prince – its female quality doesn't indicate its unimportance.

Looking back to the fairytale imagery, and the extent to which our sense of royal magic is bound up with that, the great power of the British royal obsession lies in the fact that it is established long before the



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## TOMORROW'S SCOTSMAN—IT'S LOOKING GOOD



age of intellectual discrimination. By the time men step out onto the political stage, they have learned to accept the niceness, the magic, and the indispensable nature of the Royal Family as part of the emotional furniture of life, rather than as a political phenomenon subject to rational scrutiny, reform and abolition.

Of course, as adults, they will come up with rationalisations of their feeling ('attractive to tourists', etc.), or with outright denials of them ('No time for it myself...'). But the offhand attitude to royalty expressed by most men, and a large proportion of women, when they are rationally questioned about it, simply cannot begin to account for the way in which respectable republican opinion has been marginalised and ridiculed in Britain for a century or more.

Why for instance, do even the most rational people tend to subside into awkward curtsies, blushes, faintness, or near amnesia when confronted by a royal presence? Or what can explain the near hysteria with which the public seems to respond to crashingly insignificant royal events like the birth of Baby Bea? I wear myself a fatuous, ingratiating smile of pleasure every time I

### **'The idea of Britain as some kind of mystical 'family' has contributed to the abiding English feeling that politics is somehow slightly rude'**

watch a royal event like the York wedding. Why, when this is in flat contradiction to any conscious opinions I may have about, say, Fergie's personal attractiveness, and spiritual fitness for the position of iconic significance to which fate has raised her?

Of course, from a Scottish perspective, we often hear that this kind of fatuous uncritical Royalism is more an English phenomenon. Not your average Scottish child will be brought up with this notion of 'royal magic' cutting across his healthy fantasy life, his dignity and his potential as a free citizen. To some extent, Scottish culture, moulded by a vastly different religious history, is more egalitarian, more democratic, less mystical, more intellectually sophisticated, European-minded and dialectical (not to say, combative) than the English. Our attitude to royalty is more sceptical.

But despite the strong outbursts of Scottish anti-establishment and anti-monarchical nationalism that arise from time to time, this seems to matter less that it should.

For one thing, the erosion of distinctive Scottish manners and language through the influence of the mass media erodes our 'man's a man for a' that' republicanism along with everything else. Growing up in the Coronation-besotted 50s, I was subjected to the virus of BBC-British nationalism and royalism far more thoroughly than my parents, who grew up in Scotland in

the 20's. They could never understand my fascination for the gold coaches and glittering robes. Nor could they comprehend my irrational fear of Prince Philip – such a warlock of magical power, that I was scared he would leap out at me from the big wardrobe one dark night.

For another, ask the generation of Scots who fought in the Second World War about the Queen and they may shrug. But suggest to them that the British have anything to learn about democracy from the EEC, from the American constitution, from modern Germany or France, and their indignation and complacency knows no bounds. The sense of belonging to what Sellars and Yeatman, in their great history-pastiche *1066 and All That*, called the 'Top Nation', has been vital to generations of Britons, north and south of the border. And it is the persistence and glamour of the monarchy that is associated with that sense of national uniqueness.

But even if we only accept part of Nairn's thesis about the pervasive psychological importance of royalty to the national life, I think we must be impressed by the way it moves political debate on to a different level of understanding. What it forced me to consider was the alarming subtlety of the process – beginning in infancy, long before the age of rational resistance – by which our deepest political prejudices and allegiances are formed in an age of mass culture.

In Britain under a monarchy, it is as if our most primitive impulses of yearning and desire, the urge towards perfect happiness and beauty, are pressed into the service of a political and social order, which we will never really, thereafter have the heart to change. Binding us to it in love and longing, identifying itself with our innermost needs and dreams, Royalty leaves us as incapable of abolishing it, and the order it implies, as we are of cutting off our own heads.

So what we are looking for here is not so much a political revolution as a quantum leap in psychological literacy – a move towards the kind of education fit for the media age which enables children, from their earliest years, to understand the way in which their own yearnings, their own natural desires, longings and passions can be used to buttress huge social institutions which may or may not act in their interests.

For the British people to assent rationally to monarchy would be one thing. There are in fact, some good deep arguments for preserving monarchy, and if Nairn's book has a serious weakness, it lies in its failure to look seriously at these. Bad-mouth it as we may, the stable constitutional monarchy of the last 300 years has preserved Britain so far, from the catastrophic civil strife and genocidal political extremism that has stalked the continent this century. It has certainly proved no worse than America's elaborate enlightenment constitution at throwing up political leaders who can string two thoughts together, and keep their hands out of the till.

Likewise, there is perhaps, something wiser than Nairn allows in the traditional English aversion to theory, something sensible in the recognition that constitutions cannot in themselves create good governors. Since it is ultimately the quality of the men and women in charge that matters, more than the technical details of the system they are operating, there may be something naive in Nairn's and others' enthusiasm for Bills of Rights and written constitutions.

But for the people to offer the monarchy their love, in a hopeless unrequited sublimation of personal energy and passion, is something else entirely. It is a serious affront to the idea of the mature, independent, free and equal citizen, a surrender of reason which education should combat. And combat not with competing prejudices and loyalties, but with an understanding of the psychological mechanisms involved.

It has to be said that this is a tall order in a culture which still tends to regard Freud as a dirty old man, which refuses to recognise child sexuality, and which indeed spends much of its time denying the importance of

### **'... the alarming subtlety of the process – beginning in infancy – by which our deepest political prejudices and allegiances are formed'**

all such yearnings and desires, in terms startlingly similar to those in which it denies its passion for royalty.

But the truth is that the dominant cultures of our times have instinctively acquired a terrifying expertise in manipulating those fundamental feelings for their own ends, whether that end is the maintenance of American military expenditure, or the survival of the British political status quo. Unless we recognise the importance of those feelings, their central role in human motivation and in the glamour and fascination of life, then our Roundhead theorisings about the superiority of republicanism will never stand a chance against the sheer magic and allure of royalty.

We live after all – as Sellars and Yeatman said – in a society trained for three centuries to regard its Cavaliers as Wrong but Romantic, and its Roundheads as Right but Repulsive. That dichotomy will persist until we reach a moment of psychological revolution in which – like a scorned lover finally abandoning the lost cause – the British people learn to fall out of love with Lady Di, and fall back in love with their workaday selves, with each other, with the magic of the common man. But whether, in the prevailing atmosphere of sexual prudery and psychological illiteracy, we will ever get the enabling 'education sentimentale' – that, at the moment, seems doubtful.

# THE CHILD IN HISTORY



"The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorised and sexually abused."

Writing on the evolution of parent-child relationships as a factor in history, Lloyd de Mause in his *The History of Childhood* makes no bones about his stance. The modern family, for all of its many faults, is for de Mause, a relative cradle of safety, a nurturing womb compared to bygone ages. The expectation of parents in the modern age is that they will be legally and morally responsible to care for and protect their offspring until the age of majority.

De Mause, political scientist and psychiatrist, encompassing Freudian perspectives of the family, is firmly of the view that life for children has improved. His stance is consequently in conflict with that of Philippe Aries, whose seminal book *Centuries of Childhood* had been cited previously as 'Holy Writ'.

Aries argues that while the traditional child was happy because he was free to mix with many classes and ages, the invention of childhood as a separate stage and status in modern times has resulted in the tyrannical concept of the family.

The consequences of either position for the way we live our lives now, are dramatically different, both in the day to day interaction between parents and children, and in the kind of people we are socialising for the future.

In the march of history however, it is of course not just children whose freedoms and welfare are determined and circumscribed. The way we live, relate, raise

children, and die will be conducted within a historical context with its own values, expectations and desires. No part of life is separate from the course of human affairs. Save for possibly a word or two, the above opening quote could have been written by Engels 150 years ago about the condition of the working classes in England.

It is only in very recent years that the concept of oral history has gained any degree of acceptance. Ordinary people tell in their own words how war, work, love, church, etc. affected their individual lives. John Burnett's *Destiny Obscure* is a collection of autobiographical memory pieces which attempt to give a voice to the 'crowds and crowds of little children who are strangely absent from the written record.'

Some of these records are about universals. Like Ethel Davidson who first learned at the age of seven that her idealised father had shortcomings when he laughed as her kitten leapt in the air in distress on being fed dinner scraps laced with hot mustard. Other records, like Florence Goddard's who knew nothing at age ten of the arrival of a baby brother until he appeared, indicate social conventions.

"My mother was certainly excessively reserved and prudish upon these matters, but not so very different from other mothers in those days. I have inquired among friends of my own age, and have found no one who had received any information of that nature in the home."

All such recollections are touched by the

spirit of their age, and by the events on the national and world stage that are of traditional interest to historians.

For it is this interplay between the theatre management and the individual actors of history that is of great interest. What dynamic interchange exists, for example, between the individual and the society which socialises him? Does the institutional political level of affairs largely inform the outlook and private behaviour of the individual? Or is it the other way around?

In the Scottish context, as elsewhere, these are questions which, since they go to the very roots of our lives, are absorbing. Certainly on the institutional level in Scotland, there prevail a number of beliefs and values about who we are and what we can be.

John Galt's phrase that Scotland is a 'wrong resenting country' finds its echo in the majority of Scots' deep ambivalence towards institutions. Perhaps because of the centuries old secession of political power by our forbears, we never really feel that our institutions are our own. In an observation in his biography of the Glasgow socialist, James Maxton, Gordon Brown describes the slowness of ordinary Scots to change, their unreceptiveness to new ideas, and even under appalling social conditions, their lack of enthusiasm for political action.

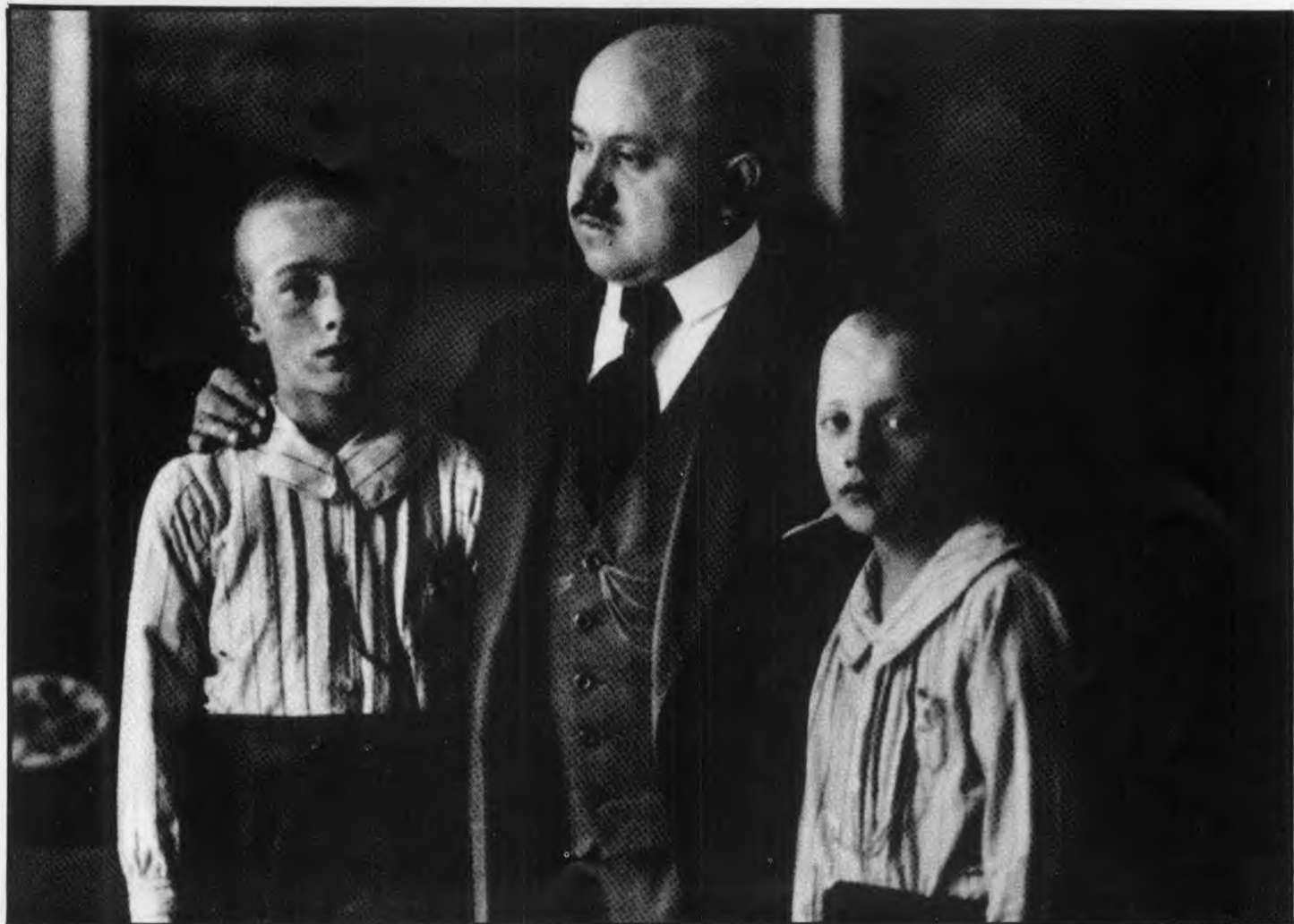
'Children's Champion' Maxton campaigning for improved conditions for children in the slums of Bridgeton found few supporters among their parents. There is an assumption at the core of Scottish people that involvement in politics, far from improving things, can in fact make them worse. Christopher Smout's assertion that "Labour in Scotland became synonymous with the defence of council housing, jobs in heavy industry and sectarian schools" can have won him few friends. His rejoinder that the all powerful Labour hegemony has "nothing whatever to do with participatory democracy, enthusiasm for socialism or hope for the future" has earned him the silent reply of hurt rage.

In Chris Harvie's phrase, "the time of the 'wee hard men' " in Scottish political and intellectual life has come. In Scotland, through our daily assumptions values and behaviour, we may, in Smout's words be telling the young to "fear what is new, believe the difficult to be impossible, draw back from responsibility, and afford established authority and tradition an exaggerated respect."

The supposed democratic nature of Scottish society, and the feared anglicisation of our education system are just two of the issues which affect adult perceptions and their children's lives.

In the first of a series exploring how childhood ambitions and inhibitions have been shaped by the culture children grow up in, we look this month at another country's experience. ■





August Sanders

Widower and Sons, Cologne, c1925

# FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!

Through his work with violent offenders as Medical Director at Broadmoor Hospital, **John Hamilton** finds much of interest in a study of the culture of unquestioning obedience in Nazi Germany. He examines the attempt to look for the roots of violence in infancy.

It is perhaps surprising how little attention has been paid to the early histories of people for whom things have gone drastically wrong. In mentally abnormal offenders for example, it is only in recent years, and sometimes grudgingly at that, that thought has been given to the incidence of their abuse during childhood.

There are of course, enormous problems in truly testing the notion that every offender was once a victim. A recent study found though, that seven out of eight adolescents who had murdered, had a history of severe physical abuse by one or both parents. Belts, buckles, cords, broom handles, sticks and shoes were used to inflict punishment. The mother of one boy broke his finger while under the influence of alcohol. The hospital record of another boy revealed that his father had attempted to

kill him and his brother on several occasions. Records also revealed that six of the boys had witnessed extreme violence within their households. All boys were severely neuropsychiatrically impaired.

Difficult though such studies are, there are other ways of gaining knowledge and

**'from infancy, they had been raised not to have any feelings of their own.'**

understanding. Perhaps the greatest contribution has been made by the Austrian psychiatrist, Dr. Alice Miller. In the preface to her book **For Your Own Good - hidden cruelty in child rearing and the roots of violence**, she describes the question that has haunted her since the end of World War II.

Along with a goodly proportion of the German speaking world, she has been preoccupied with the thought of what can make a person conceive the plan of gassing millions of human beings to death. How was it possible then for millions of others to acclaim him and assist in carrying out this plan?

She says the reason is that Hitler and his millions of followers were subjected to pathological experiences during their upbringing, as a normal and acceptable pattern of family events. The former practice of physically maiming, exploiting and abusing children was gradually replaced by a system of mental cruelty, masked by the honorific term, 'child rearing'. Since training in many cultures begins in infancy during the initial symbiotic relationship between mother and child, this early conditioning makes it virtually impossible for

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the child to discover what is actually happening to him.

The child's dependence on his parents' love also makes it impossible in later years to recognise these traumatisations, which often remain hidden behind the early idealising of the parents for the rest of the child's life. We in Scotland know the archetype of the gangster-criminal who has killed and maimed, but who won't have a bad word said against his idealised version of his 'Ma'.

## Repression

Miller says that the lack of opportunity in childhood to react to hurt, humiliation, and coercion causes severe psychological problems. Neuroses are a result not so much of events themselves, but of the repression of them.

In the countless compulsions of everyday life, in politics, and not least, in psychoanalytic theories, in recognising the social expectation to repress feelings, Miller felt she was 'getting to the bottom of a mystery'. She believes that the way children were brought up in Germany provided them with all the emotional requirements to live in a dictatorship, without really minding it. In fact, the Germans felt a euphoric identification with it. Hitler himself said, 'It gives us a very special, secret pleasure to see how unaware the people around us are of what is really happening to them.'

Children on the other hand, who are permitted to react appropriately with anger to the pain, wrongs and denial inflicted on them will retain an ability to react appropriately in later life. When someone wounds them as adults, they will be able to recognise and express this verbally and will not feel the need to respond with physical violence. A person who can understand and integrate his anger as part of himself will not become violent. Whereas those who have been unable to understand rage, if they were not permitted to become familiar with this feeling as children, will either shrink from any spontaneous reaction, or have occasional outbursts of inexplicable rage and violent behaviour.

The tragedy of this situation is that the parents of such children undoubtedly had the best of intentions. From the very beginning they wanted their children to be well-behaved, undemanding, self-controlled, grateful, and above all, meek.

They wanted to inculcate these values in their children by whatever means. If there was no other way, then they had to use force to attain these admirable pedagogical ends. The children were trained to be obedient so successfully, and at such an early age that the training never lost its effectiveness. To the end of their lives they carried out orders without question.

## Taking Orders

Miller believes that during World War II, military service provided the best opportunity for these earlier victims to continue the established pattern of taking orders. When someone like Hitler claimed, just like Father, to know exactly what was good, right and necessary for everyone, it is not surprising that so many people, who were longing for someone to tell them what to do, welcomed him with open arms and helped him in his rise to power. Miller describes the servile, uncritical, and almost infantile

**'... the way children were brought up in Germany provided them with all the emotional requirements to live in a dictatorship, without really minding it.'**

naivety with which Hitler's followers spoke of his omniscience, infallibility, and divinity in the way a little child sees his father.

Miller's quotes from the writings and speeches of Himmler, Goering, Hess, and concentration camp commandants substantiate her thesis. She believes we are still threatened by the possible repetition of a similar crime unless we understand its origins and the psychological mechanism behind it. People with any sensitivity cannot be turned into mass murderers overnight. But the men and women who carried out 'the final solution' did not let their feelings stand in the way – for the simple reason that from infancy, they had been raised not to have any feelings of their own.

Yet what of Hitler himself? Miller asks what takes place in a child who is humiliated and demeaned by his parents, yet at the same time is commanded to respect and love those who trust him in this fashion, and under no circumstances to give expression to his

suffering. She gives evidence that Hitler was frequently ridiculed by his father, and given 'his due measure of beatings' every day. Hitler himself once told his secretaries that his father had once given him 30 lashes on his back. He is reported to have said, 'I resolved not to make a sound when my father next whipped me. I silently counted the blows. My mother thought I had gone crazy when I beamed proudly and told her father hit me 32 times!'

Hitler knew that nothing he did would have any effect on the constant beatings he was given. All he could do was deny the pain. In other words, deny himself, and identify with his aggressor.

Hitler tried all he could to forget the trauma of the beatings his father gave him. He subjugated Germany's ruling class, won over the masses, and bent the governments of Europe to his will. He possessed nearly limitless power. At night however, in his sleep, when his unconscious reminded him of his early childhood experiences, there was no escape. Then his father came back to frighten him and his terror was boundless. It is recorded that he would wake up at nights with convulsive shrieks, shaking with fear, and muttering confused unintelligible phrases.

The feelings of fear he had repressed in his childhood now overtook the adult at the peak of his success. Had he made the entire world his victim, he still would not have been able to banish his introjected father from his bedroom. One's own unconscious cannot be destroyed by destroying the world.

'I have no doubt,' Miller concludes, 'that behind every crime a personal tragedy lies hidden. If we were to investigate such events and their backgrounds more closely, we might be able to do more to prevent crimes than we do now with our indignation and moralising. We do not yet know what the world might be like if children were to grow up without being subject to humiliation, if parents would respect them, and take them seriously as persons. In any case, I do not know of a single person who enjoyed this respect as a child and then as an adult had the need to put other human beings to death.'

*This article is an extract from a paper, Violence and Victimology, given by Dr Hamilton to the British Association last autumn. Alice Miller's three titles covering these issues are The Drama of Being a Child, For Your Own Good and Thou Shalt Not be Aware.*

## INVERSE

### Pictures of an Earlier Time

Sometimes,  
When I sit quietly  
Alone,  
Sounds and pictures of an earlier time  
Seep into my mind,  
Filling some vague need  
To touch my past.  
To know my roots,

Who I was, where I belong.  
Perhaps I sense  
Having lost something of myself  
Along the way.  
Perhaps just yearning  
For what appears to be simpler days.  
The lure of childhood  
Is hard to fight,  
Against the weighty load of today  
With its tense sensibility.  
Attempting,

To bring order to  
Chaos,  
Searching for patterns and progressions  
Within the memory,  
Outwith the sentimentality  
Lurking in sticky-sweet nostalgia.  
I fight the losing battle,  
Knowing I want to lose!  
Enjoying the reward of my defeat.

John Davidson

# LOOKING BACK

**H**e deliberately put his full weight on every creaking board, all the way down the passage. He paused after each step and listened. Nobody had heard. They must all be occupied. There were distant noises of canvas being sized. He grinned. He should have been doing his homework.

He quietly turned the porcelain handle of his father's study door, pushed it open and slipped in, closing it as quietly behind him. He stood with his back against the door and looked across the room. The light from the lamp in the square outside fell slanting on his large mahogany desk which was placed against the right hand wall. "Always work with the light coming from your left, Colin. It throws the shadow of your pen off the page, keeping it clear. Unless of course, you're left-handed!"

He grimaced. The desk seemed slightly unreal, like a magic lantern slide projected on the wall by the street lamp. He walked over and sat in the mahogany swivel chair at the desk. He picked up his father's pen, the stainless steel ball-point, the 'special' pen that was never used for anything mundane such as letters, shopping lists, or signing cheques. He wondered what it was like to be a writer.

He had peeped in at his father once, unseen. He had seemed absorbed, surrounded by what he called his implements, putting pen to blank paper. Absorbed but frowning. It must be hard work. He knew you could work with your brain as well as your hands. Homework, for example. But he found homework easy. He noticed that the top left-hand drawer of the desk was open, disclosing some of the contents – a jumble of papers, letters, sticks of sealing wax, empty stamp books.

Just then he heard his father calling him from the corridor. He had time to grab something (it felt like a postcard) from the drawer, swing round, slide from the chair, dart to the window, and stand with his back to the door, before his father came in. He hoped to give the appearance of somebody staring out of the window in pensive mood.

His father peered into the room, saw Colin, but instead of putting on the light, came over and stood beside him.

"What are you doing?"

"Just looking."

"I often do that too. Someone once said that ninety per cent of a writer's time is spent gazing out of windows."

They both looked out at the shadowy elms in the square. The trees rustled in the wind; they sounded like the sea.

"Faintly rural," his father said. Colin thought, a bit like country in the city. "A wee bit like country in the city," his father said. "The only thing that reminds us there are seasons. Seventy eight years old, these trees, as old as the houses."

Later that night, under the tent of his

he wondered



bedclothes, Colin examined his find by torchlight. At first he thought it was just an ordinary postcard, but looking at it more closely he realised it was an advertisement in the form of a postcard. On the picture side of the card there was a black and white illustration of a strange contraption like a Gatling gun mounted on a railway wagon. Above it was the legend, THE 'MERRITT' TYPE WRITER.

The name reminded him of one of his teacher's favourite jokes: promotion doesn't depend on merit, it depends on who you are merrit to. Beneath the legend, a paragraph of typewriting assured the reader:

This is exact copy of the 'MERRITT'S' work. It is equal to that of any High Priced Typewriter. Relieves fatigue from steady use of pen. Improves spelling and punctuation. Interests and instructs children. The entire correspondence of a

## THE M

by Ham

Under the bedclothes by torch

business house can be done with it. Learned in half an hour from directions. Prints capitals, small letters, figures and characters, 78 in all. Price only £3 complete.

Address – RICHARDS, TERRY & Co. Ltd, 46, Holburn Viaduct, London, E.C.

"Improves spelling." That sounded useful, and surely more fun than his father's





Nick Stevenson

# HERRITT

sh Whyte

ght, Colin plans for a better world.

prescription: a page of dictionary a day. He didn't think the typewriter was particularly low-priced, complete or not, but decided to send away for it anyway. In the morning he emptied his piggy-bank – a pink china pig with his name on the side and a dollar sign on the other, a present from his mother, a joke – and counted up just under £2 in coins; a sum realised by careful hoarding of money saved from bus fares, playground dealing in comics, and his grandfather's 'slippings'.

He made up the price of the typewriter from that week's pocket money, bought a postal order, and sent it off. And waited.

He wondered what would happen when his typewriter arrived and his parents saw it. He had swithered about giving a schoolfriend's address, but on reflection he didn't think his parents would ask him about any strange parcel. They might be curious, but they wouldn't open it, they wouldn't ask. They respected the rights and privacy of the individual whether adult or child. All the same, each day was spent anxiously.

He mooched about and his mother did ask the reason for that. "Oh nothing," he said. Just a mood his mother thought, and didn't pursue it. One afternoon after school he happened to find a scrap of paper lying on the dining room table, presumably left by his father – it was his handwriting in it. He tried to read it but his mother picked it

up quickly. "I must put that in your father's desk before he loses it."

Then one Saturday morning it came. Colin got to the door and took the heavy parcel from the postman. As he passed the dining room his father, sitting at the table, looked up, saw him carrying something, shrugged, and went back to his bran flakes.

Secure in his bedroom Colin placed the brown paper parcel on the bed and carefully unwrapped it. The actual typewriter was even more magical than the illustration. He wondered if Heath Robinson had invented it. He stared at it. Slowly he reached out and pressed the **Caps** key and made the carriage move up and down, then the **Space** key to make it jump along. Very satisfactory. He opened the **Directions**. They seemed easy to follow; he would read them later.

He carried the machine over to his table at the window, tore a page from a jotter and wound it on to the platen (after a reluctant glance at the instructions). He sat down and pulled his chair in till his stomach pressed against the edge of the table. He flexed his fingers the way he had seen a pianist do until the joints cracked. Just as he began to type, he heard a voice shout, but the question, "Have you done your homework?" only vaguely penetrated.

One day the editor called O. Henry into his office.

"Look here, you overpaid quill-scraper, I want a decent feature article from you. None of this Oh Mr. Porter! stuff. Something fashionable, something to stick pins into. I want a piece on the man-about-town: what he wears, where he goes, all that sort of thing."

"But I don't know a darned thing about the breed, they're not my cup of sarsaparilla."

"Well get out there and find out."

O. Henry pulled down his waistcoat and stumped out of the office. He was still grumbling over what he considered to be a trivial assignment when he left the building. He was too preoccupied to notice where he was going and was promptly knocked down by an omnibus.

When he came to he found himself in a hospital ward. At the foot of the bed stood a large Irish nurse watching him.

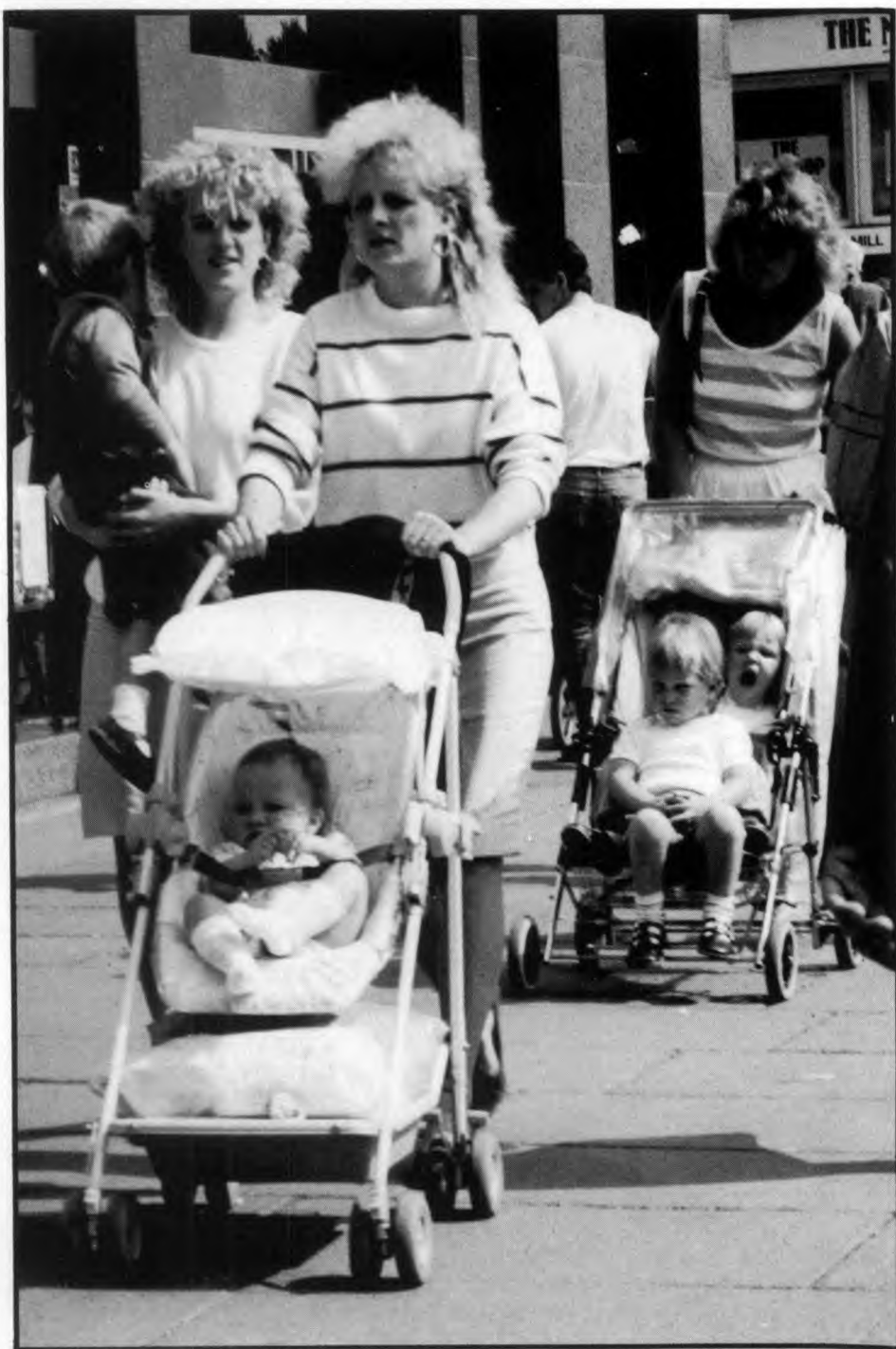
"What day is it?"

"Tuesday."

"I've been out since yesterday."

"Yes, but your injuries aren't too serious," and knowing that he was a writer, she added, "would you like to see the paper?"

He looked at the front page. About halfway down the fourth column was a story which began, "O. Henry, the well-known man-about-town, was yesterday bowled over by a stray omnibus . . ."



# SHOPPING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

What is it about shopping that makes it a perpetual trial for parents and children? **Scottish Child** offers three views of the contemporary shopping experience.

## Do you want something to cry for?

It is a familiar everyday scene. Mum or dad is trudging round the supermarket, carrying out the modern chore that is shopping. Baby is wheeled in the trolley, or left to follow on his own.

In spite of mega marketing efforts to convince us otherwise, there is something in the make-up of the supermarket that children and adults find stressful. ('You'll be impressed at P\*\*\*\*\*' – always converts in my mind to – 'You'll be depressed at Depresto')

Whether it's their deceptive appeal to economy of budget and effort, their assault on the powers of choice, their seductive yet dishonest promise that everything is within your reach – whatever it is, in supermarkets kids and their parents get fractious.

While the adult is likely for the sake of social form to make some attempt to conceal frustration and disappointment, the young child is constrained by no such inhibitions. He complains and gins and makes demands. The parent at first might concede, might give mixed messages, and then might finally say no. Often by the time that frustration all round is reaching its highest point in the impersonal and essentially competitive check-out queue, the child is bawling.

'Do you want something to cry for?' asks the parent through gritted teeth in a thinly disguised threat, as patience reaches an end. Since a young child is put under these circumstances in an impossible position – I'm crying because I'm bored in this busy noisy boring but attractive place which shows me things I can't have; I'm crying because if I don't stop crying my mum's going to carry out her threat – many a supermarket queue contains a crying child who's been given a smack or a clout or worse. It is a social situation which contains in microcosm that familiar feature of modern life, where no one, in spite of all the glitter, all the hype, gets what they really need.

Through a child's eyes, the modern form of shopping for life's basic essentials, and not so basic luxuries can be seen to contain, if we consider it, the elements of danger in losing that which is vitally important to self, to identity, to life. In a supermarket, the child in his way of seeing things, loses his mother.

Mother's (or in certain occasional exceptions) father's attention is directed not to egocentric needy infantile him. She is looking at objects, things. If baby is inventive and confident, he tries to join in this game. But that's not really allowed, and can be quite costly with eggs and glass bottles and such like. If it's a local shop, mother might meet friends and chat, which takes her away as well. But mostly it's just looking at the merchandise.

While the mother being an adult can see





an end to this chore of shopping – she might soon be in the comfort of home with a cup of tea, and with any luck her feet up for a few minutes, the child has no such concept of endings. This discomfort is for ever.

And whereas mum has an adult notion of emergency endings – if need be she could actually walk out of the shop, out of this discomfort – the child can go nowhere without his mother, and would not feel at all safe in doing so. Even wandering off and ‘getting lost’ can be seen as an attempt on the infant’s part to be found again. The infant in these circumstances will see things the other way round, as mother having lost him.

‘There is no such thing as an infant,’ said baby book pioneer, Dr. Donald Winnicott, ‘meaning of course that whenever one finds an infant one finds maternal care, and without maternal care there would be no infant.’

No one would have a greater appreciation of this at some level of understanding than the infant himself. So if the source of the maternal care is taken up with other things, that leaves the infant in a vulnerable situation he can do nothing about. Nothing except complain, and cry.

To some extent most mothers and care givers are aware of this and order the shopping trip in ways which are sensitive to the child’s needs. They might talk to their child about the purchases, they might involve them in fetching the less fragile items, they might make sure baby has some comforting diversion of his own – a favourite teddy, or a bar of chocolate. They might even involve the child in the treacherous check-out queue in unpacking the trolley.

Of course, all of these environment ordering devices require strengths and capacities on the care giver’s part. On the shopping trip, or in the supermarket of life, some of these capacities may be in short supply. The infant’s fears and loudly expressed needs may even mirror the care giver’s. The tears of rage, of hurt need for affection and love may be being shed by the infant, but can be silently felt by the mother.

Baby, in a hopelessly responsible position for his years, has to stop crying for both of us. ■

Deidre Robertson

## Children Parking! A Scandinavian Answer to Shopping Blues?

**C**HILDREN PARKING! it said in large letters in the shopping centre in Odense. We were spending our family holiday in Denmark and our two lively daughters would have much preferred to go to Legoland than browse around gift shops with us.

The sign though, was intriguing, and we followed the arrow. So while our offspring watched cartoons, painted or played games under the watchful eye of two nursery nurses employed by the centre, for the first time in many months, we actually managed to have a relaxing hour or so shopping together.

We took turns to nip downstairs to see if all was well. We needn’t have bothered. In fact we had to drag the children away from the place when it was time to go.

To our delight we found that most shops had such facilities. Even the smallest boutiques had a corner for kids, with toys, books and games.

In Esbjerg we took one look at the packed shelves of breakables in just such a shop. Just as we were turning on our heels to leave, each with a child gripped firmly by the hand, an assistant approached us.

‘Let me look after the girls,’ she said, immediately aware of our dilemma, and invited them over to a table where a few attractions were laid out.

We have visited Scandinavia quite a lot and have always been impressed by the facilities which encourage family shopping trips. The familiar temper tantrum, or plaintive ‘I need the toilet’, just as you are about to try on something, need not be a problem.

Most shops and centres have good toilets, and not in out of the way corners to discourage all but the desperate. Rooms for nursing mothers are all well equipped and

attractive and, setting an example of sex equality, many of the gents toilets have baby changing facilities too.

As new stores and shopping centres are built in Scotland, there seems a slowness in following the Scandinavian example. For most families it is still a bit of a nightmare to take a couple of toddlers shopping, even when it is essential just to kit the kids out. The fact is that parents feel that they and their children are treated as second class citizens. Toddlers, pushchairs and prams seem to be discouraged, and how often do we hear an exasperated mum saying, ‘Hold on till we find a toilet!’?

As my Danish friends pointed out, good shopping facilities are not just a social service. Unhurried, unharrassed parents generally spend more money! ■

John Muir

## Pain-free Shopping

**A** range of high quality goods, including hand-crafted toys, and high quality children’s clothing; a range of activities on offer so that children can stay in a creche, watch a puppet show, and be looked after while you shop. Food, and toilets to hand.

That’s right. It’s not Marks and Sparks, John Lewis, Debenhams of any of the big chains.

These child centred shopping facilities were found last month when **Scottish Child** took part in a Children’s Craft Fair in Edinburgh’s Adam House. Contrary to the often harassing experience of buying, shopping was just about a pleasure in these conditions, and many parents and children took advantage of them. As opposed to the determined ‘get in, get it, and get out!’ survival of the fittest approach to high street or supercentre shopping, this was shopping for leisure.

The event was organised by Northern Craft Fairs, whose director, Richard Green runs craft fairs all round the country throughout the year. He wanted to run something with a special appeal to children, since he is aware that children are often dragged round shops as unwilling participants.

This Edinburgh venture had a mixed reception. While those who were there clearly had an enjoyable and relaxed time, there was a feeling among stall holders that the side attractions – puppets, clowns, toys, etc. – were a disincentive to actually buying anything. It was not felt to be a strong commercial success.

Also, as distinct from other craft fairs at the same venue, the turnout was modest. Perhaps some people, said one stall holder, thought it was just for children.

It may be back to the drawing board for Richard Green on this one, but full marks for trying! ■

Stewart Asquith

# LOADSAPLA

## Higher Education in the Enterprise Economy

In November 1988 the government published its White Paper on the funding of students in higher education. It contained proposals for the freezing of student grants at their present level and for the abolition of the right of students to Housing Benefit and Income Support.

In their place students would be eligible for a government loan of about £400. At the same time a working party is considering the potential for a voucher scheme giving the student more 'consumer' power and the possibility of determining the nature of university education through the ability to pay for what he or she wants.

What is obvious is that the ability to pay is once again in the forefront of debate about questions of access and admission to university. The concern expressed has been that the government's commitment to wider access for all to higher education may well be at odds with the policies proposed on the funding of students. The intriguing aspect to this is the wide range of sources of concern – from the Tory Reform Group to Winne Ewing, from the Adam Smith Institute to members of the CBI.

But it would appear that the chances of getting to university are now greater than ever before. In the ten years from 1975 to 1986 the number of students from the UK in British universities increased by 15% to 301,200.

Care has to be taken however, in reading such statistics, as the increase hides some interesting developments. For example, in the same period the number of male

students increased by only 2% whereas the number of women students increased by a staggering 35%. The proportion of women in British universities is now 42%. In Scottish universities this is repeated in the figures for first year entrants, with a figure of around 45% for women – the exception being Heriot-Watt where only 28% are women – engineering and sciences are still largely a male domain.

And again there has been a large increase in the number of mature students going on to higher education – in 1986 there was a 30% increase in the number of over-25s. The increase was again larger for women, standing at 39%.

Why then the concern? Shouldn't we be pleased at the apparent increase in the opportunities available to the young? A number of things have to be considered, particularly in relation to the continuing trend towards the ability to pay being a vital factor in the ability to take up a place at university.

Firstly there is widespread concern that the university system in Britain is one that **already** favours the well-to-do and that the introduction of a form of student funding based on loans or vouchers or the like will merely increase the gap in the **social divisions** at university and will reflect those in society generally. Loadsamoney translates readily into loadsaplaces. With particular reference to Scotland, recent concern at the increasing 'anglicisation' of some Scottish universities has not been so much about place of birth as

All British universities have seen an increase in the numbers of women and of mature students in recent years. There has to be some concern that loans or vouchers about the social status of applicants from south of the border – that is, that students coming to Scottish universities from down south are pretty well-heeled.

When Edinburgh, for example, was being criticised recently over a figure of 40% 'non-Scots', the comparable figure for other universities stood at around 60% for St Andrews, 37% for Stirling, 35% for Dundee and 20% for Heriot-Watt and Aberdeen.

Secondly, the 'loadsamoney' ethos is particularly threatening to the Scottish university system where an **Honours degree** will take four years compared with three in English universities. Again, a loan system or the like is in danger of catering for those sections of the population who can afford the financial demands of supporting a son or daughter at university for four years – notwithstanding the merits of the flexibility for which the Scottish degree structure is renowned. There are 40,000 places at Scottish universities and there are 28,000 Scots in Scottish universities. As a net importer of students from elsewhere the fear is that the cost of a four-year Scottish degree for a student funded through a loan or voucher system will privilege already well-endowed sections of the community and thereby inhibit applications from well-qualified working class Scots.

**Universities are undoubtedly in a period of transition just now. Where do you see them going in the future?**

Two things have to be said. The first is that there are a variety of public statements by government ministers that we must increase the participation rate, and that this is to be given priority. The second is that universities must raise more of their income from their students – not only the maintenance loans, but actually part of their tuition fee.

**Isn't this going to put university beyond the reach of certain sections of the community?**

Other countries do charge and it does appear that there is a wide social mix. However it doesn't necessarily follow, and it doesn't take into account the great cultural differences there are between countries.

Any normal person would tell you that

the more you increase the financial burden on students, the fewer you are going to get. Especially at a time of demographic decline, we are going to be increasingly in competition with institutions such as the Health Service etc. Young people are going to compare going into Higher Education and coming out with a bill to pay, with, on the other hand, paid and lucrative

a cohort of children with the same order of grades, twice as many from the manual group will drop out of school, as for the children of non-manual parents. Already in secondary schools there is not a good perception of university.

What worries me is that all the time we are being pushed away from the concept of

### Scottish Child speaks to Sir David Smith, Principal of Edinburgh University, about the future as he sees it.

employment. I sincerely hope we won't go in the direction of charging tuition fees.

If too much of a financial burden is placed on the student, in our culture that will be a disincentive to apply to university.

One of the worrying statistics relates to the performance of children from manual groups in secondary education – if you take

university as a place to learn and to develop a set of values; and we're being pushed towards the idea that it is a training ground for a higher income. Unfortunately, too much publicity is given to the financial markets and high salaries – the idea that you go to university and come out a yuppie is a bit too widespread for my taste.

**On the issue of access to higher education, could**



# ICES

will also make it difficult for these groups to benefit from a university education, given the additional financial constraints. Other avenues could easily be more attractive.

Thirdly, we need to bear in mind that the overall increase in student numbers referred to above conceals **wide variations** in the distribution of demand for places and in the places actually available. For example, there has been a swing towards business management and related courses. The number of students on business and social studies courses in the UK went up from 108,000 in 1979 to 128,500 in 1984. The demand for such courses as business studies, accountancy etc has mushroomed. Throughout the university system there is no shortage of people applying for accountancy, law, medicine but there are more places than students in areas such as nursing studies and engineering. Education Minister, Michael Forsyth, has also lamented the lack of technology teachers, with the SED publishing a leaflet **Teaching Technology** specifically to encourage expertise in that area.

And given that a student going into the financial sector can expect to earn considerably more after graduation than a nurse or teacher, he or she will be in a better position to pay off a loan. If the consumer is to determine which university courses are to be laid on then there is no doubt that science, social science and some arts courses had better be ready for hard times. **The market is coming.** ■

Stewart Asquith

**the universities be doing more for mature students and part-time students?**

The universities are going to have to look all the time at the wider community. For mature students, the problem is not so much with the universities as with the mature students finding their own financing for this. Here we come back to government attitudes to how you finance universities. We are going to have to explore this more.

**One of the main concerns with the drive to asking students individually to pay more is that the university will be an institution for the privileged. As the Principal of one of the largest universities in Britain, how would you respond to that criticism?**

Are universities for the privileged? Well if you analyse the social composition of university students in the British Isles, then clearly, the middle classes occupy a disproportionate position. That is not the



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path desired by the universities.

I really would not want the university to be for the privileged – certainly not in wealth terms – because I think it is too important for the country to exploit its talents. So the only privileged position for universities to take is to admit those who are privileged, by way of genetic or environmental circumstances, in their ability to learn. I do wish we weren't so middle class but it's not just a problem for the universities – it's a problem for the education system as a whole, and the kind of expectations people are encouraged to have.

**Should the universities be doing something to redress injustices in the community?**

We have got to work harder at the admissions stage and at our marketing in schools. It isn't a question of universities lying back and saying that's society's problem. We are a part but we are not the whole part. And I again get back to the view that we should be looking at the total package from primary school to secondary.

And we are in a better position to do this in Scotland than in England because of good integration between the school and the first year of university. I come from Oxford where admissions are broken into small enough units to allow applicants to be interviewed, and it's possible to have a one to one discussion with an applicant. The trouble is you can't really do this in Scotland where there are so many applications to be dealt with by the university as a whole. (e.g. last year, 16,261 applied to Edinburgh University for undergraduate entry, of whom 2,374 were successful and took up places)

One of the worries I have about Edinburgh is that it is perceived by too many people in the outside world as having this elitist upmarket image, which is why I would like to see universities develop more of the image of the great state universities in America.

**Given the push towards students paying more**

**'the idea that you go to university and come out a yuppie is a bit too widespread for my taste'**

## ASPIRATIONS

The scene – a Higher Education Convention in a school somewhere in Scotland where a university representative is speaking to a schoolboy and his parents about career possibilities. 'What kind of career is it that you're thinking about?'

'I'd ...'

'He wants to be an accountant,' says the voice from the boy's left.

'Well I'm not so ...'

'He's very good at arithmetic and things like that,' says the voice from the right.

'Can you tell me why you think you'd like to be an accountant?'

'I'd quite like ...'

'He'd like to get a job on the financial side of things – good money and security and that. If he chooses the right course now, then he could be an accountant as soon as he left university. We thought maybe he could take Accounting as a Higher, and then go into uni to do a degree in Accountancy. Set him up nicely that would. But it's up to him what he does really.'

'What else do you like doing at school?'

'Don't really know. Eh ...'

'How old are you?'

'I'll be eleven next birthday,' he says clutching his poly bag full of university prospectuses. ■

themselves and the demographic decline you mentioned earlier, does that mean that the universities will continue to recruit from abroad? Will universities continue to seek to pay their way by having larger quotas of overseas students paying at the higher overseas rate?

I'm not so sure. We may be going through a phase to the extent that countries overseas will be building up their own universities; and whereas now overseas students get grants from their governments to come here, in the future they could be encouraged to go to their own universities at home. And because of the increase in university fees in Britain, students from abroad and their governments may well have to reconsider the cost of coming to Britain.

This applies largely to the undergraduate market. Postgraduate recruitment will still develop for another decade or so. The British university system is probably at the maximum point for overseas undergraduate intake.

Finally, you are a Welshman by origin, you've worked in different universities in England, and you've now come to Scotland. Have you come to what is just another British university or do you feel that there is a particularly Scottish dimension to higher education here?

I regard it as both different and better. There is no doubt in my mind that having dealt with the family of problems at a couple of universities in England, the first year is very different here. The kid who comes to do, say, chemistry, is labelled as a chemist from day one. If by the end of year one, he thinks he'd like to take up chemical engineering, that option is closed off to him in most universities in the south. Here he comes to the Faculty of Science and can make up his mind over a longer time scale without having options closed off too early.

Also, a distinct advantage up here is that children have a broader education at school giving them a wider outlook and making them well fitted to enter a broad based first year in a Scottish university.



# GROWTH CULTURES

**E**ver experienced it? You walk into a public office, shop, bank, to complete, you think, some mundane task which should require minimal thought. And suddenly your interactive sensors are alerted. There is some 'atmosphere', some intangible aura or charge in the air, which inexorably draws you into its field.

No it's not an extra-terrestrial field force. It's probably the normal everyday charge that arises when people work together. Sometimes it can even appear that it's the nature of the working together that assumes priority. What is innocently supposed to be the main purpose of the enterprise can appear a mere sideline.

"The way people feel about the work they do," according to Edinburgh psychologist, Christine Wilson, "has an important bearing on the service they can give." The way people feel about their own positions in their organisation, and their relationship to colleagues are also important.

"Yet these aspects of working life are rarely addressed in the workplace," she says. "At least, not on the official agenda." At times such feelings can be a positive force, enhancing performance of the organisation's task. But at other times, they can get in the way of the job at hand.

And when the task of an organisation is to care for groups of people, children, elderly

people, or hospitalised patients, there is every chance of staff problems affecting, or even being mirrored in the resident group. Those working in residential care settings are all too familiar with the patterns of staff behaviour – scapegoating, rejection, lack of continuity, the way authority is exercised – being acted out among the residents.

Usually children in care, or the elderly infirm, or the sick in hospital, have enough to cope with. They can do without being

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**'Very often what appears as a clash between individuals can be traced to a muddle about who's responsible for doing what'**

---

caught up in potentially destructive staff dynamics which they feel powerless to influence. So how can this 'human' aspect to organisations' working be tackled?

"Language itself assumes a challenge," said fellow Glasgow-based consultant, Robin Hall. He explained that the language of the pub, where people meet to talk about the covert processes that occur in their work relationships, is different from the official language of the organisation. "The language of the pub," he said, "is talking about the same things that are of concern in the workplace. But it is as if sometimes, it

has no accepted place in it."

Managers might want to talk always of procedures. Yet managers and staff also know that 'process' is as big a factor in getting the job done. How to marry the two?

**R**obin Hall and Christine Wilson are two members of the Edinburgh-based Scottish Institute of Human Relations, which has been offering consultancies on a 'group relations training' model over a number of years in Scotland. They recently gave a paper on their work to the first International Symposium on Group Relations at Oxford. Whereas Scots might not be noted for their readiness to work in the area of the emotions, interest has been shown in the development of human relations work with a wide appeal in Scotland.

Hall and Wilson have been asked on a number of occasions to run in-service training events for the staffs of children's homes and residential agencies for the elderly. Voluntary self help groups and formal social work training agencies have also called on their services. They have responded by running events which they call conferences ("on the basis that our expectation is that members will confer with each other").

One of the main aims of their work is to get to the truly organisational aspects of the work. "You often find," said Christine





The 'human' side of organisations is often overlooked – at some cost to their smooth functioning! Consultants **Robin Hall** and **Christine Wilson** have helped care agencies work on the human angle. How do they do it? Here they talk to **Scottish Child**.

Wilson, "that problems can be individualised. So people say there's a personality clash there; or there's a personality problem here. Well, we're not in the business of changing people's personalities.

"Very often what appears as a clash between individuals can be traced to a muddle about who's responsible for doing what, or who has what authority." Alternatively they have found that conflicts are between groups, such as different job categories. "One group can make assumptions about another – it's characteristics, values, motives – which don't get checked out, and spirals of misunderstanding and ill-feeling can arise."

In a model they have devised, all staff in an agency take part in a five day participative training conference, which encourages the staff group through a series of planned exercises, to study the way their own organisation actually operates.

Each day starts with a group meeting in what is each participant's Base Group for the duration of the conference. These base groups are made up of members from every different job category in the agency, and work for a time each day with a consultant. Other aspects include a Job Switch, where each sub-group of employees adopts, for the duration of the event, the role and function of another. Care staff become cleaners; cleaners become senior staff; senior staff become cooks, etc.

"After initial incredulous hesitation, the event," in Robin Hall's experience, "usually turns into action-packed hilarity. Those in the role of senior staff enjoy their new, if short lived power; while the actual senior staff make the best of their junior role to make complaints; and so on."

By the time this kind of simulation ends, there is ready acknowledgement that the so-called imaginary agenda of the conference, is in fact real. Whereas a more

**'... the language of the pub is different from the official language of the organisation.'**

direct confronting approach might only evoke defensive denial, participants through this kind of experiential work, are able then to move on to address these real issues.

Far from the relevance of such training being questioned, it has fully engaged those who have taken part. "I never thought I'd be able to talk like this about work," said one manager. A cook in an organisation who had felt abandoned by her colleagues during a nasty assault incident said, "I've kept quiet about this for the last 4 years, and I feel better already for having talked about it."

The approach adopted by Christine Wilson and Robin Hall owes much to the Group Relations Training model developed by the Tavistock Institute in London. At root, a group relations approach acknowledges and works with both the conscious and unconscious aspects of individual and group behaviour.

This means looking at the underlying thoughts, fantasies and feelings – often dismissed as irrational – which influence the way people work together, and their responses to stress and change.

"The single most important issue," though, according to Robin Hall, "is how learning is taken back to the day to day work. If there is not already a structure in the workplace which creates space and time for exploring working relations, then the application phase of the conference must help members find one."

Such training conferences, they feel, leave their undoubted mark on an organisation or agency, and follow-up days, to continue work started in the conference, have been included. ■

*A fuller account of Robin Hall and Christine Wilson's work is contained in a paper, **Group Relations Training and Organisational Culture: an application for staff in residential establishments**. This paper was delivered to the First International Symposium on Group Relations at Oxford last year. Copies and further information are available from **Scottish Child**.*



## Spiritual Things

**Alexander McCall Smith** enjoys a good, and growing reputation as an author of children's books. He is profiled here by **Honorah Perry**

"A story has to ask to be written, said Somerset Maugham, and when I have the thread of a story in my head, I just have to let it unravel."

The unravelling thread of Sandy McCall Smith's life started in Africa – a place he holds dear. "A place with an extremely powerful presence," he says thoughtfully. And then by way of emphasis, "such a spiritual place!"

He spends at least a month every year in Africa. This year Canongate Press are due to publish his second collection of African short stories, these based on the traditional stories of Matabeleland. He describes his time in the bush there.

"Just talking to people there, young and aged, you realise that there is this extraordinary seam of vivid and dramatic fiction." The stories have, of course, an African perspective on the world, and a hint of the supernatural running just below the surface. He tells of an old witch doctor "who was more than willing to talk in exchange for presents. He was most probably an old rogue," he smiles fondly, "but

he had a great sense of humour, and a wealth of good tales."

Born in Zimbabwe, and educated there until he came to Scotland to study law when he was eighteen, Sandy McCall Smith draws strength from Africa still. During a time in Swaziland, "with not an awful lot to do in the evenings," he wrote probably his best known story for children, **The Perfect Hamburger**. This has been reprinted as part of the Young Puffin Story Book series, and has been translated into German and Welsh. The Japanese rights have also recently been sold.

An animated version of McCall Smith's story, **Children of Wax** has been made for television. Evocative perhaps, of the inner psyche of the white Zimbabwean, in this story, a couple have five children made from wax. They have to be kept away from the heat of the sun, and so are only able to come out at night. A moving and poignant little film, one child more curious than the rest escapes into the daylight and melts, is remoulded into a bird and flies away. "Five copies," the originator announced, "have been bought by the Zimbabwean government, which means that it will be shown fairly extensively in Africa."

**Film Boy**, his most recent book, is set in Bombay and is the story of Prem who loves films and who cannot believe it when he meets his favourite film star. **Mike's Magic Seeds** is a smashing read for five to eight year olds; and **The Little Theatre**, beautifully illustrated by Peter Rush Jansen is the most delightful story. McCall Smith's style of writing is perfect for reading aloud to four

or five year olds, who've not yet mastered the art of reading, but it holds fascination for the slightly older child who wants to be able to say proudly, "I've read that all by myself."

Children's fiction is only one part of his orbit. Together with his wife, Elizabeth – a doctor in an Edinburgh health centre – he has published books for teenagers, **All About Drinking** and **So you Want to Try Drugs**, as well as, under a pseudonym, **So You're Adopted**. These contributions to the Chambers Teenage Information Series are short and straightforward. Macmillan are soon to publish a title of his on drink and drugs for African schools. And there is a further career still.

Last year Sandy McCall Smith was visiting Professor of Law at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. He is currently working on a commentary for criminal law in Botswana, and he lectures in law at Edinburgh University. He and his wife have two small daughters.

How, it might be pertinent to ask, does anyone achieve all this in the course of a day? He defers to "my wife's good organisation." He also talked of the importance of his agent, who "has been a great help to me".

He finds time himself though, to check on the stocking of his titles in the bookshops. If they're not there, then he has been known to go round with copies and enough confidence just to make certain of their availability. It's not many aspiring Scottish authors that have that kind of spirit. ■



## Getting Parents in on the Act

### IN SPECIAL NEED: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

HMSO Books £4.95

Graham Atherton

Since the Warnock committee reported on the education of handicapped children and young people over a decade ago, our conventional categorisation of schooling as 'ordinary' or 'special' has been undergoing a major rethink.

Special schools still exist, but the Education (Scotland) Act 1981, in abolishing the concept of 'special education' took on board Warnock's conclusion that there was not always any obvious link between a particular handicap and the type of education a child required.

The effect of writing in the concept of 'special educational need' was to greatly widen the range of children requiring additional help with their education. Not only were included the two percent of children with various physical and mental 'handicaps', but also the very large number

of children with mild or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion now was the one fifth or more of all children who were not getting the attention they required. A report by inspectors of schools in Scotland took an even wider view to include children with language difficulties.

Although Warnock saw a continuing need for special schools for children who could never be properly catered for, or settle down ordinary schools, the committee argued that there were compelling educational and social arguments for disabled, mentally handicapped and other children with pronounced difficulties being educated alongside 'ordinary' children.

A corner-stone of Warnock, and the ensuing legislation is the importance attached to parents and professionals working in 'equal partnership'. In a way that has no parallel in 'mainstream' education, parents must have their views and preferences taken into account during the assessment and recording processes.

All is not as it might be, however, in the complex legal procedures for identifying and attending to children with special educational needs. Faced by a battery of experts and officials, parents still have a

dearth of information and advice at their disposal. Parents may be under real or perceived pressure to fit in with arrangements which are administratively or economically expedient. The prospect of taking up appeals may be such a daunting one that few cases ever reach the Secretary of State.

With this month's publication of the Scottish Consumer Council's latest guide, parents of children and young people in Scotland with special educational needs now have a compendium of advice and information to steer them through these processes. The guide is not just about putting the law to best effect, however.

It draws attention to some of the broader issues – the role of the Named Person; provision after leaving school; and the limitations of the legislation itself, which parents might want to take up politically. The guide also includes a list of useful organisations working in this area. ■

*The above is a companion volume to **The Law of the School: a parents' guide to education law in Scotland** (HMSO Books, 1987 £5.95), and **Keeping Parents Posted: information about children's schooling and other educational matters** (HMSO Books, 1988 £3.50)*

## Women Watching Women

### FEMALE SPECTATORS – LOOKING AT FILM AND TELEVISION

Deidre Pribram (ed)

Verso £8.95

Anna-Louise Milne

Women have always been avid filmgoers and TV fans, yet their participation in the 'cinematic experience' has been left largely unexplored in recent film theory.

The recognition of film as a serious art-form has encouraged much high-brow analysis drawing for the main part on psycho-analytic models. Patriarchal culture is said to define the Woman as 'Otherness', as an object through which the patriarchal subject defines himself. The act of gazing is given up to the man. The woman is for gazing at, not for playing an active role in the narrative.

During the 1970s feminist theory became bound up with the idea of sexual difference as oppressive – the definition of woman as object was regarded as a given, as in some way universal. The inadequacy of this analysis has been laid bare in recent years, not only in avant-garde cinema but also in mainstream television programmes.

**Female Spectators** is a collection of essays which, while taking as their subject matter many different aspects of visual media, all

challenge this repression of the 'female voice'. The general theoretical approach recognises the privileges of the male and the masculine but is expanded to include a role for females which encourages and even necessitates their participation in a system which has tended to objectify them.



The specification of sexual difference is no longer seen as oppressive but rather as liberating, as offering the only possibility of radical change.

Detailed analysis is given to mainstream productions such as the detective series 'Cagney and Lacey' which emphasises the bond of female friendship and the image of

woman as the author of her own actions. Tina Turner's video and song 'Private Dancer' is analysed as a self-conscious portrayal of her physical ensnarement within a male fantasy but her psychic detachment from it – thereby demonstrating the cultural and economic blocks placed on woman's subjectivity. Attention is also given to films of the more traditional mould, frequently treated by many feminists as unequivocally repressive of the female.

The recent phenomenon of the 'Richard Gere-type' action man who is also viewed as the 'object of the gaze' for women is discussed. As is the notion of compensatory pleasure – the pleasure of escapism that does not challenge the dominant ideology. Both these themes are frequently neglected in feminist writing.

The book itself is not particularly accessible. The language in parts is extremely technical and some of the essays rely on the reader having a good knowledge of recent feminist film and psycho-analytic theory. But it's worth struggling past this barrier to get to the keynote of the book. This is not just a cinematic and televisual analysis of the difference between male and female – but, more critically, of the difference between Woman and women.

Women suffer from being invisible to many men but equally many women are also invisible to other women. ■

# THE SCOTTISH CHILD AND THE LAW

## Not in Front of the Children

Many children in a number of Regions are not being cited to attend Hearings of the Children's Panel. Whether this is because some arbitrary age for attendance has been selected as a matter of regional policy, or is merely the result of a decision taken by an individual or department is not certain. What does seem clear is that chairmen of hearings who in law carry the responsibility for dispensing with the child's presence, are consulted only occasionally. One region deals with the legality of this by requiring the Hearing Chairman to sign a dispensation order.

But what does the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act itself have to say about the attendance of children at hearings? The Act is clear enough: Section 40(1) spells out the child's obligation to attend, while Section 40(2) permits a case, in whole or in part, to be considered in the absence of the child if the Children's Hearing 'are satisfied that it would be detrimental to the interest of the child to be present . . .'

Individual panel members may be unaware of the development of this trend of 'the absent child', since it is difficult for one panel member to get a sense of what is happening in hearings other than those they personally attend. Panel members will know that, for instance, no child attended in one out of three cases they heard on a particular afternoon. But they may well not know that in some areas children under five (sometimes up to secondary school age) are not cited to attend. If they are present, it is because the parents have inadvertently brought them.

Parents are unlikely to do so again, if it is suggested that next time, perhaps it would be easier to leave the children in nursery or school. There are after all, no facilities in most Children's Hearing Centres for children.

What has happened in the development of the Children's Hearing System that such a statement can be made? Can we be confident that we are still heading in the right direction when professionals can hold the view, virtually unchallenged, that children should not attend as the regular course of action, with special circumstances necessary to decide when a child **should** attend?

Personal views become a matter of public importance in a profession which carries as much discretionary power as that of the reporter.

But it would be oversimplifying the question to suggest that the whole matter can be reduced to an issue of power. Of course, a reporter, with daily professional contact with the Hearing System, is in a position to influence matters of this kind with more ease than individual panel members attending for two sessions a month. And of course panel members feel under some pressure to go on with a hearing in the absence of the child, when they know that to set a fresh date

heard! But this is evidently not so in all regions – as the job advert for an Usher for Children's Hearings in Tayside seems to indicate . . . someone . . . 'to receive children, parents and others . . . and to ensure good order is maintained.'

Who would apply? Was Tayside looking for a disciplinary doorman or a welcoming mum or dad who might make families a cup of coffee and supervise the play of younger children?

Some people argue that there is nothing to be learned from a child too young to talk, that panel members don't put the child's presence to any good use, and

from 'troublesome'.

In trying to take decisions 'with regard to the child's individual need' is the Children's Hearing System defining children as 'needing' to be protected from their own Hearings? If so the trend must be challenged for it is nowadays widely accepted that children need wherever possible to be included in decision-making which affects them. As well as the 'therapeutic' arguments, familiar to social workers and others, hearings have other reasons for including children in discussions – the legislation itself. It not only allows, but **demands** informality of language and setting in the hearing – **it was drafted with the child in mind.**

There must be questions too about the ethics of moving towards a compulsory decision-making forum which routinely decides about a child's future without his or her presence. It would seem to provide further fuel for the case for child advocates in Hearings, and yet another move towards an English way of handling children in need.

The administrative arguments for children not attending Hearings must be discounted. Hearing Centres can and must become places where the majority of children whatever their age, can wait and be present during the Hearing, without adding to the stress. It has already been done in some Centres, where a welcoming atmosphere for children has been created.

It is not suggested that Hearings become family therapy sessions, but if they were to borrow some of those techniques, then panel members might be better able to tackle the criticism that they find it difficult to talk to children in Hearings. Simply providing floor or table toys enables observation of children at play, and in interaction with their parents. Apart from just being able to hear what is being said if young children are busily occupied, such things make for a more relaxed and unthreatening atmosphere, where panel members can measure the professionals' reports on family relations against their own observations of the interactions between parents and child.

Hearings held without the child

At a time when the Scottish Law Commission is considering the potential vulnerability of child witnesses during the giving of evidence, it is all the more surprising, argues **Jean Raeburn** that Children's Hearings appear to be moving in the opposite direction. She looks at a growing trend towards hearings being held 'in absence of the child' and asks which children are not attending and why.

for another hearing will probably cause both practical and emotional upset to parents.

But if this explanation won't suffice, what are those 'other reasons'? It would be easy to argue 'convenience' grounds, and there is no doubt that most Hearing Centres are not designed for children. Waiting rooms make little concession to the anxious minutes passed there by tense families. Worse still, the hearing room itself often provides no distraction for young children unless enterprising panel members bring in toys. Little wonder that very young children become fractious and disruptive, older children bored. And of course, if during the Hearing, panel members consider that there are some matters more helpfully discussed without the child, we are back to the original problem of the waiting room – not only lack of resources in the way of toys, but also lack of a supervising adult.

There's no money for that kind of person, the cry may well be

that they become distracted from the main task of the Hearing by toddlers' noisy behaviour.

However, there can be no doubt that the main argument presented by those in favour of childless Hearings is that of the protection of the child. It is argued that the child needs to be protected from the experience of the Hearing, from the discussion concerning his situation, and from the uncertainty of the different views about what is best. Protection, in other words, from the **emotions** involved. The worrying thing is that there is never a question about whether or not a child referred on **offence** grounds should be protected from coming to a Hearing. Yet a fundamental condition of our unique system is that offenders are not separate groups of children and should be dealt with within the same system setting. The present movement towards a system where offenders are cited to appear and victims are not, is surely entrance by the back door of the separation of 'deprived' from 'depraved', 'troubled'





## Victims of Theft

A Scottish Child reader recently had his bike stolen. The bike was found and the alleged offender charged with theft.

The police took the bike as a production, and told the owner that it would be at least six months before the bike was returned.

The delay in cases coming to court has been acknowledged here and in the pages of national press. The reasons may be beyond the control of either the police or the prosecution services. And the reason property is retained is to enable identification in court.

It is, however, unfair and unnecessary that the victim should be further prejudiced by having his or her property removed for such a lengthy period of

time. Particularly if the property belongs to a child, and is an article, like a bike, which by the time it has been returned, may have been outgrown.

However, if the Procurator Fiscal or Reporter is asked, they normally would not object to the property being returned to the owner on the understanding that it is produced in the event of a case going to trial. Unfortunately, because the police are so busy, they usually do not check this out unless specifically requested to do so.

Scottish Child would hope that if any of our readers are unfortunate enough to be the victims of theft that they do ask for it to be returned. The loss of property, whether it's lost lawfully or unlawfully, is still a loss. ■

may well fall into the trap of talking to the parents themselves as if they were the child – particularly where the parents are young, inexperienced and possibly themselves until recently 'unprotected children'. The social worker calls mum by her first name and the scene is set for an all too familiar confusion of roles.

Panel members, reporters,

social workers – everyone must be aware of the power of these confusions and collusions. Serious questions must be asked about this trend, for there is much at stake here for the long-term welfare of the Hearing System.

The 'Hearing System', pure and simple? Or the 'Children's Hearing System'? We'd better be sure we know. ■

## CASENOTES by Malcolm Schaffer

### The Petition of M. and Another 2nd November 1988

This case concerns the provisions of the Law Reform (Parent and Child) (Scotland) Act 1986. The Act was introduced to do away with the differences caused for children of illegitimate birth. Among the Act's provisions, Section 3 allows any person claiming interest to apply to the Court for an order relating to parental rights.

In the only previous decision concerning this Act, Lord McCluskey expressed the view in A.B. Petitioner reported in *Scots Law Times* at page 652, that Section 3 was "deliberately restricted to conferring a title on a person who can claim an interest as a parent to exercise the rights which any parent is entitled to claim."

Lord McCluskey thus took a narrower interpretation of the Act than many had envisaged would be possible when the Act came into force. His reasoning would have limited the Act's provisions to applying only to fathers who were not married to mother of the child.

However, Lord Cullen in the petition of M. and Another took a wider view of the provisions of the Act: "There appears to me to be no good reason why the expression 'any person claiming interest' should be restricted to a parent or a person claiming to be a parent. On the contrary, the apparent purpose of the Section was to remove any restriction or doubt as to the title to apply by enacting that it was sufficient that the applicant claimed an interest."

The Act has therefore produced two very different interpretations, one very restrictive, the other very wide. A final authoritative decision would only come when there is an appeal against a decision under this Act to the inner house.

The petition in Lord Cullen's case had been brought by grandparents of a child in respect of whom the local authority had parental rights. The grandparents were wishing title to enable them

to have the right to appear at a Children's Hearing.

Lord Cullen ruled, "... in the present case the Petitioners, standing in existing supervision requirement, seek appointment to the office of tutors solely on the basis that it is in the best interests of the child that their views be represented before a Children's Hearing. The Court is not being asked to consider whether it is in the best interests of the child that the rights and powers of tutors, and in particular those relating to the care and control of the child, should be vested in the Petitioners as opposed to the third respondent or, for that matter, any other person or body. The effect of the supervision requirement is that for the time being the exercise of the rights and powers of tutory by the Petitioners, if appointed, would almost entirely be suppressed. The corollary is that as soon as that requirement was terminated the Petitioner would be free from any encumbrance on the exercise of those rights and powers. In my view it would not be proper or expedient for the Court to create a situation in which that could occur without having considered in advance whether the Petitioners should be given the right to the care and control of the child."

In this particular case Lord Cullen indicated that the arguments had been presented in terms of whether it would be in the child's best interests for the grandparents to be able to appear at a Children's Hearing and not whether it was in the child's best interests for the grandparents to have the child's care and control. Having regard to the temporary nature of the supervision requirement, Lord Cullen indicated that he would need to be satisfied on the latter to grant the petition, which was accordingly refused.

This is an interesting Act and it seems likely that other cases will emerge, which *Scottish Child* will endeavour to report. ■

# LETTERS

## Child Labour

Dear Editor,

Your readers might tend to think of 'child labour' as something to do with a Dickens' novel, or a Third World problem. The jobs children and young people in Scotland do tend to be regarded as invigorating and healthy – the brisk morning paper or milk round – a source of extra pocket money, and a useful addition to life experience.

If we define 'child labour' as activity where young people are financially exploited, under conditions that could put their health in danger, then there is some evidence that 'child labour' is in Scotland, very much alive.

To date there has been no data produced for Scotland nationally, or for any Scottish local authorities. In recent months, as part of a research project at Paisley College of Technology, a survey of a number of schools in Renfrew district has been carried out. A number of clear patterns are already emerging.

In line with the findings of other studies elsewhere (most notably by the Low Pay Unit), about 40% of the Renfrew sample have, or have had some form of part-time employment. Also, although the greatest proportion of jobs are in fact newspaper and milk rounds, there are significant numbers of children employed in other areas. One illegal occupation which emerges in significant numbers is 'hawking'. That is selling produce, very often sweets and farm produce, around the doors. The financial



Julia Mason

not carry more than 20lbs weight on foot, or 26lbs by bike.

Many children appear to be carrying more than this, and on bikes not suitably adapted to the task.

The laws dealing with child labour can be muddled and confusing. They are a hodge podge of local and national regulations whose enforcement is divided between the Health and Safety Inspectorate, the Education Welfare Service, and Environmental Health Officers.

Although many teachers may be concerned about the effect work is having on children's educational performance, many education authorities at the same time tacitly acknowledge that children are an important part of the local economy. In recent times the Scottish Education Department has allowed Tayside Region to grant pupils an extra week's holiday to pick the raspberry crop.

Child labour is alive and well in Scotland. National and local government are aware of the fact, as are employers. It is time we recognised the fact and started to consider what to do about it. If any of your readers have views or information about children working, particularly in the Renfrewshire area, as this research is continuing, I would be delighted to hear from them.

**Michael Lavalette**  
Dept. of Applied Social Studies  
Paisley College of Technology  
High Street  
Paisley PA1 2BE

reward is dependent on the number of sales.

The money received by children is often pitifully small. A rate of under £1.00 per hour is most common. Accidents have been reported by a number of the children. Conditions too are sometimes harsh. Many boys

(mainly) are starting their milk rounds as early as 4am. Some of the weights carried by paper boys and girls gives cause for concern too. Although comparisons are difficult (100 **Daily Records** are lighter than 100 **Observers**), the Union of Communication Workers has an agreement that postal cadets will

## Services to the Under-Fives – the East Sutherland Experience

Dear Editor,

At three months old and sleeping most of the day, my daughter is as yet hardly in need of preschool provision. But living as she does in one of the more remote East Sutherland glens, the benefits to be had from nursery education will soon become much more important.

While her peers in town can enjoy the company of neighbours' children and have ready access to preschool groups, with miles between houses, such groups may be the country child's first opportunity to socialise outwith the family.

Fortunately, unlike many other rural areas, preschool provision for the scattered crofting communities of East Sutherland is very much up and running. When the time comes, my daughter will be able to take advantage first of a thriving mother and toddler group, then a play group, before she attends the part-time nursery class run by the local authority and attached to the primary school.

While facilities are readily available for under-5s in the rural coastal area stretching from Bonar Bridge to Helmsdale

and inland to Lairg, the one potential hurdle is distance. However, parents in isolated areas tend to accept this as a part of life and journeys of ten miles or more to get to services are common. The local authority will provide transport only in special needs cases, and some parents group together to ferry each other's children into town.

Yet the experience of adequate provision in East Sutherland is not enjoyed widely over Highland Region. There seem to be historical reasons for this, according to an education department spokesman, dating

back to the time even before local government reorganisation. The high priority given to the under fives by the old Sutherland County Council seems to have maintained in some degree to the present day, even if it does make for an inequality of provision within the Region.

The Scottish pre-School Play Association are also active in the area. Their recently appointed field worker for Sutherland, Mrs. Ann Keating acknowledges that with 14 play groups the county is well served.

**Caroline McMorran**  
Brora Sutherland



## Schools – Troubled Waters

Dear Editor,

I have on my desk a caption from a tear-off calendar which reads, "Parents don't appreciate teachers until it rains all day on a Saturday!"

I wonder if the proposed changes in Scottish Education will alter this belief. We have to hope that the members of the soon to be set up school boards will have some insight into the difficulties facing teachers at this time.

There was a day when teachers had considerable status and respect in the community. Many reasons have been given for the decline in that status but primary school teachers, although often undervalued by some, nevertheless have had a lot of job satisfaction, due in no small part to the freedom within regional and national guidelines, to plan and organise their class activities in their own particular way.

It gives rise to considerable concern, on my regular visits to schools to find such low morale among so many teachers.

It is not related to salary. Teachers hoping for a measure of calm after the storm of the protracted dispute, have been rudely disturbed by what appears the euphoria of a third term

administration hell bent on 'improving' Scottish Education as quickly as possible and with the maximum of fuss.

And yet primary school teachers are not opposed to change. On the contrary, any study of primary education will show that they have been in the forefront of educational innovation, and often, it must be said, at the behest of those like myself who don't have to teach real children every morning.

New ideas have come and gone. The primary school experience for Scottish children, according to numerous HMI reports, has improved rather than declined in recent years. It is much more attractive and effective than it was for most parents when they were pupils.

What disturbs teachers now is that there has been virtually no consultation with them on the proposed changes. Neither do they feel any recognition of their considerable day to day efforts in the classroom. "While politicians argue about this or that aspect of the curriculum and debate about who should make major decisions which may dramatically change my work," argued one infant teacher, "I keep thinking about my class tomorrow. What I need is more

space to work, more money for books and equipment, auxiliary assistance to deal with the non-teaching duties, smaller classes and some help on how to cope with children with severe behavioural problems." Meaningful change can only be achieved with the co-operation of teachers, change through discussion, and if necessary compromise. A carefully structured and regularly assessed national curriculum, overseen by school boards, without the support of the profession will lead to various undesired consequences, not the least being an increased demand for early retirement and a shortage of teachers in the near future.

Isn't it time the Secretary of State exercised some leadership of a different kind in this increasingly sour debate, and poured some oil on these troubled waters? If he doesn't the real losers will not be the parents, the teachers or the government ministers, but Scottish children who depend on sensible adults to lead them carefully by the hand into the future.

John G. Muir  
Adviser in Primary Education  
Caithness & Sutherland

## Among the Contributors in this issue...

Graham Atherton is Senior Researcher with the Scottish Consumer Council in Glasgow.

Colin Chalmers works with the Stopover project for homeless young people in Edinburgh.

John Davidson lives and writes in Greenock. *Pictures of an Earlier Time* is the first piece in a collection of poetry, *Earlier Times*. A further extract will appear in the April issue.

Robin Hall is an Assistant Director with Strathclyde Region Social Work Department, and a member of the Scottish Institute of Human Relations.

John Hamilton is consultant forensic psychiatrist with the Department of Health at Broadmoor Hospital, and honorary senior lecturer in forensic psychiatry, University of London.

Joyce McMillan is Scottish theatre critic of the *Guardian*, and radio columnist of the *Glasgow Herald*.

Anna-Louise Milne is an undergraduate student reading French and Philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford.

Mark Ogle works part-time and looks after his baby daughter.

Honorah Perry is a freelance journalist.

Jean Raeburn is Training Organiser for the Children's Hearings in Lothian, Borders and the Western Isles.

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

Deirdre Robertson is a Glasgow based freelance writer and journalist.

Hamish Whyte works as a librarian in Glasgow, and is managing editor of *New Writing Scotland*.

Christine Wilson is a psychologist working with residential establishments for young people in Lothian. She is a member of the Scottish Institute of Human Relations.

SOCIAL SECURITY ACT 1986 SECTION 20 (4A)

NAME: MISS F.M. WOOD - 6191/310000

The Secretary of State has decided that you are not a person to whom section 20 (4A) of the Social Security Act 1986, as inserted by Section 4(2) of the Social Security Act 1988, applies.

D. H. Skerret

MRS. D. H. SKERRET

Signed by authority of  
the Secretary of State

18 DEC 1987

## A Letter from the DSS

Dear Editor,

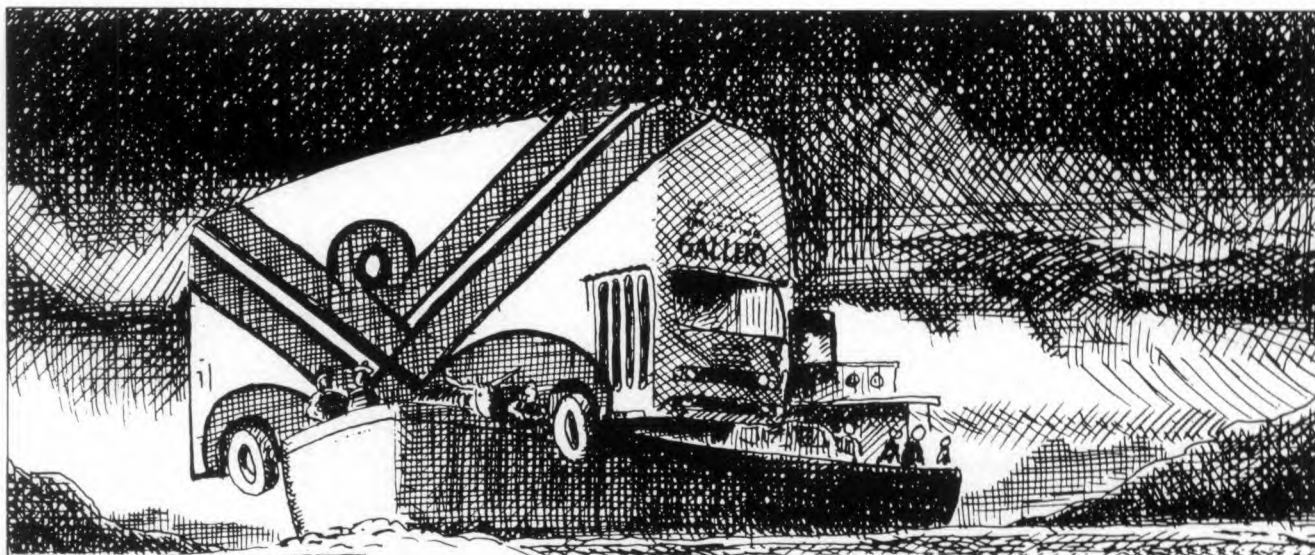
Here is a letter I got recently from the DSS telling me I'm not getting any Income Support. Someone phoned up for me and told me that's what it means. I wanted an interview with the DSS so I could say why I thought

I needed some money, I'm homeless, but all I got was this. When they say 'You are not a person' it's like that's just what they mean. If you're under 18 it's difficult enough getting money even if you're in difficulties without getting letters that no-one

understands.

They probably think they're very efficient and important, but they couldn't even date it with the right year!

Freda Wood,  
Edinburgh



## IF THE PEOPLE CAN'T GET TO THE GALLERY, WE TAKE THE GALLERY TO THE PEOPLE.

The Travelling Gallery is just one way we go out of our way to make art more accessible to people.

Another is the fact that, thanks to subsidies, most galleries are free.

And much of the real cost of theatre

and concert tickets is paid for before you pay for them.

The rest is met by the Scottish Arts Council, local authorities and private sponsors.

Arts subsidies aren't just for artists. They're for everyone.

Scottish **A**rts Council

# CHILD CARE LAW REVIEW

**ASSESSING THE NEED FOR CHANGE OR CLARIFICATION IN CHILD CARE LAW IN SCOTLAND**

## 1ST STAGE OF CONSULTATION

The Child Care Law Review is circulating a consultation document containing provisional conclusions and recommendations on a selected number of topics within the general remit of the Review.

This paper is now available from:

**Child Care Law Review**  
Room 304,  
43 Jeffrey Street,  
Edinburgh EH1 1DN

to which comments and enquiries should be addressed.

A JOINT MEETING  
OF THE SCOTTISH  
BRANCHES OF THE  
ACPP AND THE BPS



# BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL CHILDREN

**LOCATION: HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY**  
FRIDAY 3RD MARCH

**DR. KEVIN WHELDALL: 'TROUBLESOME CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR'.**

**DR. ROGER BURLAND: 'AN OVERALL BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH WITH CHILDREN'.**

**DETAILS FROM:**

DR. COLIN BRYDON,  
8 SANDFORD GARDENS,  
PORTOBELLO,  
EDINBURGH EH15 1LP  
TELEPHONE: 031-669 1730



## Devil Talk!

**W**hen a child is neglected, battered, sexually abused, the public feeling towards that child is naturally of overwhelming sympathy and protectiveness. The child is quite clearly an innocent victim. Fifteen or twenty years on when that same person, now an adult, similarly abuses their own child, the public feeling is of horror, hatred and retribution.

The adult, in such instances, is quite clearly an evil monster! Yet when does the transition take place? When does the innocent child become the evil monster? Is it at 15 years old? 18? 20? When does innocence give way to personal responsibility?

Now, no attempt here to make excuses for abhorrent and unacceptable behaviour. Individuals have to be held responsible for their actions. But whilst the desire for punishment and retribution are expressions of our valid outrage, they do little to address

the problem. We have after all, enough evidence now to know that many abusers were once the innocent abused. But this knowledge does not seem to inform our response.

It suits us to think of abusers as something alien to ourselves. 'MONSTER' scream the tabloid headlines; 'DEVIL' pronounces the judge from the bench. How

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much easier it would be if they were! The difficult and complicated reality is that abusers of children and batterers of old ladies are all too human. They belong to the same species, and we have to accept that people, not aliens from outer space, can commit appalling acts. The capability for destruction and sadistic abuse of power, as much as the capability for selfless caring and heroic deeds, lies within all of us.

A simplistic notion of good and evil allows us to disassociate ourselves from that which we find too painful to face. Placing pain 'out there' helps only to avoid looking at how we exercise collective responsibility.

It is almost impossible for those of us who had generally happy childhoods, caring families, 'good enough' parenting to conceive of what it must be like to have one's

childhood needs for dependence and trust on adults regularly abused and betrayed. What would that do to our views of ourselves? Our view of the rest of the human race? What range of emotions would be unknown and meaningless to us? What would be our emotional means of survival?

And, at what point would we become responsible for the way

we translated our own experience into our treatment of others? We have to face the damage of abuse – the damage that arouses our disgust and rejection as well as that which enlists our sympathy, care and protection.

**B**ut where does all this leave us? The task of repairing the damage is enormous even when the abuse is discovered whilst the child is young. And we are often so inadequate to the task that we can compound the damage. But while we see the responsibility for this as belonging 'out there', to professionals with limited resources, and not to all of us, we will continue to be inadequate to it.

And having our monsters and devils to lock up, and our 'incompetent' professionals to blame for not sorting it all out, we won't move any further towards the beginnings of an answer. ■

Sheila Ramsay

# In the next issue...

Stewart Asquith

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