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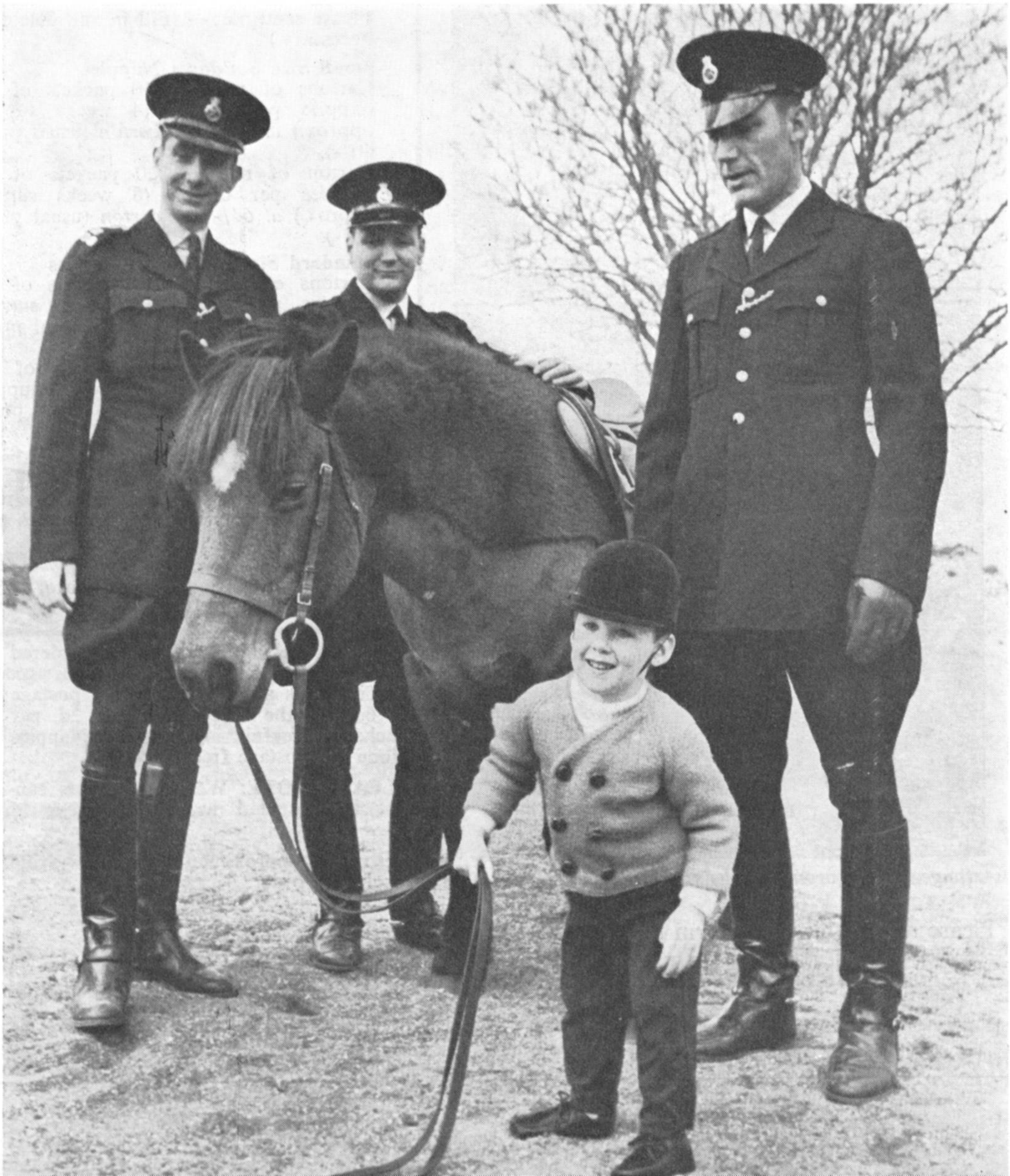
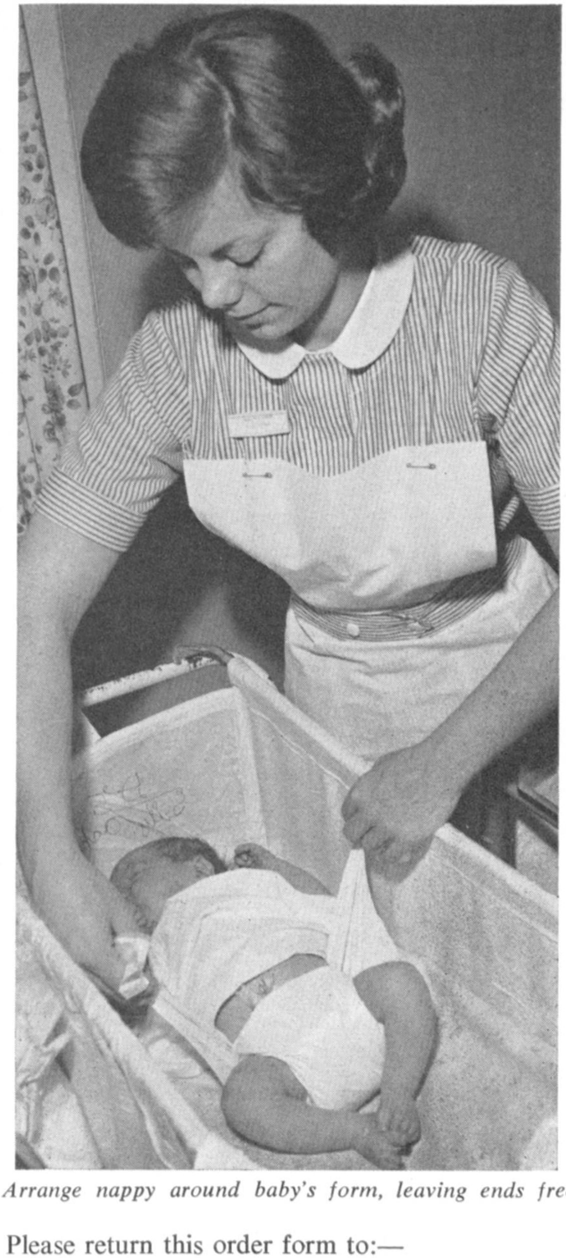
LINK

The Journal of The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Limited (A.S.B.A.H.)

Autumn 1969 **One Shilling**



SOLVING THAT BIG PROBLEM OF THE NAPPY



Arrange nappy around baby's form, leaving ends free

Lewis Woolf Griptight Limited are pleased to announce that the special reductions to A.S.B.A.H. members of their Sof'down nappies and Tie Pants are to be continued.

ORDER FORM

Name ....

Address ....

....

Please send me:— (Fill in and delete as necessary.)

Small Size Sof'down Nappies

......Cartons of nappies, 10 packets of 20 nappies per carton (4 weeks supply approx.) *at 32/- per carton* (usual price 40/-).

......Carton of nappies, 20 packets of 20 nappies per carton (8 weeks supply approx.) *at 64/- per carton* (usual price 80/-).

Standard Size Sof'down Nappies

......Cartons of nappies, 10 packets of 20 nappies per carton (4 weeks supply approx.) *at 34/- per carton* (usual price 42/6d.).

......Carton of nappies, 20 packets of 20 nappies per carton (8 weeks supply approx.) *at 68/- per carton* (usual price 85/-).

Standard Size Nappies Extra Absorbency

(Recommended for night-time use)

......Cartons of 15 packets of 12 nappies per carton 39/4d.

Tie Pants

......Packets of Tie Pants 4 per packet 1/6d. (usual price 1/11d. per packet).

When nappies and Tie Pants are ordered together there is no charge for postage. If Tie Pants alone are required postage of 6d. for the first packet and 2d. per packet thereafter is required. Nappies alone are postage free.

PLEASE NOTE: We regret orders cannot be accepted *without payment in advance*.

Delivery: Approximately 14 days from receipt of order.

Please return this order form to:—

DIRECT SALES DEPARTMENT (A.S.B.A.H.),

Lewis Woolf Griptight Limited,
144 Oakfield Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29.

LINK

AUTUMN Vol. 1 No. 12

Contents

Our Cover

Ian Hough, son of Constable Frank Hough from Scotland Yard is shown with his father (just behind him) and two colleagues. Said Constable Hough: "The doctors were astounded at Ian's progress. Riding has helped him to establish a sense of balance and has increased his confidence."
"Now he walks well—if not elegantly."

EDITORIAL

When I wrote my first piece in the Summer Number I asked readers to support me with editorial matter and this they have done splendidly.

I do hope that material will still continue to come in because other people's views and experiences are of such great interest to readers both at home and overseas.

What has impressed me most is the quality of the writing. Contributions usually start off in a slightly self-depreciating way.—"This is the first time I have ever written to any magazine" or "I know I can't write but this is what I mean" etc.: The piece usually turns out to be near perfect—needs little or no sub-editing because although it comes to me typewritten or in long hand it really comes from the heart. Please try your heart at writing for LINK. It costs only a fourpenny stamp and may give hope, comfort and help to thousands of others.

Talking of help, may I express my gratitude to Mrs. Anne Barlow of Forest Row, Sussex, and Mrs. Dorothy Goodman of Pinner, Middlesex, my two unpaid but over worked spare time typists. Without their cooperation the last two issues of LINK would never have gone to press.

SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN HANDICAPPED BY SPINA BIFIDA

Extracts from a circular issued by the Secretary of State for Education and Science—

Children with spina bifida will reach school with varying degrees of handicap. A proportion of the children will have hydrocephalus, which may result in some degree of brain damage. There will also be problems of movement, resulting from paralysis of the spine, for which the services of a physiotherapist may be necessary. It is important that children should be encouraged towards early mobility. Because of incontinence the children will require the attention of a nurse and special adaptation of lavatories to ensure individual privacy and room for a table to be available for treatment. The size of the lavatory should allow easy access of a wheelchair and the WC should be suitably sited.

The school nurse will be on guard for the particular hazards to which these children are vulnerable: urinary infections, skin infections and pressure sores. If there are children with hydrocephalus, in whom a valve has been fitted, it is important that the school doctor should advise teachers on the signs or symptoms which may indicate a blockage of the valve so that medical help can be obtained. Sores and fractures may occur of which the children themselves may be unaware. Supervision at school can thus usefully supplement the care taken by parents at home.

As with other handicapped children, there is a possibility that children handicapped by spina bifida may become emotionally disturbed as a result of their condition, hospital treatment involving separation from home and also if, for example, their incontinence leads to embarrassment when they are with other children.

Where possible, it is desirable that children should start their education at the nursery stage, for example, by attending part-time or whole-time the nursery units which are increasingly to be found at special schools for the physically handicapped. This stage is particularly important for a child's development and also for the guidance and support of parents who, it is hoped, will attend freely.

Arrangements which are made should be with the knowledge of the consultants responsible for the children and a link should be established between the nursery and the hospital which is concerned with the child.

The early establishment of effective bladder and bowel control is necessary. This may more easily be achieved in a special school than in an ordinary school unless suitable sanitary arrangements (comparable to those in a special school) are made at an ordinary school, where it will also be necessary to employ welfare assistants and to make provision for laundry and for the disposal of soiled linen. If there is no day special school within reach of the parents' home it may be advisable to make special arrangements for children handicapped by spina bifida at a selected ordinary school which is able to take on this task.

In other cases, and with parental agreement, it may be best to arrange for attendance at a boarding special school for physically handicapped children or at a boarding special school specifically providing for children handicapped by spina bifida. Two schools of the latter kind have already been established: Coney Hill maintained by the Shaftesbury Society in Kent and the boarding special school recently opened by the Sheffield Local Education Authority. A third school of this type is currently planned by the Liverpool Local Education Authority.

Arrangements at the secondary stage will also need to ensure that there is continuing medical care and that the individual attention given to particular children at school has in mind the emotional problems which may be particularly acute in adolescence. It is important also to ensure that the children's education should not suffer as a result of time taken by necessary medical and nursing attention. Particularly in their circumstances, children handicapped by spina bifida should be encouraged to develop to the full their mental abilities since the severity of the physical handicap is likely to rule out in many cases some types of unskilled or semi-skilled employment. At the secondary stage very early consultation with the Youth Employment Service will be needed so that Youth Employment Officers may call upon specialist advice as required.

The Big Air Race

By Tom Ravensdale

I took part in this event on behalf of Spina Bifida and actually attempted to win on six occasions. I did not of course win a prize but I did manage to break the world record for passenger flight. I completed six Atlantic crossings—25,000 miles in five days—average 5,000 miles a day.

The first two attempts were made with a tortoise as a mascot and on the first try I crashed a motorcycle in Manhattan. The second two were with a budgie and I again had a motorcycle slip in London. The last two attempts were with a hare and on the last run I was involved in a collision (whilst in a wheelchair) with an oil-feed pipe on the tarmac. Quite a week but one which made immense publicity for Spina Bifida on T.V., radio and national press. *(Photo Sun Newspaper)*

On September 1 a new book by Tom Ravensdale will be published entitled ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS AND HOMES. Copies are available to members of ASBAH at 5s. 6d. plus 1s. 6d. Postage and Packing, 10s. 6d. plus 1s. 6d. P. & P. to non members. Larger quantities at special prices are available. Orders and remittances to TOM RAVENSDALE, ASBAH, 112 CITY RD., LONDON, E.C.1.

APPEALS

The Appeals Director announces that so far the Great Walk has raised over £5,000 for The Spina Bifida Campaign.

Miss Wendy Craig's BBC Television Appeal on April 20th—£13,000 to date. Our grateful thanks to Miss Craig for a wonderful performance, this time "In front of the Adults."

REMPLOY *helps fight Spina Bifida*

In its 86 factories throughout England, Scotland and Wales Remploy Limited employs some 7,500 severely disabled men and women. All types of disability are represented among the employees including amputations, paralyses, heart and chest diseases, epilepsy and nervous and mental illnesses.

Since its inception in 1945, as a result of an Act of Parliament, the Company has established itself in many fields of industrial production—furniture, engineering, packaging and bookbinding, knitwear and leather and textile products. Its activities include the production of orthopaedic appliances and surgical footwear and it is this aspect of Remploy's work which is likely to be of greatest interest to readers of Link.

One of the most heartening advances in medicine in recent years has been the success in forestalling what had once been the inevitable fatality of spina bifida victims. Modern surgery has made enormous progress with the introduction of the valve which reduces the presence of water on the brain; the transplanting of the ureter in ileostomy; the closing of the bifida itself and reconstruction of deformed limbs. This, in turn, has called for the development of special aids to introduce stability and mobility into the young lives so saved.

Much work has been carried out by the Remploy Orthopaedic Services Division, in the early stages under the close direction of Sheffield Children's Hospital, and more recently at many large centres throughout Britain.

The general pattern has been the design and construction of a special spinal brace and calipers which, to avoid complex technical terms, are referred to as the "Full Set". Features of the "Full Set" include the hip joint constructed to give 20 degrees of flexion and 15 degrees of extension when in the locked position together with a small range of abduction and adduction movement which allows the child to walk even when firmly held in the brace by a corset called for by weak abdominal muscles. The hip joints give free range through 90 degrees when in the unlocked position, as do the knee joints, to enable the patient to sit upright.

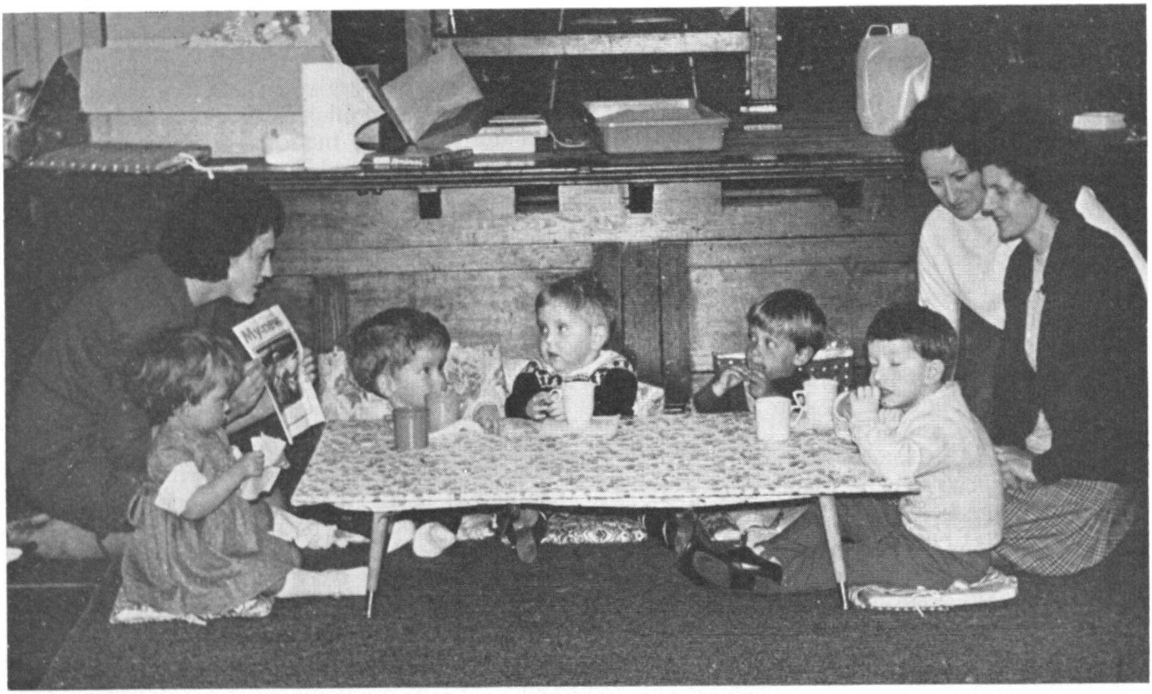
Whilst in general the sacral band is slung low to prevent hip flexion contracture and to avoid the bifida scar, there is often the need for two plates to be carried down to the ischium and a thoracic cage to assist balance and prevent leaning forward.

A small boy suffering from spina bifida shown wearing Remploy's special spinal brace and calipers ("The Full Set") and using the "Rocker" crutches. These are elbow crutches with rocker-shaped base, slightly angled to give the walker greater stability.

Remploy's Orthopaedic Division have adequate facilities to augment this special service with the provision, where necessary, of surgical footwear, iliostomy appliances and walking aids. To the standard range of Remploy crutches and walking aids have been added "Rocker" crutches. These are elbow crutches with a rocker-shaped base, slightly angled to give the walker greater stability.

As a result of these advances, Remploy's orthopaedic technicians find themselves becoming an integral part of the spina bifida team in hospitals throughout the country. This provides opportunity for the exchange of ideas on a national basis and access to the most up-to-date developments.

STARTING A PLAY GROUP (part 2)



Everybody Happy at Milk Time

The children like the playgroup sessions to follow roughly the same pattern each week. They arrive between 2.15 and 2.30 p.m. The WRVS local Transport Officer has been very helpful in finding some kind car owner/drivers to transport two children each week, who live some distance from the hall. The children play for about an hour with the large selection of toys we have been given. The most popular items are a telephone and a plastic clown consisting of about six different rings which fit on to a stick, a doll's tea service, brush, dustpan, mop and broom set, dolls and large woollen balls. At about 3.30 p.m. we stop for orange drink and a biscuit, after which we look at birthday cards if any child has celebrated his birthday in the last week and give them an additional card from the playgroup. A new picture pre-reading paper will soon be available for Nursery and Infant Schools and Playgroups which may prove useful at this time. After this we usually have some more organised activity such as listening to the record player, painting, drawing, sticking and making pictures, sand and water play and action rhymes.

I discovered there are many useful items of equipment which are thrown out every week, so I made a list which was published in the Church magazine and which I gave to the mothers and a local Ladies Club who have made the playgroup their special interest.

Empty tins, providing they have smooth edges (e.g. Ovaltine and coffee tins) can be painted with non-toxic paint and used as building bricks, filled with rice or dried peas and the lid firmly re-placed and they become musical instruments, and the lids from extra large tins can be nailed on the top of a low cupboard, which, with a few switches on the front makes a lovely pretend oven. Pretend dough is made by mixing $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of Plain Flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. Cooking Salt and water to a stiff consistency. Two straight-edged plastic egg cups filled with rice and sellotaped together make musical rattles.

Cotton reels painted, with lead-free paint in bright colours, can be used for threading on

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string and also for making a cotton reel sorter. The sorter consists of a smooth wooden base about 12 inches by 3 inches with dowel rods fixed $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in depth at 2 inch intervals along the centre of the base, the first rod should be long enough when in position to take one cotton reel, the second two cotton reels and so on up to five cotton reels. Paint the fifteen cotton reels and the appropriate rod as follows using lead-free paint: one orange, two blue, three green, four red, and finally the longest rod and five cotton reels yellow.

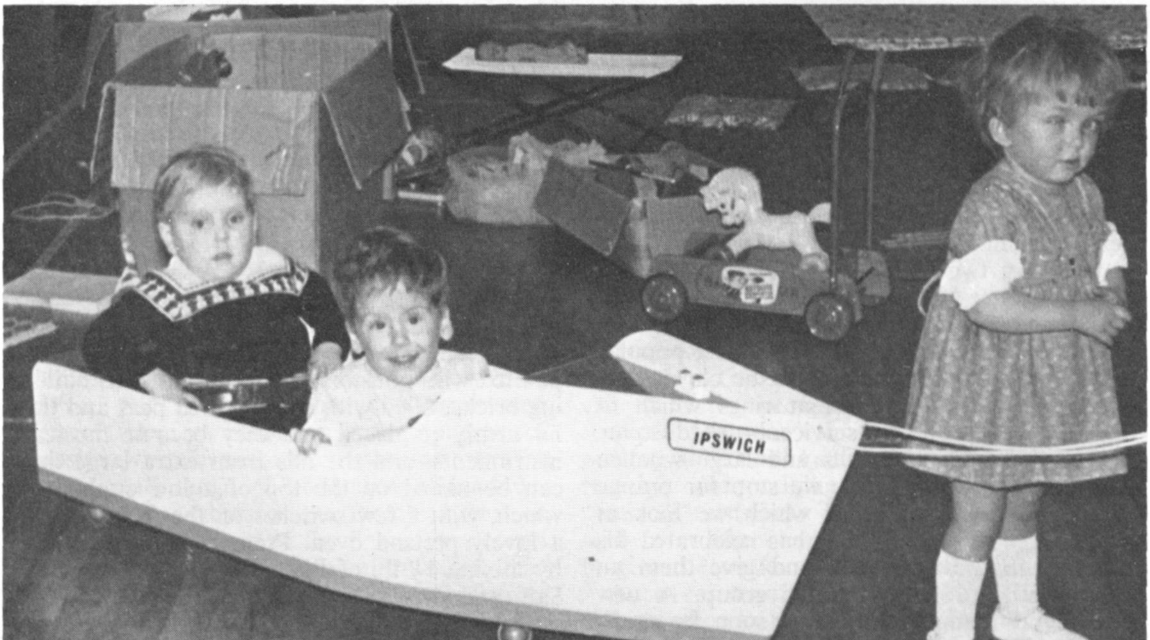
Clean, used men's black socks can be made into delightful rag dolls. Use the toe for the head, the leg as the body and four sausage-like pieces for arms and legs, stuff with nylon stockings cut into small pieces, sew features with embroidery silks and use wool for hair. Cape-like dresses can be made with scraps of material. A doll's bed can be made from a greengrocer's orange box, smoothed and painted.

Magic drawing and painting are popular and the tops from Hair Lacquer cans make ideal water pots. When using non-toxic powder or liquid paint it is a good idea to put the paint into old bun tins with a paint brush in each colour,

The generosity of firms and individual people interested in the playgroup has been truly wonderful. We have received some monetary gifts, a rocking horse and other toys and a boat on castors which seats two children and was designed and made as a surprise for us by the owner of a Hardware shop where I went to ask about lead-free paint. Through all this kindness we are now able to invite other physically handicapped children to join us as well as some physically fit friends, who, we hope, will occasionally visit us.

If a little money is available, the first item of equipment I would buy is a SHASBAH trolley. We were again fortunate in this respect and received one as a gift. I feel the trolley is very important when the playgroup has children who can walk, as well as those who cannot, attending. It is invaluable in helping those who are not ambulant to be more independent and equally able to fetch toys, etc., when they want them.

MRS. SANDRA WOODS



Linda takes Andrew and David on another voyage

OUR MAN ABOUT TOWN

ADVANTAGE PRISONER

Last week I had a half-hour to spare while in the City, so dropped into Court at the Old Bailey.

"Anything known about this man?" asked the Judge.

"Five previous convictions of theft" he was told.

"Before I pass sentence have you anything to say? For instance, what good have you done anybody?" After a pause the prisoner replied: "Well, I've kept three or four detectives in regular work for some years."

OVERHEARD

American visitor to Londoner: "Do you know that you can board a train in Texas, and after travelling for twenty-four hours, you'd still be in Texas?"

English friend: "I know; we've got trains like that in this country."

JUST LIKE OURS

Father: "I should have thought you could have found a prettier girl-friend than the one you brought home last night, my boy."

Son: "Well, dad, what do you expect with that old car of yours."

WEIGHT-WATCHERS NOTE

Thought I would try my weight on one of those talking weighing machines they have on Clacton Pier. I put my coin in. "One at a time, please," it shouted!

Well, it just shows you.

THOSE BILLS!

"Darling," said Mr. Newlywed after the honeymoon. "Aren't all these bills for the clothes you bought before we were married?"

"Yes, my sweet," said wifey.

"But don't you think it's unfair to ask a fish to pay for the bait he was caught with?"

THE TYPIST AGAIN

From a tenancy agreement prepared by an estate agent:—

"The tenant will be responsible for all repairs —storm, fire and flood expected."

THE ROVER

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Pictured above is the very attractive float exhibited in Carnivals in Southern England by NASBAH-SURREY. It did in fact take third prize in a local Carshalton Carnival. (Photo by kind permission of Mr. Peter Basden.)

South London Association

This association has been formed since the start of ASBAH and has been running jumble sales, fayres, and Christmas Parties, etc.

The Association had an entry in the Great Walk from West Byfleet to Trafalgar Square.

Nearly 90 people started despite the weather which was not encouraging. All entrants completed 14 miles and 70 no less than 24 miles, raising over £360 to date.

During the Walk, five Nuns walked 10 miles, one being over 64 years old and one over 50—she was a Spina Bifida child, was operated on and has been completely cured. The Nuns between them raised over £100.

Hull & District Association

Councillor Mrs. Ives, of Hedon, nr. Hull, held a coffee morning recently and raised £34. This was to finance an outing for children and parents to Flamborough, Filey and Bridlington.

A cheese, wine and cider evening was held on May 27 at the Centre Hotel in Hull, a recently opened new residential hotel. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress attended together with 270 guests. The profit amounted to £100—a great success.

Filey Young Wives Monday Club have raised £30 by members holding coffee mornings, jumble sales, etc.

Staffordshire Association

The Branch is thriving, holding Sunday afternoon Socials for the children and speakers for the adults every month. The attendance is often round the hundred mark.

Visits to the Zoo have been organised for June and September and the Christmas Party is planned for December 14.

The National Appeal has received in the region of £1,000 from the Branch.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS continued

Squadron Leader and Mrs. Ivor Davies.

West Surrey Association

At a recent meeting Mr. Stedman, the Group Chairman, presented Squadron Leader & Mrs. Ivor Davies, former Joint Secretaries, with a cut-glass decanter. This represented a token of appreciation by the Group for the considerable work they have done in founding the local branch of the Association and the time and effort Mr. Davies has spent in promoting the cause for Spina Bifida at national level.

Membership of the Group is now 160, and over the past year fund raising has produced more than £1,300. During the same period £1,600 has been given by the Group towards various projects which furthered the needs of Spina Bifida children and their parents. £500 of this sum was given to ASBAH and £800 to the Spina Bifida Trust.

Money is still coming in from the Great Walk and the event is expected to raise over £1,000 for the Group. Most of this money came from the support given by local people, and the Group is particularly indebted to Camberley Rugby Football Club, 40 members of which raised over £500.

Events planned for the rest of the year include an outing to Whipsnade Zoo, talks to be given by prominent medical authorities and Mr. Ravensdale, the new ASBAH Fund Raiser, participation in local carnivals, a children's party and a Christmas social evening for parents.

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Southampton & District

On May 4th two coaches left Southampton for a trip to Longleat lion reserve. This was a great thrill for the children, in fact one of our S.B. children, Nina, age almost 2, wanted to ride on the giraffe! The party went through Longleat House with all its attractions.

The children of the group have now joined the Penguin Club and are able to attend the local swimming baths on Sundays. The children seem to enjoy this as well as deriving much benefit from water activity.

The group have a property in view which it is hoped will prove suitable for play group on the lower floor and trolley production on the upper.

The Association has decided to finance holidays for 10 Spina Bifida children in August at the Bonhomie Holiday Centre at Bursledon.

Sheffield Association

At the annual general meeting held on the 19th April the following officers were elected to serve for the forthcoming year: F. A. Burgin, Chairman; L. Clark, Hon. Secretary; Mrs. S. M. Hammond, Hon. Treasurer.

The Spenborough & District Association held a Gala Day on Sunday, 15th June. Frecheville Carnival was held on Saturday, 21st June. The Boosey Cruisey was held during the evening when various pubs in the district are visited, with collectors in fancy dress and collections made at the different pubs.

Mrs. C. Robinson held a Bring and Buy sale on Wednesday, 9th July, 10 a.m., at her home.

A stand at the Sheffield Show (mainly for publicity purposes) is to be held at Hillsborough Park, Thursday to Saturday, 4th/6th September. A marquee has been ordered and it is proposed to sell cards, gifts, balloons, etc., in the marquee as well as to hand out publicity material and answer questions anyone cares to ask.

OPERATION "PETPIC"

Enclosed with this issue you will find details of a new Photographic Competition — sponsored by the very well known magazine AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER.

This is a National Competition but we are naturally anxious to receive as many entries as possible from readers of LINK.

BOOK REVIEW

The Central Council for the Disabled have produced an excellent publication on planning for disabled people in the urban environment.

Priced at 15s. post free this should be of interest to all readers of LINK.

Copies are obtainable from The Central Council for the Disabled, 34 Eccleston Square, London S.W.1.

SITUATION VACANT

Applications are invited for OFFICE MANAGER / ACCOUNTS CONTROLLER to control internal administration at ASBAH's headquarters, including all accounts. Will be responsible to General Secretary. Salary negotiable up to £1,600. Position could suit applicant with limited mobility as there is a National Car Park adjacent to office. Stairs to be negotiated to reach lift however, make the position unsuitable for the wheelchair bound. Apply: Mr. R. Stubbs, ASBAH, 112 City Road, London E.C.2.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

By T. J. V. SOLOMON, J.P.

Various people have been faintly surprised to find that my School—Trevisker C.P. R.A.F. St. Eval, Cornwall, contains children who are classified as "Handicapped". I am even more surprised at this reaction.

At present the children involved are a diabetic, an epileptic, a partially sighted, a child with a restricted gullet, three who are slightly deaf and a Spina Bifida. These eight children are all part of the family and we recognise them as such. They are integrated, happy and completely accepted by the rest of us.

They do, of course, pose problems but this is life. The outside world is not made up of people who are one hundred per cent fit and, therefore, there is no reason to assume that all children are fit. We must accept this as a fact and must learn to live with it--and each other.

We owe at least as much to the unfit education-wise as we do to the fit. This is accepted by the staff and children here and we get on with the job.

Basically I am against segregation in ANY form. I acknowledge the fact that there are children who cannot join in with the rest of us but these represent a very small percentage. For the very same reason I am not in favour of establishing special classes in central schools for the E.S.N. (educationally sub-normal) child. Obviously this is a generalisation but I believe that it is a poor policy to remove a child from his own environment, transport him elsewhere and place him within a group of children who are suffering from the same limitations. Where possible he should stay with his friends; in his own environment surrounded by people who know and like him and exposed to a cross-section of intelligence quotients.

However, we are discussing children who are physically handicapped—not mentally—although we have one or two who come under this heading, too.

Our eight cover a wide intelligence range and need a little additional help. The diabetic has an occasional insulin reaction so his form-mates have been taught to recognise the symptoms, ply him with sugar and tell the nearest teacher. The epileptic, a five-year-old, takes tablets and tells teacher when she has a headache. The partially sighted boy needs special coaching in reading and follow-up work and has an ancillary helper for part of the day. The deaf children need little help apart from careful siting in class and clear verbal work. Our spina bifida needs most help but he is an extrovert who has a go at everything and generally succeeds.

In the Summer ALL children swim every day and all our handicapped types need a little extra care. This is provided by the class teacher augmented by voluntary helpers (Mums).

Extra Care

Andrew, our S/B, needs changing twice a day and this is undertaken by an ancillary helper. He rides the short distance to School on a trike which is parked outside the Infant Department. He swims, takes part in Physical Education lesson and School Morning Worship, sits down whenever he has had enough. He, like all the others, is a member of the family and we—children and teachers—accept him as such and, occasionally give him a little extra care and help.

This is excellent training for life for the rest of us. We are learning that we cannot opt out of our responsibilities to each other. The fact is that we have no desire to do so.

Unlike Jacob we are our brother's keeper. . . .

THE GREAT WALK THROUGH SUSSEX!

By F. G. ARMOUR

"There's no fear of heatstroke," said our leading optimist, surveying the cloudy and grey Sussex skies. It was Sunday, May 18th, and the Sussex Association was about to make its first public appearance on the roads. The last lap of The Great Walk from Berwick to Brighton was about to start, and our concern was the 28-mile route from Horsham.

A bare five weeks earlier, SASBAH had been "detailed", in true Army fashion, to organise this part of the walk, without the option of refusal. "If you don't do it, the Walk will be a Berwick to Horsham Walk," we were told, "and that won't look so good, as no one outside Sussex has heard of the place." Guildford were walking to Horsham, and they refused to go any further, and who would blame them?

Counter-attractions prevented help from other local organisations (we even suggested the local Rotarians should entertain their French guests by making them walk for charity, but they fought shy of the idea) so one or two local members had persuaded a few friends to form a Walk Committee. This Committee was rapidly licked into shape by "Adj" Roberts of the Volunteer Emergency Service, our Chief Marshal. At our first meeting "Adj" had soon taken command on the sufficient grounds that he had once, so he told us, taken part in a charity walk. Indeed, he had reached the five-mile mark at the same moment as the leaders had completed twelve miles. This background of experience naturally marked him out as our expert, and this is what he proved to be.

Never had we seen such a devoted enthusiast. He chose and examined the route, mapped it and measured it, and came back two weeks later with a detailed list of requirements for 60 or 70 marshals, junction-marshals and checkers, and lists of first-aid points and refreshment points, with full details of where these were to be and at what times. Such, we thought, are the benefits of experience and of growing a beard, for whilst the rest of us wasted time shaving, "Adj" had done all this. "The System" was then devised for checking all walkers. This was based on photo-copies of lists of starters being ferried down the route to each of seven check-points within an hour or two of the planned 8.30 a.m. start. So well planned was "The System" that it even survived (a) the inevitable breakdown of the photo-copying machine, which was clearly unused to Sunday-working, (b) a hailstorm which effectively closed Checkpoint One at the peak of its short career, (c) the insuperable difficulty of identifying the sex of each walker so that, as "Adj" had insisted, "we know what we are looking for if someone gets lost" and (d) the gallant late arrivals from ICAA's school for asthmatic boys at Seaford, who were started off at unexpected places all along the route. The final proof of "The System", however, was to be that, at the end of the day, no one was unaccounted for. Even the eight hedge-hoppers reported missing after the hailstorm at Checkpoint One turned up later at the next Point.

At 8.30 a.m. Horsham Youth Centre looked like Carnival Day, with everything from jumpers and jeans to one young gentleman in top-hat and tail-coat, and ages ranging from eight years upwards. By 11 a.m. 340 walkers were on the road, taking them past the famous Leonardslee Gardens, through Cowfold and Henfield and past the folds of the South Downs to Shoreham, and thence through a long built-up area to the finish, which was (dare we reveal it now?) in Hove, and not in Brighton at all.

First came "the pro" in singlet and shorts, striking out to be first man home at 2.5 p.m. ("Adj's System" was ready for him, even at that early hour.) Not far behind were the keener young walkers and the four Sea Cadets, and then, working his way through the throng, the proud father in a red and black rugger vest, who was so jubilantly welcomed at each checkpoint by his wife and children, carrying

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An Optimistic bunch of starters set off on the Brighton Walk

a large sign reading "GOOD OLD DAD. KEEP IT UP!"

We even saw a blind man and his SASBAH helper, pressing on to finish the course in very good time. The motley throng followed in varying stages of disrepair, a strange mixture of bare midriffs and umbrellas, raincoats and shorts, and finally "cheerful Charlie with his gamp" and his daughter—he looked much more like her grandfather by the time they approached Hove. The Spina Bifida Campaign, we decided, had arrived in Sussex at last.

Many of the 176 finishers were welcomed by the Mayor and Mayoress of Hove, who had been hastily substituted for their opposite numbers from Brighton only a few short hours before, after a period of glorious bureaucratic confusion behind the scenes. By 6.20 p.m. all were safely gathered in out of the storms and the rain, and "Charlie with his gamp" and his young friend were the last to receive the standing ovation at the finish, and the ministrations of St. John's Ambulance and the WRVS tea-ladies.

All told, we decided, the whole operation had been a triumph of organisation, and our thanks to Adj and his VES motorcyclists and to each of the other 60 or 70 voluntary helpers were sincerely offered. The vast majority of the walkers were, in the words of the homemade board carried all the 28 miles, "for Spina Bifida children" and we wait to see what the proceeds will finally amount to. Of one thing we are sure—that the VES shall receive a substantial donation out of those proceeds.

There remain three open questions. If we could find 342 sponsored walkers in five weeks would we, in honest truth, have found many more if we had had more warning? Secondly, will our Sussex Secretary, the mother of two children, ever recover from being one of the very few over 22 years of age to complete the 28 miles? And finally, will such a fantastic carnival ever again straddle the county on our behalf and that of ICAA and the VES? Despite twenty miles on footpaths out of twenty-eight, would we be able to avoid accidents another time on the crowded Sussex roads?

We should like to acknowledge the help of Tatchbury Mount Hospital, and voluntary work of the members of Southampton and District Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association to make this Trolley.

All enquiries to:—Mrs. K. Charrett, 2 Marchwood Road, SOUTHAMPTON. Telephone enquiries TOTTON 3365 (Mr. Mortimer)

THE SHASBAH TROLLEY FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

PATENT APPLIED FOR IN
U.K., Commonwealth Countries, U.S.A., Canada.

This Trolley was designed by Mr. Ken Charrett of Southampton for his daughter who was born with Spina Bifida. It was soon found that here was a chair that would enable a child paralysed from the waist down, to become mobile.

The Trolley weighing only 14lb. is strongly constructed completely manoeuvreable and easily propelled by the child. Due to the low centre of gravity and rear castor action it is virtually impossible to be overturned.

The Trolley is finished with foam upholstered durable vinyl and comes in a wide range of attractive colours, this is to give the child the impression it has a toy. The child soon learns to use the Trolley, and adds much happiness to the child's life.

Is suitable for children from one to five years old. Cost £6 10s. plus postage approx. 9/-.

Produced by the
Southampton and District Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have read each edition of LINK and find it is usually about children aged 1 to 5. My daughter Yvonne was born with Spina Bifida in 1958; she is now 11 years old. After many visits to the orthopaedic clinic she first started to walk with a Bona-Pede, then with iron sticks with three prongs on the bottom, then with a wooden stick; now she does not use anything, but slowly moves from chair to chair. She speaks very well, can use the toilet on her own, etc., and can sing *all* the modern songs.

My problem with Yvonne is she gets very discontented. I put it down to frustration, then I think how can this be so, she can do most things on her own, but the fact is she is a very cross child. She wants me to play with her every minute and take her out all the time for walks. For example, yesterday her father and I went for a walk with her to the park. My husband played bat and ball with her while I prepared supper. She hadn't been in half an hour when she was sulking again, so can anyone offer me advice on this problem?

I have bought her all constructive toys which she gets very bored with quickly. I tried all the things the special school has suggested, but to no avail.

I have stopped going to the ASBAH meetings as all the children are much younger than Yvonne so there does not seem any interest there.

Yvonne up to the age of 9 was quite a contented child, but these last two years she has become very hard to get on with. I love her dearly, that's why I get so worried and upset to see her so discontented.

My husband and I tried not giving in to her moods; plenty of children ask to play with her, but she's just not interested.

THERESA PRICE (Mrs.),
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A.S.B.A.H. area officials

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