

Link

43

MARCH/APRIL 1976 5p

Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH)



Kanga Pants



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Link No. 43

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& Hydrocephalus (ASBAH)

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Editorial

One very encouraging by-product of our more liberal society is the realisation that sex can play an important part in the life of all people, including those who have disabilities both physical and mental. Undoubtedly there are very special sexual problems for those who are physically handicapped, and these are now being openly considered.

So we have swung from a situation where the subject of sex for the disabled was more or less taboo to the present one where there appears to have been something of an explosion of publicity and attention in recent months.

This is partly the result of several years work by a Committee working under the title, Sexual Problems of the Disabled (SPODI). Last year they published the report of the research they carried out and which was financed by Action Research for the Crippled Child.

The subject has not been ignored by ASBAH. As far back as the first Spring Conference in 1972 on the subject of the Spina Bifida Teenager, a session was devoted to this, and last December an Association Working Party met to consider ways of reaching schools and others concerned with counselling.

ASBAH is also playing an active part in organising a Conference, 'Sexual Needs of Handicapped Young People' in June (see page 7).

In this issue of Link (pages 6/7) we carry an interesting and informative article on the subject by Professor R. A. MacMahon.

All this effort to ventilate an important area is welcome, but the need to have a sense of proportion should not be forgotten.

More and more people are beginning to receive the Mobility Allowance, and in due course it would be useful to hear of the ways in which the Allowance is being used.

So please do write to me at National Office with details of how you are using the Allowance, particularly if you are doing something a little out of the ordinary. Your experience might give other people some good ideas . . . or warn them off!

Don't forget if you want any advice or information on how best to use your Allowance, there is a special bureau which the Central Council for the Disabled has set up to help you. And, of course, ASBAH's national office will be pleased to advise.

I look forward to seeing you at the 10th Anniversary Celebration at Stoke Mandeville on May 15.

FRONT COVER: This is the life . . . ! Geoffrey Watts-Read is captured by the camera in real holiday spirits when in Rome last year. He was one of 21 Open University Students—ten of them severely disabled—who went on a study tour of Rome.

Their experiences are recorded in a new book, "Have Wheels: Will Travel" (obtainable from booksellers or from the publishers—Educational Explorers Ltd, 40 Silver St, Reading RG1 2SU. £1.65 Postage 30p.). Photo: Barry Lewis.

News from all around



Six-year-old Richard Hulme enjoying himself at the Trafford and Salford Association club.

New booklet

ASBAH has just published another new booklet — this one is on the very important subject of "The Care of an Ileal Conduit and Urinary Appliances in Children". The book, written by experts from both Australia and the UK, aims to give practical simple step-by-step detailed instructions in the care of the conduit and it should help patients, parents, and professionals.

The authors are:
E. Durham Smith, M.D., M.S. (Melb), F.R.A.C.S., F.A.C.S.;
R. Magnus, M.B.B.S. (Melb), F.R.C.S., F.R.A.C.S.;
E. Smith, S.R.N., S.C.M.
Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne,
and John Lorber, M.D., F.R.C.P.;
R. B. Zachary, F.R.C.S.;
Children's Hospital Sheffield,
and Jill Eshelby, S.R.N., R.S.C.N.;
Downs Surgical Ltd., London.

Available from ASBAH National Office,
price 15p.

Generous gifts

Don and Dearn Association have recently had generous gifts from local organisations. The members of Rotherham Ladies Circle presented two Triad Tricycles to Melanie Beldan and Angela Birch of Rotherham as a result of their successful Fayre which made a profit of over £370. And the young members of Wentworth and District Pony Club (who include some handicapped riders) raised £115

from a Gymkhana and Show Jumping event, and gave it to further the work of Don and Dearn Association.

Mobile home on show

If you are visiting the new National Exhibition Centre at Birmingham, don't forget to take a look at the Charlie Chester Mobile Home for the Handicapped which is on display there, and which the Queen visited when she opened the Exhibition.

This purpose-built home which is designed to make daily living a relatively easy matter for anyone in a wheelchair is certainly worth looking at. Surrey Association has bought one of these homes and hopes to have it in use this summer.

Nine years of hospitality

The Central and North London Association (formerly The Barnet and Brent Group) recently celebrated their Ninth Annual Children's Party at the same venue — Churchill Gardens Tenants Association Hall, Westminster, London.

Founder members of the Group live on the Churchill Gardens Estate and they persuaded the tenants to allow the spina bifida children the free use of the hall. The tenants also provide an enthusiastic band of helpers who run the catering side of the party and also organise raffles and jumble sales.

News from all around

The house that 3 million stamps furnished

Having built their new holiday bungalow overlooking the Burry Estuary in Penclawdd, South Wales, the Herts and South Beds. Association then completely furnished it with the help of three million Green Shield stamps.

Altogether the stamps provided 193 items, ranging from a child's potty to a £220 wall unit.

Singer Vince Hill launched an appeal for stamps in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and this raised two million stamps. When people in Swansea got to hear about the bungalow in their



area through the Green Shield Gift Shop, they chipped in with another million.

The bungalow was built by the Local Association not only to provide holiday accommodation but also as an investment. In this it is similar to their other bungalow in Exmouth, Devon which has

proved so popular. It has three bedrooms and has been designed with extra wide passages and sliding doors to accommodate wheelchairs.

The picture (above) shows Ryan Davies the Welsh comedy star outside the bungalow which he opened at a special ceremony.

Janet gets a wheelchair

Green Shield stamps have also bought a lightweight wheelchair for Janet Swainger of Hull and District Association. The stamps were given by customers of Onglemere Lane Service Station.

Janet (right) is pictured in her new wheelchair, receiving a cheque for £195 on behalf of Hull Association from the Lady Mayoress of Hull. This was the proceeds of a Buffet Sherry Evening organised by the Lady Mayoress. Also in the picture are Mr and Mrs Callan, the service station proprietors.

Photo: Hull Daily Mail.



Motor insurance for disabled

If you are a disabled driver you might find it helpful to contact the Disabled Drivers Insurance Bureau. This bureau, run by a firm of insurance brokers with many years of experience of disabled drivers motor insurance, has made arrangements to provide fair premiums and terms. (See advert page 11).

SEX AND

THE HANDICAPPED

In this and the next issue 'Link' presents the major part of an interesting paper 'Sex and the Handicapped'. It was first given to a meeting of the Spina Bifida Association of Victoria, Australia, by Prof. R. A. MacMahon of the Department of Paediatrics, Monash University School of Medicine.

This issue deals with the social and physical problems of establishing a sexual relationship. The next 'Link' will deal with male and female fertility in spina bifidas and the incidence risks of spina bifida for their children.

The problem with any general discussion about sex is that everyone has a personal opinion on what sex should be all about. And it is easy to misunderstand each other unless we start from the same interpretation of the basic facts of life.

The most fundamental concept is that there is not a simple division of people sexually into males and females and it is not true that all males are sexually the same and all females are sexually the same.

In studying the embryology of sexual development it can be seen that both males and females develop from the same basic material and, for a time, in the same direction. Then a variety of genetic and hormonal influences produce masculinisation or feminisation of genital organs.

However, malfunctioning of these genetic or hormonal influences can produce various problems of sexual development.

On a more general scale, we are all aware of the spectrum of male and female behaviour from the masculine male, at one end, to the feminine female at the other, and all

shades in between. Depending on where we like to think we are in this spectrum, we will interpret our version of 'normal' sexuality accordingly. Not only that, but the sexual problems of the spina bifida child may well be exaggerated in the mind of the parent or teacher because of their own personal viewpoint.

The International Rehabilitation Review 1973 points out that the sex act of intercourse can be:

- A highly pleasurable physical activity culminating in an orgasmic climax;
- A biological process for procreation of the race;
- A means of bolstering the ego and self-esteem of the participants;
- A means of manipulating and controlling another individual important in the person's life;
- A means of expressing two individual personalities, merging them in the symbolic and physical feeling of tenderness, respect and concern for each other and their pleasure.

The success of the adolescent's adjustment to the opposite sex is not merely a

matter of learning the appropriate sex behaviour. It is essentially dependent on his or her acceptance of the social role their sex membership enjoins.

Physical deviations, of which the adolescent may be acutely conscious, may influence their acceptance of social sexual role. Tall, thin girls, big-boned girls, small boys with poor physique; because of these variations from the normal, assumption of the appropriate sexual identity may be rejected or delayed. The child with a major physical abnormality particularly one involving the genitalia, is certainly at risk of confusion about the sexual role in life.

To obtain fulfilment of life's purpose, people—whether handicapped or not—need the inspirational advantages brought about by physical and emotional love.

Perhaps the most important factor in the management of sexual problems of any adolescent, be they physically normal or handicapped, is sex education—and I don't just mean some programme done by someone else, somewhere else (for example by the school). The role of parents

'A loving relationship and marriage is a possibility for many and there are many happily married spina bifida patients'

and advisors in discussing problems as they arise—practical immediate problems rather than vague theoretical discussions—cannot be over-emphasised.

One important message is that a sex education programme for handicapped children is a must.

Grant in 1973 believed however that there was a great danger with set courses on sex, put out by people believing strongly in them, particularly if such courses were taught early in primary school. The groping and often confusing and disturbing fantasies of the child, and his needs, may be completely

overlooked in the enthusiastic desire to present a mass of so called useful information. This is the danger for the handicapped.

Points about sexual capacity and hence education of the handicapped must be on an individual basis and this must remain the responsibility of the parents and those counselling each child or adolescent personally.

Handicapped children will grow into handicapped adults, but with the emotions and aspirations of non-handicapped adults. A loving relationship and marriage is a possibility for many and there are many happily married spina bifidas.

But there are obvious social problems for the spina bifida patient attempting to develop a relationship with another. In an article in the Observer Review, 1974, June Rose pointed out that the disabled must overcome some tremendous obstacles:

- There is the implicit denial of the possibility of such a union by the people who care for them.
- They are often overprotected by loving parents and treated as asexual people.
- There is a lack of privacy so that they cannot get together.
- Their deformities are such that they may not attract partners of the opposite sex.
- They have thoughts of sexual incapacity.

CONFERENCE: Sexual needs of handicapped young people

This conference organised by The Friendship Group of Charities will examine ways in which the subject can be better understood in the hope that the situation can be improved. The problems will be discussed by various professionals, and the views of parents, and of a handicapped wife will also be put forward.

It will take place at the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, on Monday June 7 and the fee is £5.80 inclusive of coffee, lunch and tea.

Further information and application forms from: Mrs V. Abrahams, Conference Secretary, 3 Totterhoe Close, Kenton, Middx. Telephone: -01-907 3024 (and 01-730 9891 at the ICAA).

Some readers of Link will remember the Great Walk and will know that this was organised by the Friendship Group of Charities in 1969. These six voluntary associations concerned with handicapped children and young people have continued to work together and each year run a conference bringing together a cross-section of people to study an area of special concern. The charities are: ASBAH, Invalid Children's Aid Assoc., Lady Hoare Trust for Physically Disabled Children, the Nat. Assoc. for the Welfare of Children in Hospital, Nat. Society for Autistic Children, Nat. Society for Mentally Handicapped Children.

I now wish to turn to the physical sexual capabilities of the spina bifida patient.

When considering this problem from the point of view of your child, it must be re-emphasized that while spina bifida patients have many problems in common, they are all individuals, both psychologically and physically. Some very minor lesions will leave the patients with normal sexual performance but even with severe lesions isolated cord segments may have been preserved and this type of preservation will be important for reflex sexual activity.

(Continued on page 11)

MR HAROLD PIERCY, Principal of the Constance Spry Flower School has written this article especially for 'Link', to introduce you to the fascinating and very satisfying hobby of flower arranging.

'CREA

An All-Round

If you love flowers and if you have a little idea of 'art', then flower arranging should not prove too difficult for you to attempt. After all, you are only creating a picture with flowers, with a container to hold them and a suitable background, whereas the artist does the same thing using a canvas, paints and brushes to obtain similar results, only his efforts will last longer!

Flower arranging is not a new thing, in fact it has been carried out for many, many years and one has only to look at some old Dutch and Flemish flower paintings to see just how wonderful some of the pictures created were in those days. Today some people over-arrange and spoil their decoration. Simplicity is a word to remember to give the most pleasing results—do not allow things to become 'gimmicky' or over-arranged.

Learning about flower arranging has become very popular during the last 20 years, and is something one can do at any age. Flower arranging can now be an expensive hobby, but there is a wealth of material which one can use in this country which will cost nothing except time and labour in collecting; I have in mind sprays of ivy with berries and branches of alder with catkins and little dark cones, two things which I use frequently.

I realise that many of you may have difficulty in obtaining these items yourself, but, if you are keen, you will instil enthusiasm into some of your friends who may well be able to help you—I hope so. Remember, if you are to have your flowers for some time, they want careful handling and looking after because they are living material.

Try to picture in your mind what you want to create, then you will only need to pick or buy a certain amount, hence avoiding waste and keeping the cost as low as possible. Often true gardeners will be unhappy to cut from their borders but, by showing them what beauty you can obtain from just a little material, I am sure you will win them round and find many little bunches coming your way.

When you first start there are certain things you will need.

- A bucket and one or two small containers in which you condition your flowers.
- Clean water, preferably from a tap rather than a water butt because water stored in this way is often teeming with bacteria.
- A small watering can will help you fill up the vase.
- A pair of scissors for general use, and secateurs for cutting thick woody branches.
- A mallet or hammer will be useful for breaking down the fibres—only the tips of the stems are split in this way, and care must be taken to support the flower heads to avoid bruising (chrysanthemums are treated in this way).



Fig.2: Set height first, then ► width.



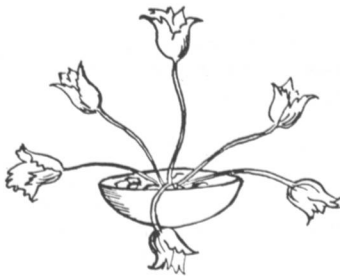
Fig.4: Fill in the five sections ► with flowers of differing lengths (see also Fig.5), so that some depth of colour is obtained in the bowl.



TING A PICTURE WITH FLOWERS'—

Arrangement

- ◀ **Fig.1:** Use a bowl about 6 inches diameter and 2 inches deep, with wire-netting tied in position as shown. Remove the tie when the arrangement is complete.



- ◀ **Fig.3** Arrange with five points as shown (when seen from above), with short sprays of foliage between.



- ◀ **Fig.5:** When using flowers of various colours, remember that a better effect will be obtained by grouping similar colours together rather than 'spotting' them throughout the arrangement.

All materials should be carefully cut and got into water just as quickly as possible. To protect them during transporting, place in a large polythene bag containing damp paper—this will stop the plants becoming dry before they can be got into water.

If your flowers appear limp and tired-looking, warm water will help revive them; by warm I mean the temperature at which you can comfortably insert your hand.

Certain flowers may have their stem tips placed in boiling water for 30 seconds but this is not easy to do and I suggest you get a friend to help you—protect the flower heads from the steam and place straight after treatment into lukewarm water. Roses, dahlias, poppies and hellebore respond to this treatment.

No foliage should be allowed below water level when the arrangement is finished; it helps to make the water smell and also takes up vital room in the container. Avoid any leaf syphoning water over the edge of the vase; certain flowers take up moisture through their heads and benefit from total immersion prior to arranging—violets are a good example of this. Some foliage are very soft and it pays to float them in a shallow bowl before use—e.g. fern fronds and small arum leaves.

Any excess foliage can be removed, but stems which look as if a goat has had a meal from them are not pretty and look very unnatural. Some stems which carry blossoms at their tips may have to be denuded of foliage to allow the blossom to take up water—I have lilac in mind—but place non-flowering shoots amongst the blooms to get a pleasing picture.

Like all aspects of flower arranging, personality comes into it, especially in the choice of container. So much depends on the style of room in which the flowers are to be placed. The arrangement should fit into the overall décor and not stand out like a sore thumb. As you progress, you will develop a small collection of containers but, to begin, I would suggest something in which flowers 'sit comfortably'. No ornate, narrow necks to the vase, because this will prove difficult and may put you off before you get going! A small urn, a round, flat bowl and a wooden box would be a good nucleus on which to build. As you progress so you will want a silver rose bowl, an alabaster tazza and a copper pan for a large autumnal group.

How to make the stems stand in certain positions may be your great worry—this will only come after practising many times. I

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

CREATING A PICTURE WITH FLOWERS

find 2 ins. wire netting the most suitable flower holder but some people prefer Oasis or one of the other proprietary water retaining substances. The pinholder is another useful item, especially in the shallow container or when working with heavy branches. The stem is placed between the heavy needlepoint holder and should remain quite firm. When I use this kind of holder I still use a little netting with it.

The materials and the colours you use together are, again, a very personal thing. Dark colours appear heavy to the eye and are normally kept to the centre of the vase, lighter colours appear less heavy and go to the outline of the group. All stems should radiate and flow from a centre point, and curved stems should be placed to appear to flow naturally.

There are no rules for size and length of stems—you must create a visual balance and certain stems will look better long, others short. Always arrange the vase at the height at which it is to stand—by varying its position you can change the whole balance of the vase. A plain background will usually give the most pleasing results. Always try to link the colour of the flowers with that of the room.

I hope these points have encouraged you to try arranging flowers and foliage. Always buy good quality materials and treat them properly. Cheap flowers are often old and their life span may well be short.

If you have found this short article interesting, read "Your Book of Flower Arranging" by Sheila Macqueen (Faber). Sheila is a great friend of mine and has been arranging flowers all her life: her work has taken her all round the world many times. Each chapter is full of interest and takes you through the year.

Start simply and, as you gain courage, go in for the bigger arrangement. All good wishes.

Harold Piercy

Insurance plan for powered wheelchairs

For most spina bifida people wishing to travel short distances a hand-operated wheelchair is perfectly satisfactory and also helps to keep arms in trim.

On longer journeys, however, a powered wheelchair gives much more scope. The introduction of the Mobility Allowance may encourage some people to save up their Allowance to buy a powered chair, seeing it as the best way of extending their field of activity.

The introduction of *comprehensive* insurance for powered wheelchairs is under consideration. In order to help the insurance brokers to offer this at a competitive rate, some idea of the number of powered wheelchair users would be helpful.

If you have a powered chair and would be interested in comprehensive insurance (provided the price is right!) do write to the General Secretary at National Office.

sheltered employment and quota scheme

The Government has announced its intentions on the future of sheltered employment and the quota scheme for disabled people.

In a statement in the House of Commons, Mr Harold Walker, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment, said that the main policy aims of the consultative document on sheltered employment would be best achieved by the transfer of administrative and coordinating functions to the Manpower Services Commission for the Department of Employment.

The Commission would be taking steps to:

- promote the closest co-operation between all those concerned with the provision of sheltered employment, at both national and local level.
- encourage the development of the rehabilitation aspects of sheltered employment.
- encourage the more extensive provision of enclaves where groups of severely disabled people work under supervision in open industry.
- review the priority suppliers' scheme.

In addition the quota scheme is to be retained. The Manpower Services Commission has agreed to take over full responsibility for it.

(From CCD Bulletin No. 37)

Sex and Handicapped (from page 7)

To deal with the most severely affected, with complete paraplegic spinal cord injuries, there is no sensation from the genital area, but the ability to have an erection can be still present from local stimulation. However, the male patients usually have lost the ability to ejaculate. If the lower spinal cord is completely destroyed, then there is no ability to produce an erection in either male or female and the penis in the male will be completely flaccid.

Intercourse of a sort is possible even with these major lesions. In the male with paraplegia, it often requires intensive stimulation to produce erection and this may be short-lived. This means that this requires a much more

active and sustained effort on the part of the wife if intercourse is going to be achieved. These patients obviously have most of their sexual satisfaction from contact from the areas above the lesion rather than from the areas below the lesion, but their normal partners can achieve sexual satisfaction. This of course, requires a special sort of relationship between them.

A substantial number of marriages between cord-injured men and women and normal partners based on a relationship consisting of a deep love, affection and understanding, with a sexual relationship based on petting, kissing and other expressions of tenderness, have been successful as marriages.

Stop Press

A Conference for Professional Workers is being organised by all the London Associations working together. The Conference which will deal with 'current medical, social and psychological problems for those with spina bifida and hydrocephalus' will be the fourth annual gathering of its kind and will be held at the Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital, London on Friday April 2.

By the time you get this 'Link' the closing date for applications will have passed, but the Secretary Miss Freda Taylor will, nevertheless, do her best to fit in late applicants. Phone her at 01-947 7324.

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Then consult the specialists who offer

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Car: Make.....c.c.....
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Do you wish to restrict cover to yourself only?.....
How is vehicle adapted?.....
No. of years No Claim Bonus.....
Full or Provisional Licence.....
Are you a member of The Disabled Drivers Motor Club?.....
Do you wish to pay the first £15 of any claim (for discount)?.....Details of disability should be given. LI



Aids and equipment

At the present time there is much activity in both research and engineering, to improve present wheelchair designs but until now there have been few efforts to develop a suitable powered chair for children.

The chairbound spina bifida who requires a powered chair is in the minority but for these the following factors are important.

- Will providing a powered chair make the child over dependent on it, and so lessen his attempts to learn to walk?
- Will providing a powered chair lessen the child's upper limb activities and so decrease his power? Is the child strong enough to self-propel? Can he use both arms?
- Does the child have sufficient intelligence and motivation to use a powered chair?
- Where will the chair be used — at school or at home? Is there sufficient room?



THE SHASBAH TROLLEY FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

(Now fitted with rubber caster on the front)

Patent applied for in

UK, Commonwealth Countries, USA, Canada

Standard model for children one to five years old costs £13.00 plus carriage.

Large model for children five to ten years old costs £16.50 plus carriage. Overseas prices on application.

Produced by **Southampton and District Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association**

All enquiries to: Mrs. K. Charrett, 46 Tillbrook Road, Regents Park, Southampton.

Powered wheelchairs

- Is it necessary for the chair to be able to travel outside?
- Does it need to be easily transportable from one place to another?
- Will the chair add to the child's independence?

It is always sensible to seek the professional advice of doctor or therapist but there is little doubt as to the importance of independent mobility to a child. It allows a child to choose his own activities, to explore his environment and make his own decisions. It may enable him to do more for his own self care. He may use it as a means of communication, of going to others instead of always having to wait for them to come to him. Perhaps he will use it to escape from adults, to be able to play alone or with other children.

Although the Department of Health and Social Security provide a wide range of non-powered chairs they supply two basic powered models to certain patients only. These are the A.C. Epic and the larger sizes of the BEC chairs.

THE EPIC is an electrically powered indoor chair which has power assisted steering. It is a robust looking, adult sized chair in red and grey. It does not fold and weighs 177lbs including the batteries.

THE BEC 3 is available in three sizes — the adult, the junior adult and the child adult. you must request the particular model when ordering the BEC 3 to make sure you get the correct seat size.

The child adult model has a seat width of 14in., a seat depth of 15in. and back rest height of 18in. It is a front wheel drive chair with pneumatic tyres. This chair has removable arm and foot rests and once the battery is removed, folds to become transportable like the self propelling chairs. Its total weight is 66 lbs, 28 lbs of which is contributed to the batteries.



Aids and appliances

The BEC 3 more closely resembles the standard wheelchair, is stable and will negotiate small indoor obstacles such as a mat. It is more manoeuvrable than the Epic.

Although that is the basic Ministry range it is by no means the limit of chairs available and I will briefly list and describe the most commonly used alternative models.

BEC BAMBINO is a small, sturdy chair, basically of wooden construction, painted red and with blue upholstered cushions. The seat size is 12" x 12" with a back rest height of 14in. The footrest is adjustable from 11 1/2 in. to 5in. from the seat. This chair is a front wheel drive, the front wheels having a diameter of 12 1/2 in. which makes it particularly adept at clearing small obstructions. The Bambino is non-folding and the total weight is 62 lbs. It is a useful and attractive chair.

A newcomer to the BEC range is the **FIREBALL**. Its appearance and many of its features resemble the BEC 3 although it is smaller in size, and a powered attendant control is an available extra. This is detachable. It is an 8in. rear wheel drive chair, folding with a total weight of 89 lbs.

An important feature is that this is an indoor or outdoor chair with puncture-proof tyres and a range of 8-10 miles on fully charged batteries.

BEC 12 is a standard indoor/outdoor chair and the **BEC 14** is the rear wheel version which can have a powered attendant control option.

VESSA have produced a new electric wheelchair which is a strong chrome and black folding model. The control system is notable as instead of having a fixed two speed variation, it is proportionally controlled both in speed and direction. Reverse is automatically limited to half speed!

It has powered rear wheels and when fully charged will run a distance of 10 miles. It is extremely easy to switch this model into free wheel for attendant operation. The Vessa is an indoor/outdoor chair designed for use on paved or unpaved surfaces and will run well over grass. As an indoor chair it is easily manoeuvrable and will turn on its own axis. The seat size is 17in. x 17in.

EVEREST AND JENNINGS have two powered chairs.

The Power driven chair is available in adult



The Braune 4-wheel Batic chair.

and junior sizes, the smallest seat size being 16in. x 16in. As it has the largest of all powered rear wheels, it can be used in or outdoors and has a selection of four speeds.

The **Sleyride Selector chair** can be bought as a complete chair or as a conversion unit for other Everest and Jennings adult and junior models. It is an outdoor chair, controlled by a central tiller which is removable for access.

THE BATRIC is essentially an outdoor chair and needs plenty of space. Three and four wheel models are available and it is controlled by a pivoting steering tiller. It is able to negotiate a one-in-two gradient and has a speed of 4 mph. It is suitable for children and in appearance looks a little like a tractor/mower. It is non-folding and requires a special trailer for transporting.

Commercial firms aren't the only producers of powered chairs and several engineering faculties are interested in developing and producing new designs. Probably most noticeable for this is **Queen Mary College in London**, which in addition to the several "specials" produced, also developed the **COMET and METEOR**.

For all these chairs prices range from £175 to approx. £360 and if the Department of Health won't supply them, it is always worth applying for funding from some charitable organisation.

Mobility is essential for independence and it seems unfair to deny these experiences when help is available.

ALISON WISBEACH
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST — WOLFSON
CENTRE, LONDON.



Appeals and publicity

We try to keep our "ideas" pot on the boil and it's always so nice when people take the trouble to pass on to us their successful ideas.

An example of this is the pennant which the Staines, Hounslow and District Association have commissioned, to present to groups and clubs who support them. It is made of green satin with a gold fringe and carries the ASBAH logo in green and white and the words—

'Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Staines Hounslow & District in appreciation of your help.'

It has a gold cord for hanging and measures 6in. wide and 10in. deep. The cost for 25 banners, including postage and VAT is £47.75.

If any Association would like to follow suit, the supplier is P & R Publicity, The Broadway, Pitsea, Basildon, Essex.

I sometimes find it very hard to devise ways of saying thank you adequately for the tremendously generous gifts we receive, knowing the sacrifices the donors have made.

This point was again brought home to me at the inaugural lunch in Doncaster of the 1976 Royal Homing Pigeon Show. As you know, all profits from the show go to ASBAH and the prominent feature is the array of very fine birds given for the auction in aid of our funds.

Referring to the exceptionally high quality of the birds given, the Show



Joanne Tilly of Windsor chats with our patron, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester after presenting her with a bouquet at our Midwinter Ball at the Dorchester.

PEOPLE WHO GIVE

Secretary said: "Charity is not charity unless the giving hurts, and when the fanciers packed these birds as their gift to ASBAH they were putting into the basket a little bit of themselves as well." As a result of that sacrifice over £5,000 was raised at the auction—for one bird alone, £600 changed hands!

A different kind of giving is illustrated by a widowed grandmother living frugally on her old-age pension who manages to save something each week for our children and young people. She writes to me unflinchingly every other month to send a postal order for £3. When I tell you that she is lame and her sight is failing you will realise the effort

involved in writing the letter and going to the post office to get the postal order and so on.

Four young soldiers of the Royal Signal Regiment gave up their summer leave to do a sponsored walk from John O'Groats to Land's End (in 28 days!) and as a result £175 was sent.

The Midwinter Ball was a very enjoyable and profitable evening, thanks to the great generosity of our sponsors, the Federation of Master Builders. We expect the profit to be around the £6,500 figure—not quite as good as last year but there isn't so much money around this year.

KATE WHITE



**READ
ALL
ABOUT
IT**



ASBAH booklets . . . leaflets . . . posters

<i>Your Child with Spina Bifida</i> , 3rd Ed., by J. Lorber, MD, FRCP	20p
<i>Your Child with Hydrocephalus</i> by J. Lorber, MD, FRCP	15p
<i>Equipment & Aids to Mobility</i> by O. R. Nettles, MCSP, ONC.	25p
<i>The Care of an Ileal Conduit and Urinary Appliances</i>	15p
<i>Clothing for the Spina Bifida Child</i> by Barbara Webster, SRN, RSCN	15p
<i>The Nursery Years</i> , by S. Haskell, M.A., Ph.D., and M. E. Paull, Dip. Ph.H.	15p
<i>Children with Spina Bifida at School</i> . Ed. P. Henderson CB, MD, DPH	30p

Information leaflets 100 for £1.30
 All available from ASBAH, 30 Devonshire Street, London W1N 2EB. (Special rates available to Local Associations.)

Scottish Spina Bifida Association booklets

The Spina Bifida Baby being revised.
Growing Up with Spina Bifida 20p. both by O. R. Nettles, MCSP, ONC.
 Available from: The Scottish Spina Bifida Association, 190 Queensferry Road, Edinburgh, EH4 2BW (at special rates for bulk orders).

Fund raising and publicity material

Posters Car Stickers 5p each.
 Best Foot Forward 20 x 30in. — 10p each. **Cards for Notice Boards** 10 for 10p.
 Best Foot Forward 15 x 10in. — 10 for 40p. **Flag Day Emblems** 1,000 for 70p.
 For local publicity 15 x 10in. — 10 for 40p. **Plastic Label Badges** £2.10 for 100.
All available from Appeals Dept. — postage extra. Full list on request.

Spina bifida badges. 22p each, postage extra. (for one badge enclose s.a.e.).
 Bulk orders particularly welcome. Available from: Mr K. McKenzie, Salisbury & District ASBAH, 111 East Gomeldon Rd, Gomeldon, Salisbury SB4 6LZ.

Films about spina bifida and hydrocephalus

What is Spina Bifida? Black/white. 16mm. 25 mins.
A New Lease of Life. Colour. 8mm. 25 mins.
Like Ordinary Children. Colour. 16mm. 30 mins.
Growing Together. Colour. 16mm. 40 mins.

All may be hired from Concord Films Council,
 Nacton, Ipswich, Suffolk.

The Mansfield Association film "**What shall we do tomorrow?**" Colour, 16mm. 22 mins, may be hired direct from Mrs Freeman (see p.16).

Holiday accommodation for spina bifida families

Camber Sands, nr. Rye, Sussex. New well-equipped 6-berth chalet, in pleasant situation near the sea. Apply: Mr. S. Evans, 1 Coniston Gardens, Wembley, Middx. 01-904 7840.

Christchurch, Dorset, Hoburn Farm. 8/9-berth caravan, 1 mile from sea, near New Forest. Further details: G. R. Large, 89 Duchess Way, Queensfield, Swindon.

Easington, Withernsea. 7-berth caravan on well-equipped site by sandy beach. Details: Mr A. Clark, 3 Lays Close, Carleton, Skipton, N.Yorks, BD23 3EW.

Golden Sands, Voryd, Rhyl, N. Wales. 8-berth caravan, mains water, electricity, gas, shower and T.V. Every facility on site, right by the sea. Enquiries to Mr. Adams, 58 Strathedan Road, Bradeley, Stoke-on-Trent.

Great Yarmouth. Caister Beach Caravan Camp — 6-Berth caravan. Details: Mrs E. N. Barefoot, 23 Marlborough Road, Southall, Middx. Tel. 01-574 5067.

Looe. Millendreath Holiday Village. Two bungalows. Details: Mr Keith Jackson, 202 Exeter Street, Plymouth, and Mrs Cook, 19 Winslade Road, Harestock, Winchester.

Mablethorpe. Two well-equipped self-contained chalets, 6-berth, at Golden Sands Estates. Details: Mr K. Hall, 17 Walhouse St, Cannock, Staffs.

New Forest. Well-equipped 6-berth chalet. Easy reach of Bournemouth, Beaulieu etc. Swimming pool, paddling pool, restaurant and playground on site. Details: Mrs A. Rae, 16 Clifton Road, Lee-on-Solent, Hants. Tel. Lee-on-Solent 550242.

Prestatyn: 2 six-berth luxury caravans, running hot and cold water, flush toilets, televisions, gas fires. No vacs. August. Apply: Mrs E. Taplin, Colonial House, 63, Corporation Street, Manchester M4 3DT.

Selsey: New well-appointed, self-contained 16ft. x 30ft. six-berth mobile home. For details send s.a.e. to Mr R. V. Taylor, 3 Dickens Way, Horsham, Sx, RH13 6BQ.

Winterton-on-Sea, nr. Great Yarmouth — new well-equipped 6-berth chalet. Indoor swimming pool, shop, and play areas. Details: Mr R. Morris, 127, The Pastures, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks. Tel: H. Wycombe 32184.

Withernsea. Equipped 6-berth chalet on a pleasant site. Apply to: Mrs P. O'Callaghan, 14 Dyer Lane, Wheatley, Halifax. Tel: 0422-56402.

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