



Link

**Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus(ASBAH)
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Registered Charity No. 249338

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Mrs Anna Khan, *BA (Hons)*

ASBAH Publications

**All available from National Office
Cheques payable to "ASBAH"**

Young People with Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus — Learning and Development (1985) *Leonie Holgate*..... £1.60

The Handwriting of Spina Bifida Children (1979) *Joan Cambridge, Eliz M. Anderson*... £1.60

Spina Bifida & You - A Guide for Young People (1985)..... £3.50

Sex for Young People with Spina Bifida or Cerebral Palsy (1984)..... £1.75

Children with Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus at School..... £2.50

Life & Death-thoughts on bereavement (1983) 75p

Making our Way-individual experiences of young people with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (1984)..... £1.20

BOOKLETS/ LEAFLETS

General leaflet..... 13p

Housing: general advice for young people Free
60p for professionals

Five Oaks leaflet..... Free

FACT SHEETS..... up to 10 copies
Translations of fact sheets are available into Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, and into Welsh.
Please send at least 30p postage

VISUAL AIDS
Slide sets and notes (12 slides) Living with Spina Bifida..... £8.62 inc. VAT
Video — Training video on Hydrocephalus (May 1987).
Contact Information dept for details of hire or purchase.

MAGAZINES
LIFT - for members of young ASBAH (LIFT)..... Free
Causeway - for contributors to ASBAH's work..... Free

LINK SUBSCRIPTION
UK..... £3.30
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Air Mail..... £10.80
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All prices include post and packing

Editor's Note

Out of the closet

The 'doyen' of fashion for people with figure problems - Nellie Thornton - a good friend of ASBAH appeared on television in a surprising place last week - surprising and cheering. She was interviewed by Selina Scott on the BBC I 'Clothes Show'

That Selina had chosen to look at clothing problems of people with disabilities is a sign that the fashion needs of those who are not standard shapes and sizes is at last coming out of the closet and being noticed.

Nellie's Fashion Services for the Disabled at Shipley in Yorkshire was shown as an example of where disabled people could learn to make their own fashionable garments and buy flattering clothes made-to-measure. Selina Scott also went with a group of people with various disabilities round High Street shops and they fitted themselves out with good-looking outfits at reasonable prices. It showed that today's clothes, with the emphasis on a casual look and easy fitting garments, can be ideal for all shapes and sizes.

The important point made by the programme is that the more disabled people are seen in High Street fashion shops the better - then shop assistants will begin to understand and manufacturers will start to take notice and make garments in appropriate sizes. As Ginny Jenkins of the Disabled Living Foundation said on the programme "Things are much easier now. But many disabled people don't realise what is happening on the clothes front."

So the message is that now the Spring is here and your fancies turn to thoughts of looking good - go out into the shops and make yourself known.

If you really feel that your shape couldn't be catered for in the shops you may like a list of places like Fashion Services for the Disabled who do made-to-measure fashionable clothes at reasonable prices. Contact Pat Corns at National Office

Sue Gearing, Editor

On the INSIDE

ASBAH NEWS

5 ASBAH plans to move



6/8 Golden gardener - Nicholas and other Round-up news from local associations

11 LINK plans another Holiday to Florida

OTHER NEWS

6 New European group

10 Report highlights lack of job opportunities for disabled people

19 Newlines

DAILY LIVING

9 Penile sheaths

PROFILES

17 LINK meets Anne Andrews

HYDROCEPHALUS

6 Study Day for parents

LEISURE

12/13 Wheelchair dancing

15 Reading matter

16 Holiday ideas

20/21 Birdwatching



FUNDRAISING

22 Conversationalist contest and other Appeals News

PLUS

23 Classified Advertising

24 Directory of associations

FRONT COVER:

Philippa Boorer, 8, of Farnborough in Hampshire, looking very pleased with herself- she became the first Brownie in North Hampshire to receive the Star of Merit -the highest award in the Girl Guide movement. Philippa was nominated for the award after spending three months with the lower half of her body in plaster after a hip operation. Yet she managed to complete two badges and join in activities at the 6th Farnborough pack while lying on the floor.

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Link is published by ASBAH (The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus).

Contributions to LINK by way of letters, news, photographs, articles and opinions are warmly welcomed. The closing date for the July issue is June 5 (earlier than usual because of holidays). Send to the Editor, Sue Gearing, at National Office

Letters

Programmable shunts

Several enquiries have been received recently from parents and doctors about programmable shunts for hydrocephalus. These work at a variable pressure which can be adjusted after insertion using a magnet, without the need for a further operation.

We have been asked by the United Kingdom Shunt Discussion Group to assess these valves and at the moment we are unable to recommend their use until more information is gained concerning problems encountered, particularly over-drainage.

Dr Roger Bayston, Senior Lecturer in Bacteriology, and Hon Secretary of SDG in the UK, and Miss C. Bannister, Consultant Neurosurgeon, and member of SDG in the UK.

Advertising second-hand mobility equipment

In May 1987 the Department of Transport hosted a meeting of car modification specialists, disabled drivers and assessment centres. One of the topics discussed was the difficulty of matching up people who wanted to purchase and those who wanted to sell second-hand modified vehicles, for disabled drivers or passengers. Many organisations were offering 'For Sale' columns in their own journals..however, the circulation was usually limited to a particular readership; and the effectiveness reduced by publications appearing at monthly or even quarterly intervals.

Following the meeting in May, the Forum of Assessment Centres investigated the possibility of finding a national weekly publication to which all prospective vendors and purchasers could be directed. A request was to be made for a special clearly iden-

tified section for the advertisements.

We are delighted that **Exchange & Mart** magazine has willingly accepted the challenge. From June 16 there will be a motoring section entitled **Adapted Cars**. Advertisements will be welcome from individuals wishing to buy or sell an adapted vehicle for a disabled driver or passenger or from organisations or commercial companies. As an introductory offer advertisements received by **June 6** will be placed for **3 consecutive weeks free of charge**.

Advertisements should be addressed to: Mr Nolan C.T.Mills, Marketing Manager, Exchange & Mart, Link House, West Street, Dorset BH15 1LL.

We have also been asked to point out that from **June 16** the existing heading 'Invalid Transport' in the Health and Fitness section will change to **Disabled Mobility**. This will continue to advertise stairlifts, powered and nonpowered wheelchairs.

Obviously the specialist journals will still offer advertising facilities and, in a few cases, this may be most appropriate, but the members of the Forum of Assessment Centres hope that you will feel able to publicise and recommend that anyone wishing to obtain or pass on specialist equipment or adapted vehicles will use the weekly **Exchange & Mart** magazine. We believe that this will be the easiest and most effective way to circulate second-hand equipment.

Mrs Morigue Cornwell, MCSP, Secretary, Forum of Assessment Centres

DON'T FORGET YOU CAN ADVERTISE EQUIPMENT IN LINK. SEE PAGE 23.

Your letters on any article in LINK or on any topic of concern to those with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus will be warmly welcomed by the Editor, Mrs Sue Gearing. Please send to her, c/o National ASBAH. The closing date for the July issue is a little earlier than usual due to holidays - June 5.

Halfway house

It was interesting to read in **LINK** March/April of the various initiatives in housing that are taking place round the country. Sussex Association's housing project at 5 Grand Avenue, Worthing providing a 'halfway house' for nine young adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus has been running for almost two years. One resident has already moved on, and three others are waiting for modifications to a council flat and a flat belonging to Downland Housing Society, both in Worthing, into which they hope to move very shortly. Future permanent housing is now the need for those who feel confident enough to move on, and so far the response from local authorities and housing societies seems encouraging.

The Post 16 Clinic held at Chailey Heritage for young adults in Sussex with spina bifida and hydrocephalus has now been running for over four years. It has been very successful, - a real lifeline to many young adults. But it seems that the initiative in setting up such clinics has not been taken up in other areas. I wonder why?

After initial funding by SASBAH for the two years pilot project, the clinic has been entirely funded by the six district health authorities in the area. SASBAH's contribution has remained in providing fieldworker support, and transport when needed. Eighteen clinics were held in 1987, seeing a total of 93 patients. Of these, 20 were new patients. The number of people now registered at the clinic is 136. Young people can refer themselves to the clinic which is held on alternate Friday mornings. In addition to the consultant, they can see a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, a sister with family planning training, and the SASBAH fieldworker.

Other local groups must be as concerned as we are in Sussex about the health of their members as they reach 16, particularly the need for regular check ups under the care of one consultant. It may be that other areas are happy with the present provisions made for their young adults?

Mrs Margaret White, Secretary, Sussex ASBAH

ASBAH'S AUTUMN CONFERENCE 1988

Southampton University
September 2-4

Plans for the Conference continue, but as yet we haven't any more firm details. But do make a note of it in your diaries. ASBAH hopes that as many people as possible with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, their families and professionals will be able to attend

The general theme will be: The problems of young (and not so young) adults.

ASBAH is aware of the enormous difficulties that families face once the support of paediatric services is withdrawn, and the Conference will look at these problems and attempt to identify some solutions.

Further details about the programme and the Conference cost will be circulated soon, and there will be more details in the next LINK.

Formation of European Association for Spina bifida & Hydrocephalus

Largely due to the initiative of the French Association, and Francois and Fabienne Haffner in particular, a European group has now been formed.

This will exist alongside, but in close co-operation with the International Federation.

The EEC welcomes this action and may help with funding.

ASBAH was very sorry not to receive an invitation to the inaugural meeting; neither, indeed, did our colleagues from the Scottish Association. However, as joint UK members of the Community, both organisations hope to be involved. Mrs Audrey Smith, the Executive Officer of the Scottish Association, will be our representative at the European group.

We all look forward to a positive and fruitful outcome of the formation of the European Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

ASBAH is moving to Peterborough

The decision has been taken by the Executive Committee that ASBAH will be relocating its London offices to Peterborough. At present it looks as though a central site in Peterborough is to be the chosen place where new offices will be built. Confirmation of this will be in LINK as soon as we know definitely.

The move comes about because of the need for expansion. ASBAH has outgrown 22 Upper Woburn place and there is certainly no room for expansion. Faced with the ever increasing cost of office premises in London the Association decided to look elsewhere in the country for a convenient location accessible to ASBAH families and professionals, where rents and rates are cheaper.

It is not yet known when the move will take place. ASBAH has to find a new tenant for its London offices, and obviously if new offices are to be built in Peterborough it will take several months.

The move will give ASBAH the chance to expand services without extra administrative overheads.

More details as soon as we know them.

HYDROCEPHALUS SUPPORT GROUP STUDY DAY

ADDENBROOKES HOSPITAL, CAMBRIDGE

July 2, 1988. 12.30 pm - 5.15 pm

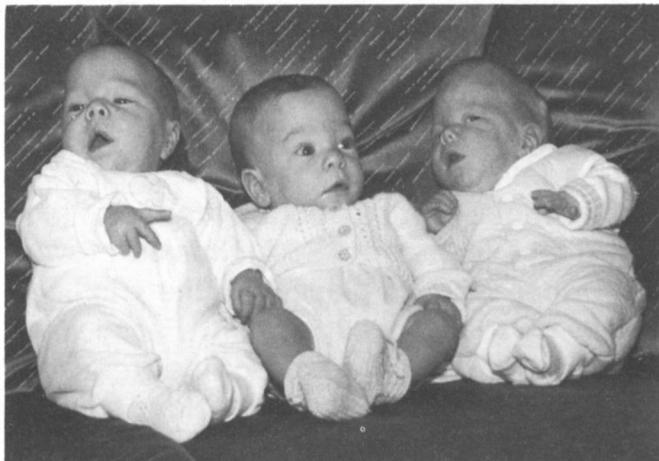
Following the success of the HSG Study Day in Liverpool, a similar day for parents is being held in Cambridge at the Child Development Centre at Addenbrookes Hospital in Hills Road, which is wheelchair accessible.

Topics to be covered include Hydrocephalus Explained, Learning & Psychological Problems, Education and Employment. There will also be question time and general discussion. A buffet tea and refreshments will be served. It should prove to be another very useful and stimulating day. There will be a creche available.

Attendance is restricted to 50 people so book as early as you can. The fee is £4 for each parent.

Bookings to: Philip Watson, Hydrocephalus Support Group, c/o ASBAH, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0EP.

Local Association
Round-up



Three of the Sloan quads. From left to right: Steven, Shaun and Scott. The fourth - Gemma - was, unfortunately, still in hospital dependent on a respirator when this photo was taken by Phil Rimmer a volunteer at Newbridge Resource Centre in Stockport. See story below.

Stockport, Cheshire

Supporting the Sloan quads

Seven months ago in September Susan and Eddie Sloan of Stockport became proud parents for the first time. What they hadn't bargained for was that having wanted a family for a long time - in fact Sue had resorted to a fertility drug - they would, in effect, get the whole family in one go! Four beautiful babies were born - Steven, Shaun, Scott and the only girl, Gemma. They were very tiny - none of them heavier than 2 lbs. They were born at 27 weeks and were underdeveloped.

Unfortunately, Scott developed meningitis and hydrocephalus and eventually Miss Carys Bannister, Neuro Surgeon at North Manchester General Hospital, decided a shunt was needed. A single shunt was insufficient because the ventricles in Scott's brain are not linked and only one side was being drained. Therefore, a second shunt was fitted - one on each side.

Susan was reluctant to take Scott home at first because she was frightened of the amount of extra care he would need. However, reassured that he was just like any other baby in terms of his basic needs, she took him to make the trio of boys at home. Sister, Gemma, had to remain in hospital where she was dependent on a respirator.

Help from the nursing services, home helps and volunteers is maintaining the family support.

ASBAH's Manchester fieldworker, Mrs Jean Black, visits regularly and the children are growing.

"Scott is thriving on love and seems to be only a little behind the other two boys in his general development" she told LINK.

Wirral

Snowdon award gives Jeffrey a help with his studies

This year, for the second time, Jeffrey Newall of Eastham, Wirral, has been given a Snowdon Award.

Jeffrey, who has hydrocephalus and is partially sighted, writes: "In time for the start of the current Academic year, I received a bursary worth £450 from the Snowdon Award Scheme. Thirty six awards were presented this year to students in further or higher education who have disabilities.

"I am now approaching the examinations at the end of my second year in the Dept. of Industrial Economics at the University of Nottingham. Being partially sighted, I read material for my course with the aid of a closed circuit television, which enlarges the printed page on the screen. This award has been used for the photo-copying of material which could be removed from the library, so that I could take it back to my room and put in under the machine to be read. In addition, I have an ever-increasing supply of audio-cassettes, used to record some of my lectures. This award has paid for these.

"Just to complete my study skills picture - I am one of three undergraduates at Nottingham University indebted to Community Action for their help in finding volunteers to read printed material for us. I understand that this is just one of the many projects worked on by my Community Action's 800 volunteers in and around Nottingham....

"All these things combine to make my University life somewhat easier than it might otherwise have been. (I would be very happy to tell LINK readers privately of my experiences at University for those who may be considering it themselves".

Jeffrey Newall,
1 Airdrie Close, Eastham,
Wirral, Merseyside L62 8DU.



On the occasion of his first Snowdon Award presentation last year - Jeffrey Newall with Lord Snowdon and Jeffrey's parents.

Local Association Round-up



Golden gardener, Nicholas Jacquest proud winner of a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award (see story below)

Photo: Northamptonshire Newspapers Limited

Northants

Gold for Nicholas

Congratulations to 18 year old Nicholas Jacquest (photo above) who has earned himself the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

It was presented to him this Spring by the Duke himself. As other young people at present tackling the Awards will know, they take a lot of determination and will to succeed.

Nicholas who has spina bifida lives at Wymington, near Rushden, Northants and was really pleased to hear he had gained the award:

"I passed my driving test and decided I would like to learn more about the mechanics of a car as one of my achievements for the Gold Award. A teacher at school used his own car to show me how it works and I learnt about the engine and gearbox. I also did special physical training at school, which included press-ups, and I went on a walking expedition" he said.

Nicholas set out on the 75 mile trek with 150 able-bodied youngsters and was among the 25 who successfully completed the journey, which he covered both on foot and in his wheelchair.

Now he is on a Youth Training Scheme course at Hinwick Hall College for the Handicapped, working in the horticulture department. He hopes it will equip him to open his own smallholding.

Nicholas also finds time to help with the running of Wymington Youth Club near his home.

Essex

"Please can I wear knickers!"

Helen Wall, (below) takes her Brownie promise with the 1st Tiptree pack in Essex. The photo was sent by ASBAH Fieldworker, Meg Garnett who writes:

"The Wall family first became involved with ASBAH some two years ago when Helen was 5 years old. Up till then they had always managed. Then Helen started asking 'Why do I wear calipers?' and 'Why can't I wear proper knickers?' and 'Please can we ring someone and ask them.' So ASBAH national office was contacted and then the family rang me and Helen repeated her request 'Please can I wear knickers'. The family were visited and with help from Clare Michelmores ASBAH's Disabled Living Advisory Manager and lots of samples, Helen was fitted out with suitable pants and pads.

Helen is a lively, friendly little girl of 7 who attends normal school and joins in all normal school activities with enthusiasm. She is a Brownie and also goes to a swimming club for the physically handicapped. One satisfied little girl!"



Ipswich

What a difference a car makes!

Karen Davies of Ipswich was also at this year's Snowdon Awards, (see story on page 6 about another Award winner) because she had missed the ceremony in 1987 when she received the award, due to bad weather. She wrote to LINK explaining what the award has meant to her:

"I received £1,200 which I use to run my hand-controlled car (Metro automatic) to attend a B.Ed (Hons) Degree Course at Nene College, Northampton. I am now in my second year and would find it impossible to attend college without a car. This was recently brought home to me when I was involved in a car accident and my car was off the road for two weeks. I had to rely on taxis to get to college as I live out of hall and share a house with three other students. I also had to rely totally on friends for shopping. Even though I receive Mobility Allowance this only goes a small way towards purchasing and running a car."



Lesley McQuade celebrating her birthday. See below

Northern Ireland Special and Ordinary Schools

"My name is Lesley McQuade. I suffer from an illness called spina bifida, and I go about everywhere in my wheel-chair. I consider I was lucky to have had the opportunity of experiencing the difference between attending an ordinary school and a special school. I am able to recall the advantages and disadvantages of both

"I first attended the Hart Memorial Primary School in Portadown, where I live, and I can faithfully say I really enjoyed those first seven years at school and I never was treated any different from the rest of the pupils in the school by the other pupils or by the teachers. I took part in all the activities of the school to the best of my ability. When I was in Primary Six I went on a short holiday to Newcastle with the rest of my class, so I didn't miss out on anything as the Headmaster pulled me through every nook and cranny. It was a great experience for me as I had never stayed away from my parents overnight before.

"Soon it was time to move on to the Junior High school which was a much bigger school with stairs, but luckily my mother worked there as classroom assistant and she was there to look after me and three other handicapped children. One advantage was that there was a lift installed just one year before I arrived there, so it enabled me to go upstairs and join the rest of my class in such subjects as cookery and needlework. My one concern was when starting this new school what would all the other pupils make of having a handicapped person in their class, but in a very short time they got used to the idea and we got on very well together. The one disadvantage was that I couldn't take part in all the P.E. classes and I had to sit and watch the other children.

"Then in September 1984, I started at a special school - Fleming Fulton School - and I am in my fourth year there now and I really enjoy going. It has many advantages as it is all on the flat and very suitable for its pupils. I attend physiotherapy and wheel-chair class, which I feel is very essential as I am growing up and want to become more independent. I have enjoyed learning to type and this year I am doing shorthand. Everyone works to their own

Local Association Round-up

ability and gets on very well with each other. We have a very caring child care staff who are always willing to help us. That was the one problem at the Primary school - there was no-one there specially to look after me if I had any difficulties, but luckily that particular school was on the flat. I have enjoyed our class outings in the Summer and at Christmas. It is great that the school was geared this way so that we can do as many things for ourselves as possible, and can cope very well.

"Every Christmas the pupils are involved in putting on a play for the parents. Last year the school production was 'The Wizard of Oz'. In which I played the part of the 'Wicked Witch'. The year before last the production was a 'Rock Nativity'. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part.

"So as you can see I have really enjoyed my years at school, and I am glad to have been able to attend both types of schools, so it lets me see how I could mix with able-bodied people and get on in life on my own. As I have recently celebrated my eighteenth birthday, I will have to leave school at the end of this year and have to face the big world. I will probably then be going on a YTP Scheme."

Lesley McQuade



Scotland

(Above) Gordon Rainey, who has spina bifida, at work as an international directory enquiry operator at Irvine in Scotland. A Fit for Work award was presented to British Telecom's Irvin branch recently in recognition of its efforts to increase job opportunities for disabled people. Six other disabled people work with Gordon at Irvin.

Photo: Courtesy of Dovetail (Action for Disabled Customers) published by British Telecom.

Ian Laker, one of ASBAH's Disabled Living Advisers, takes a look at one method of incontinence management - the penile sheath

Daily Living

Sheaths of convenience

As far as incontinence aids go, men are far luckier than women in that there are more systems available, mainly due to the anatomical differences between the sexes which makes male incontinence systems much easier to design and more satisfactory in daily use. One such method of incontinence management is the penile sheath:

There is a wide variety of sheaths now available on prescription. Basically all use the same principle. The differences come in the substance and thickness of the material and the method of attachment of the sheath to the body.

In recent years sheaths have undergone major transformation. New sheaths are durable and lighter than the older styles, and other innovations include adhesive incorporated within the sheath. This reduces the time and effort required to fit the device.

The sheath is rolled up over the penis allowing a space between the tip of the penis and the base of the sheath, with a little squeezing to insure adhesion. If pubic hair is caught in the sheath it may break the seal. Shaving the pubic area may save a lot of leaks.

Self-adhesive sheaths are becoming more popular and most manufacturers are beginning to produce them. They are less fiddly to put on, especially as full erections are not vital to assist in fitting them. As with anything, they do not work for everyone but unless you have tried them you will not know if they are suitable for you or not.

Dangers to watch out for with sheaths are sores and rashes either from allergic reactions to the glue or from removing them incorrectly.

There are several makes of sheaths available and your doctor or local continence adviser should be able to help. You will also need to look at the various types of urine bags on the market.

Management of sheaths

- 1 Keep the skin dry and pubic hair out of the way
- 2 Prepare properly and place sheath in correct place, i.e. 1 cm from the base of the penis
- 3 Only use the sheath once and not for more than 24 hours
- 4 Drink plenty and empty the bag regularly
- 5 Make sure there are no twists in the sheath or the bag that will inhibit drainage.
- 6 Use the correct size for your penis

Chas. B. Thackray are currently very good for self-adhesive sheaths. Incare have recently produced one that has an internal collar to aid in the prevention of 'blow back'; this is where the urine is not draining correctly thereby causing the sheath to swell excessively. The urine then slowly breaks the seal thus allowing urine to come out of the wrong end of the sheath.

Sheaths and urine bags tend to be better than most system if you can use them. Pads tend to be wet, smelly and cause irritation. This can lead you to restrict your drinking to avoid accidents and mess which can easily contribute to kidney and bladder infections. Those of you who have partial control, but when you want to go to the toilet have to go quickly might find sheaths useful. Accessible toilets are few and far between and using this system allows you more freedom to go to pubs, cinemas and on long journeys etc.

Following the recent controversy about child abuse, some members have expressed concern about aspects of coping with their children's personal care.

ASBAH has produced some guidelines. If you would like a copy, or if you have any worries, please do get in touch with the Disabled Living Advisory Department

The right to choose

We have had a good deal of correspondence on the subject of the Alton Bill and the editorial in the last LINK - *The right to choose*.

Because of press date being a few days before the 3rd Reading of the Bill it seems appropriate to hold everything over until the next issue. We will then publish your comments

If you would like your views added to those of other readers please write to The Editor of LINK, ASBAH 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0EP by June 5.

Meanwhile ASBAH would like to reiterate its position which was summed up in the last paragraph of the LINK editorial:

"ASBAH offers support to every family whatever their decision, and whilst encouraging independence and fulfilled lives for all disabled people, recognises the right to choose in this highly personal and sensitive area."

THE NATIONAL TRUST NEEDS YOU!

The National Trust is keen to recruit disabled people. It provides a fortnightly Vacancies Bulletin and welcomes applications from disabled people. The Trust also produces a booklet *Working for the National Trust* which outlines the types of jobs on offer.

If you wish to receive the *Vacancies Bulletin* please send a supply of large stamped addressed envelopes to Margaret Harris, Personnel Department, National Trust, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS. Copies of the 'Working with the National Trust' booklet are available from the same address.

Government measures to help disabled people to find work have been attacked in a Commons Select Committee report which came out this Spring.

The report, by the Public Accounts Committee, accuses officials of not knowing the number of disabled people in the country, and says schemes to train and employ people with disabilities are inefficient.

Quota system

The Department of Employment is criticised for its delay in replacing the quota system, under which companies are required to employ as part of their workforce a quota of 3% disabled people. Only 27% of employers met the quota in 1986, while 56% had obtained special permits relieving them of the obligation.

The report calls for action to be taken as soon as the DoE has completed research into alternatives to the quota system, probably by late this Summer, and expresses surprise that it has taken nearly three years to look

Measures to train and employ disabled people are 'inefficient' says report

into the question.

ERCs

The report calls for a better performance from the 27 Employment Rehabilitation Centres which give job training. Only 40% of people who attended ERC courses in 1986-7 were employed or on the community programme three months later. The location of the ERCs is also criticised, as there are large areas of the country which have none.

Liaison

The report says that liaison is unsatisfactory between JobCentres and ERCs, with only 33% of JobCentres regularly referring the disabled to ERCs and 29% never contacting them. It feels that this 'co-operation' may deteriorate even further when

JobCentres are incorporated into unemployment benefit offices.

The Report questions whether resources for sheltered employment programmes are being used efficiently.

RADAR (The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) said the findings of the report confirmed its worst fears about job opportunities for disabled people. Mr David Sindall, RADAR's policy officer for employment said: "The report makes clear that disabled people are not getting the best services possible and that there is great room for improvement." He said companies were given very little incentive to meet the three per cent quota, but warned that abandoning the system would lead to an even worse deal.

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



AS INTRODUCED



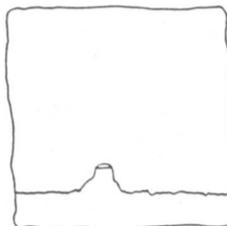
AS AMENDED IN COMMITTEE



AS AMENDED ON SECOND READING



AS ENACTED



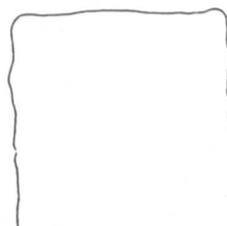
AS FUNDED BY JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE



AS IMPLEMENTED BY THE STATE AGENCY



AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA



AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE PUBLIC



WHAT WAS ACTUALLY NEEDED



YES..... Link is planning a second holiday to the USA, so start saving.....

Because of the great success of LINK's first ever readers' holiday to Florida in 1987, we're off again to the same part of the world but to different hotels and to a different beach resort on the Gulf of Mexico - St Petersburg instead of Clearwater.

It will be a two centre holiday, once again organised by Panovista who did such a wonderful job for us last time.

Final details will be available during the next few months. This is a preliminary announcement so you can start saving and making plans.

It will be a 16 day (15 night) holiday in October/November 1989 and there will probably be two departures, (from Manchester and Gatwick) as before, because of the numbers involved. By 1989 there may well be a direct flight from Gatwick to Orlando, not calling in at Manchester as we did last time. We hope to have confirmation of this as soon as possible.

FLORIDA 1989

ORLANDO and ST PETERSBURG



Approximate cost: £725-£750 per adult. £450 per child

plus supplements for single rooms, and airport tax and insurance.

The holiday will include:

★ Return flight via British Airways Poundstretcher to Orlando.

★ 8 nights at the Heritage Inn in Orlando, a new hotel with old world charm, with architecture, furnishings, fashions and food in styles popular throughout the South from the 1890's through 1910. A beautifully landscaped courtyard surrounds the large outdoor pool. (The hotel is situated at the other, quieter, end of International Drive from the Continentale Royal Hotel where our 1987 holiday was located).

★ 6 nights at the Breckenridge Resort Hotel, St Petersburg Beach, on the Gulf of Mexico. It has direct access to the beach, and an outdoor heated swimming pool with poolside bar; and entertainment most days. The bedrooms include a kitchenette with facilities for making simple meals and drinks.



- ★ 3 day ticket for Disney World and Epcot
- ★ 6 hour visit to Busch Gardens
- ★ Entry to Seaworld
- ★ A day coach excursion to Cypress Gardens
- ★ Excursion to Tarpon Springs
- ★ Coach transfers to hotels, airports and attractions
- ★ Services of a nurse and possibly another helper from ASBAH
- ★ Services of Panovista representatives

The holiday does not include food, but as those of you who have been before will know, there is a good variety at reasonable prices. Both hotels are well situated for eating houses of all kinds.

Helpers

Although ASBAH will be sending a nurse, you need to be reasonably independent and able to cope with your daily routines. This will mean taking your own helper if you need regular personal help. There is quite a lot of ground to be covered at the attractions, particularly at Disney World and Epcot. There may not be someone available to push you on a regular basis, so be prepared to wheel yourself over some distance in temperatures of about 75-80 degrees, unless you have a pusher with you. The holiday would prove far too expensive if ASBAH were to supply a full team of helpers.

Accessible transport

Panovista will be looking at the availability of fully accessible transport in the States and the extra cost involved. We will report on the findings as soon as possible, and let you know if tail-lift coaches or the equivalent will be possible, or whether we will rely on lifters as before and our own transit carry seats which proved very successful. Either way you can be sure that we will try and find the best solution.

More details in LINK as soon as possible. If you have any queries contact Mrs Sue Gearing at National ASBAH.



LINK visited the Concorde Wheelchair Dancers based in Bristol. Ken Richards went along, too, with his camera...

These wheels were made for dancing

"When it comes to dancing you can do anything in a wheelchair" said Anne James, watching her 18 year old son Trevor in his chair dancing a waltz with his partner Julia Hall.

Trevor and Julia who both have spina bifida are two members of a very successful wheelchair dance group- Concorde - based in Bristol. There are 16 of them, of different disabilities and all ages, from 16 year old Mark Jewell to Harold Barber a real veteran dancer at 75.

"Dancing has really helped Trevor to be fit and to keep him fit" said Anne as she watched Trevor and the



Successful partners, Julia Hall and Trevor James, demonstrate the tango

others manoeuvre their way skillfully through the Dashing White Sergeant. "So many people in wheelchairs are amazed when they see what can be achieved" said Anne "I think it's a shame that there aren't more groups like this, and unfortunately too many parents are quite happy to let their children sit around at home instead of coming out each week like this"

The weekly get-together takes place on Mondays in a community hall in Bristol, and from this there has developed over the past nine years a real skill, commitment and group identity. The members clearly enjoy being there and being together, and they give up their spare time to give dem-

onstrations to local clubs and homes. When LINK visited they were planning a demonstration at the end of the week at a large home on Clifton Downs in Bristol, but most of the talk was about the forthcoming Southern Wheelchair Dance Festival at Salisbury in May.

Chairman, Val Potter who is making some of the costumes had bought in some material "I thought this might be suitable for the blouses. What do you think?" There's quite a lot to do with a Festival looming - costumes to be planned and made, dances to be learned, partners chosen, travel and accommodation organised - and that's providing the money has already been raised to do it all.

Concorde hopes to do well at the Festival, and it has a reputation to keep up. "Last year at the International Festival in Glasgow we came away with more trophies than anyone else" said Maureen Hinton, Concorde's instructor. "We won four firsts and two seconds". It was a massive gathering in Glasgow she recalls with over 400 people in wheelchairs staying at one hotel. "Apart from the Festival itself what I remember is the fire alarm that was given at the hotel (for real, not a practice) and the way the hotel was cleared of people in six and a half minutes".



Co-ordination, concentration and memory are important, particularly for team dances like this

Continued on next page



Harold Barber and Val Collins enjoying the tango

These wheels were made for dancing *Continued*

For the competitions and festivals Concorde will take part in all kinds of dances from team numbers to waltzes, fox trots, sambas and disco dancing and dancing where one partner is in a wheelchair and the other is able-bodied. Maureen, who is able-bodied, and husband Derek who has polio, demonstrated for LINK's benefit and showed how well the combination can work. "Learning this has meant that we can go to dances together now" said Maureen.

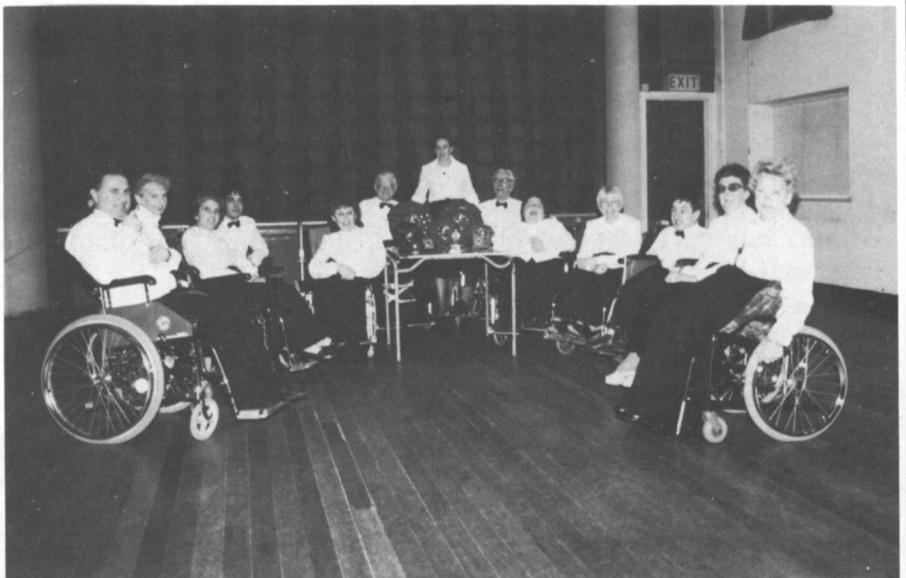
It was an invitation to Derek to dance a few years ago when they were out for the evening that started the ball rolling as far as Maureen was concerned. "Derek eventually agreed to dance and thoroughly enjoyed it. After a while I decided that I was tired of being a wallflower so I got myself a wheelchair and learned for myself, so that we could wheelchair dance together" she said. PHAB dancing came later.

By being in a chair herself Maureen soon came to realise the amount of concentration needed to master the dances. This could be a great help to someone with hydrocephalus who finds it difficult to concentrate and needs to practise. Wheelchair dancing also takes arm strength. Con-

corde is divided into 'As' and 'B's', with some 'C's' depending on how much arm power members have.

"Learning the moves and the dances can be very confusing at first" said Maureen "But after a while there really isn't anything I couldn't teach someone in a chair".

Maureen has been the instructor for three years, taking over from Jean Tanner who had steered the Concorde in the right direction for a good many years and had to give up because of her husband's ill health.



Concorde, with instructor, Maureen Hinton, and a display of trophies

It's not just the dancers that have made Concorde what it is. There's a good core of friends - mainly families of the dancers - who do much of the organising and the fund-raising to make it all possible, to finance trips, accommodation and costumes. When Concorde does a demonstration it's for free but the dancers ask for a donation, and other money comes in by way of Smartie tubes which they give out full of Smarties to supporters and receive back a few weeks later full of money. Then there are the usual fund-raising events such as jumble sales.

Concorde lives up to its name and is a harmonious and active little group giving pleasure to themselves and to others.

Concorde would be happy to give advice to anyone interested in setting up their own wheelchair dance group. Derek, as an Executive Member of the Wheelchair Dance Association, can provide a Starter Pack Cassette of instructions at a cost of £ 2. Contact: Derek Hinton, 11 Marsh Close, Winterbourne, Bristol BS17 1HY. Tel: 0454 773402. Cheques payable to 'Derek Hinton'.

For details of your nearest established wheelchair dance group contact the National Secretary of the Wheelchair Dance Association, Mrs Ellen Mair, Westburn Occupational Therapy Unit, 116 Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB2 4QA

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Mobility Allowance -

from Disability Alliance

The guide aims to explain clearly the rules for Mobility Allowance and gives advice on how to present your case, what to expect at different stages, and how to appeal if your claim is turned down. There is also a checklist to alert people to important points they should include in the claim. The guide will prove invaluable to both claimants and advisers

Price £2 for advisers, £1 for claimants, (post free) from Disability Alliance E.R.A., 25 Denmark St., London WC2H 8NJ. Tel 02 240 0806

The Sex Directory - a guide to sexual problems and where to go for help

compiled by Ann Darnbrough and Derek Kinrade

Published by Woodhead-Faulkner of Cambridge

In spite of increased sexual frankness today many people still suffer from a serious lack of knowledge about their own and other people's sexuality. As a result they may enter into unfulfilling relationships. *The Sex Directory* should help them to an increased understanding of sexuality and tell them where they can get more information on this important aspect of their lives. The Directory looks at the whole range of human sexual activity and sets out details of the many agencies which exist to offer

Reading Matter

help with difficulties. It is the ideal guide for people who want help but don't know where to turn.

Price £19.95 paperback from bookshops or from Woodhead-Faulkner Ltd., Fitzwilliam House, 32 Trumpington St., Cambridge CB2 1QY. Tel: 0223 66733. (Add £2.50 post and packing. £4 air assisted and £8.50 airmail.)

Esso Service Station Address List for Disabled Motorists

This new updated list in a simple slim booklet contains details of facilities for disabled people at each Esso Service Station.

Free copies from Esso Merchandising, PO Box 2, Feltham, Middx.

Adaptations for the Disabled Driver

from the Mobility Information Service.

Aimed at the young and the newly disabled driver it lists a wide range of conversions and adaptations, both simple and highly complex.

Price £1 from Mobility Information Service, National Mobility Centre, Unit 2A Atcham Estate, Shrewsbury SY4 4UG. Tel: 074 377 489.

New TV series: Same Difference

Elly Wilkie (left), co-presenter of *Same Difference*, Channel 4's current affairs series covering issues which particularly affect disabled people. The second series will be shown each week for eight weeks, from Monday June 6 at 6 pm and repeated Saturdays, from June 11, at 9.30 am. The second series will include a report on organisations established to serve disabled people; there will also be items on social security, access, attitudes, sport, self-defence and the arts.

More details from Kate Watson or Alison West on 0225 446688

Able to Attend - a Good Practice Guide on Access to Events for Disabled People

from the National Council for Voluntary Service

This gives information on the wide range of special needs which should be met if disabled people are to participate effectively in an event in every way. It has been written for organisers of events where disabled people are likely to be present or are to be invited specially.

Price £2 from Ann Richards, Employment Unit, National Council for Voluntary Service, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU.

VIDEO

See you Thursday

from the Dept of Transport.

This new video on wheelchair safety in vehicles demonstrates the importance of correctly and separately restraining wheelchairs and their occupants. It also covers the safety of elderly and less severely disabled passengers and advises drivers on good practice.

Details of the video and borrowing arrangements from the Disability Unit S10/21, Dept of Transport, 2 Marsham St., London SW1 3EB. Tel: 01 212 3547.

A man with driving force!

Chris Beynon who has worked for several years assessing and advising disabled drivers at Banstead Place and at Five Oaks has set up a fully comprehensive driving consultancy service. This has the full backing and support of ASBAH.

For a single fee of £27.50 (less in some cases), Chris is offering unbiased advice and guidance on assessments, cars, modifications, insurance and even driving instructors nationwide.

Contact Chris Beynon at 24 Shetland Close, Worth, Crawley, Sussex, RH10 4YZ. Tel: 0293 885911



holidays

● Disaway Trust

The Disaway Trust, a charity providing group holidays for physically disabled people, is planning two holidays this year: an 8 day break in Belgium (July 10-17, and 10 nights in Crete (Sept 20-Oct 1). Each holiday will be accompanied by helpers (on a minimum 1:1 ratio), at least one of whom will be a nurse.

Details from: Mrs N. Warries, Disaway Trust, 6 Burlington Avenue, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DQ. Tel: 01 878 2054 (evenings).

● Cote d'Azur

Stickhting Vakantie en Handicap is a Dutch-based organisation with several adapted caravans and apartments available for holiday lettings on France's Cote d'Azur. In addition, SVH has an adapted car which can be hired by disabled people holidaying in the South of France, and operates an Assistance Service which could make life easier for British visitors to this particular region.

Details from Stichting Vakantie en Handicap, Hulpdienst Coe d'Azur, B.P. 62, 83480 Puget-Sur-Argens, France. Tel: 94. 45. 60. 95.

● Holidays for young adults

A programme of holidays for physically handicapped young people aged 18-30 has been arranged for this year by Young Disabled on Holiday which is part of the Holidays for the Disabled organisation.

Details from Miss Rosemary Girdlestone, Young Disabled on Holiday, 6 Yewland Drive, Boothsmere, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8AP.

● Burgundy barge cruises

Two week barge holidays in Burgundy suitable for able-bodied and disabled people are being run by Aquagallica cruises based near Southampton. Special care has been taken to make it possible for the cruise

craft to be used by disabled people, and features include handrails, power lift, wide gangplank, shower seat, large toilet room and 36" access throughout.

The company can arrange for transport using the Portsmouth-Le Havre ferry and specially adapted minibus to the barge's base and return. Once on the vessel you are free to cruise as you wish. While basic prices are for self-navigation, a skipper can be provided at additional cost. A further option is for one night's extra accommodation in a suitable hotel before returning to the UK.

Details and brochure from: Aquagallica Cruises, 25 Ashleigh Close, Hythe, Southampton SO4 6QN. Tel: 0703 842383.

● Fun in Cumbria

The Northern Association for Community Care is running special activity weeks for individuals with a physical disability at Bendrigg Lodge, Kendal in Cumbria. The pursuits will include canoeing, sailing, rock-climbing/abseiling, caving, orienteering, archery, horseriding/driving with pony and trap. There will also be indoor activities such as arts and crafts, photography, cookery and games. All equipment and protective clothing will be provided.

Dates: June 20-24 and August 22 - 28

Details from the the Bursar, Bendrigg Lodge, Old Hutton, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 0NR. Tel: 0539 23766.

● Exploring Britain

Gillmour Travel Services is a new company aiming to offer personalised holidays for individual families with a disabled member. The holidays can explore any part of Britain. Accommodation and access details are checked beforehand and transport for the holiday is in a top-of-the-range Nissan Prairie, with room for a family of four, including a wheelchair user. It is anticipated that the idea of personalised itineraries will attract overseas visitors in particular.

The company was founded by John Bell, a teacher with wide experience of disability.

Details and a holiday planning questionnaire from Gillmour Travel Services, Gillmour House, Blenerhasset, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 3RE. Tle: 0965 21553

A course that strikes just the right note!

Michael Swallow and Richard Stillgoe invite you to a course in music, dance, movement and drama specially designed for people with physical disability:

SHARE MUSIC IN ACTION
at Crabhill House, Redhill, Surrey
July 23 - 30

This is not a course in music therapy, but a chance for handicapped people to develop and share their musical interests and skills in the company of others and with help from expert tutors.

A special feature this year will be the development of a music, dance and drama project leading to a performance on the final day

It is not absolutely essential that participants are able to play a musical instrument.

Crabhill House is a holiday centre run by the Winged Fellowship Trust and is totally accessible to wheelchair users. Facilities include a heated indoor swimming pool and a licensed bar. There is a full-time resident nursing staff and a doctor always on call.

The course is open to disabled people aged 17-40. Able bodied companions are welcome.

The fee is £120 to cover tuition, full board and the use of all facilities. A bursary scheme is available for those who cannot afford the full fees. Donations towards this fund are invited. Disabled people may also be able to get help from their Social Services Office or contact ASBAH who may be able to help.

ASBAH has one or two form/brochures, or apply to: Dr Michael Swallow, 15 Deramore Drive, Belfast BT9 5JQ. Tel: 0232 669042.



LINK went to meet a quietly determined and independent lady - Anne Andrews

Living and giving

Independence, not only of body but also of spirit, has meant that 43 year old Anne Andrews of Aldershot really does enjoy a busy, active and fulfilling life. Widowed four years ago, Anne, who has spina bifida, runs her home from a wheelchair and looks after her 15 year old son, Mark.

As an active Christian, Anne is trying to give back to the community as much as she can by various forms of voluntary work, and she still manages to find time to keep up a good circle of friends.

One secret of Anne's physical independence is that she has remained fit and has retained the ability to walk a few steps. She can transfer herself quickly into chairs or onto the kitchen stool and in this way she can manage in a house free from adaptations - unless you count the ramp at the back that gives access to the garden.

She is the first to acknowledge that her days at a small special school at Alverstoke, near Gosport in Hampshire (now closed) laid the foundations for the road to independence and her parents also contributed to the road-building.

"Apart from when I was at school I've never mixed with handicapped people, and in fact, I only have one friend who is disabled" said Anne, explaining her independence from any special organisations. (Even ASBAH has seen her only very fleetingly!).

Her only contact with disabled people now is in her role as a helper at Camberley Association for the Disabled in the Resource Unit. "It's diffi-



An independent lady - Anne Andrews

cult to say what I actually do there but I'm absolutely shattered at the end of the day. I suppose it's because I am giving out all the time." She is there to help run the centre in a variety of different ways from making tea to being a good listener.

When Anne left school she returned to Aldershot, and like many youngsters in her situation going away to be educated, she knew very few people in her home town and felt isolated. But with her usual get-up-and-go, it didn't take her too long to join a large youth club in the area - and she never looked back!

Apart from the Resource Centre she also helps at a mother and toddler group and sees it as part of her Christian commitment to give back as much as she can to the community. She is a member of the local Pentecostal church and a singer in a large Christian folk group - Trinity Folk (19 strong). This involves regular practice as well as performances. "And, of course, my son Mark keeps me very busy" said Anne. He's working hard for his GCSEs at present and Anne feels it is important to support him as

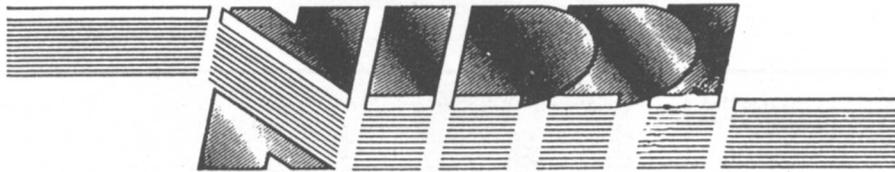
much as she can. "I certainly haven't any wish to go to work at the moment" she said. Anne used to work as a typist/clerk with the Royal Engineers in Aldershot before Mark was born. Her husband died of cancer four years ago, and Anne insisted on nursing him herself at home.

She has wondered about helping out with counselling, having recently completed a year's course for the Certificate of Welfare Studies. "As part of this I had to do a study into special educational needs in the area, which I really did find interesting".

She is very community conscious and in recent borough council elections Anne decided it was about time that the views of a Christian and a disabled person were represented on the council so she put herself up as a Conservative candidate, and managed to increase the vote by 50% for the Conservatives although she wasn't herself elected.

One way and another she has shown that she can stand up for herself and that disability certainly doesn't mean an inability to enjoy life or to play a part in the community.

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S.V. NIPPI

Illustrated above is the award winning S.V. NIPPI designed and manufactured by Special Vehicle Designs Limited which is now available in the new range of 1988 colours, together with an improved 50cc model capable of speeds of up to 30 m.p.h. The design remains simple but functionally well suited to its purpose. Well established and reliable scooter components have been adapted to form a motor tricycle combining a rugged safety frame with attractive bodywork. It can be driven from a normal pillion seat, but its more likely use is from a wheelchair. The central well is big enough to take a wheelchair up to 27" overall width, and entry is made by a ramp/tailgate at the rear, and the chair locks securely into place in a simple clamp.

Many adaptations are now available to meet the specific requirements of different disabilities, such as push brakes, left hand throttle amongst others.

This versatile vehicle is living up to its name, with all the characteristics of a normal motor scooter, but with the added security and stability of three wheels. The basic model has an engine just under 50cc and as such is classed as a moped. It can be driven by anyone holding a car driving licence without the need for a further test, or on a provisional licence. A more powerful model at 80cc is classed as a motor tricycle and requires an appropriate driving licence (or provisional licence in the short term). As a vehicle designed for road use, the S.V. NIPPI must, of course, be taxed, registered and insured. All models have an electric start and are fully automatic.

The 'on the road' price of the 50 cc model is £2,495.00 and the 80 cc model costs around £2,895.00.

Included in the purchase price of the S.V. NIPPI is a course of driving instruction undertaken by the Star Rider Association and the first year's Membership of the A.A., to ensure that the owners obtain the maximum pleasure from their vehicle with the utmost safety.



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● The Government is urging local authorities to extend the benefits of Sections 5 and 6 the 1986 Disabled Persons Act to young people leaving education after their 19th birthday. (The Act itself applies only to those under 19). This is the welcome news in the Government circular (LAC (88)2) issued by the DHSS, the Welsh Office and the DES to accompany the recent implementations of Sections 5 and 6.

● The ACT Now Steering Committee set up nationally to press for the full implementation of the Disabled Persons Act has published a new leaflet for use by people keen to join in the campaign. It gives a full and easy-to-use guide to what is in the Act plus advice on campaigning tools such as petitions, local radio, and contact with MPs.

Copies are free from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London WIN 8AB. A small charge is made for bulk orders

● A specially converted Ford Transit van has been launched by Peter Bottomley MP, Minister for Roads and Transport. It has been adapted for the Dept of Transport's Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service (MAVIS) and incorporates seven main features enabling severely disabled wheelchair users to enter and drive the vehicle independently. Depending on the adaptations required, the van will cost from £12,000, from Perrys of Edgware, Middx. Tel: 01 952 2353.

Before purchase, disabled motorists can see and try the vehicle and have a thorough assessment on the adaptations required from MAVIS, TRRL, Crowthorne, Berks RG11 6AU. Tel: 0344 770456

Newslines NEWSLINES Newslines



Actress Jane Asher and MP Peter Bottomley, Under Secretary of State for Transport launch the new Carelink service at Euston Station. With them is one of the Carelink drivers

● As mentioned in LINK Nov/Dec 1987, the Carelink bus service linking main line railway stations and Heathrow has been relaunched. The new service started in March and enables passengers with mobility problems to travel between Waterloo, Victoria, Paddington, Euston, King's Cross and Liverpool Street main line stations using midi buses specially adapted to carry wheelchairs. The drivers are specially trained to give any assistance needed. At Victoria and Euston, Carelink connects with the wheelchair-accessible Airbus services to and from Heathrow Airport (A1 at Victoria; A2 at Euston).

Carelink buses run a clockwise circular route once an hour, seven days a week, starting at Victoria at 8.30 am and finishing at Waterloo at 8.05 pm. The fare is £1, or 50p for children and anyone holding a London Boroughs' Disabled or Elderly Person's Travel Permit or a BR Disabled Persons Railcard.

Speaking at the launch, Mr Keith Brown, LRT Board member said: "Carelink is not just for Londoners. By providing convenient connections with other modes of transport, it will enable all people with mobility handicaps to travel easily within and across Central London".

Carelink is operated for LRT by London Buses Ltd.

● Disabled motorists parking in Central London are finding their cars clamped because some boroughs do not recognise the Orange Badge Scheme. Under the provisions of Section 105, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, it is illegal for a vehicle displaying a disabled persons' Orange Badge to be wheel clamped. The Orange Badge Scheme, however, is not recognised in the London Boroughs of Chelsea and Kensington, City of London, Camden (Southern part) and Westminster; They issue their own Central London badges.

A number of the holders of such badges have been clamped as the exemption from wheel clamping is not applicable to the Central London badges.

Residents living in Central London in possession of their local borough badge but not an Orange Badge should obtain one to avoid being clamped.

● The Computer Centre for the Disabled (CCD) has been set up, based at the Central London Polytechnic which has facilities for use in courses and seminars, a software library plus a range of hardware. CCD's main aim is to help disabled people get into further education by teaching them communication skills using computers. For further details, contact David Laycock, CCD, c/o London Polytechnic, 115 New Cavendish Stret, London W1. Tel: 01 486 5811

● RADAR would like to hear from anyone who has details of recreation sites in the country particularly suitable for disabled people. It is for a new edition of *Countryside and Wildlife for Disabled People* RADAR is at 25 Mortimer St., London WIN 8AB.



BIRDWATCHING is a hobby that is becoming increasingly accessible to those in wheelchairs. The RSPB (The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) is trying to increase facilities for the disabled by providing accessible vantage points, paths and hides at RSPB reserves and giving details of practical aids for disabled birdwatchers, such as special binoculars for those with little or no arm strength or lacking finger dexterity. It has produced a special leaflet giving a list of Opportunities for Disabled People to Visit RSPB Reserves (Details of this and other useful books are given at the end of the article).

Here the RSPB writes about birdwatching from the point of view of someone lacking full mobility:

MORE THAN JUST.....

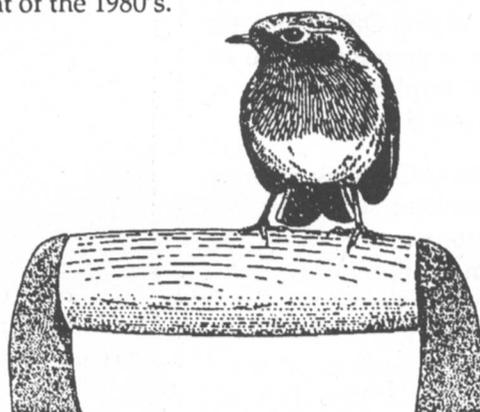
A flight of fancy

One of the attractions of birdwatching as a pastime is that it can be enjoyed not only by able-bodied people but by those who are in some way physically (or even visually) handicapped. Wild birds will come within view of the sedentary watcher whether it be through a garden window, a birdwatching hide on a nature reserve or from a car seat. Many species can be watched from a vantage point or on a short walk in a town park or the open countryside.



An accessible birdwatching platform at one of the RSPB reserves

Birdwatching provides informal and relatively inexpensive recreation for individuals, the family or small groups of countrygoers - and that need not exclude the disabled member. Birdwatching is an increasingly popular hobby in Britain where more people are becoming aware of our precious heritage of nature and landscape through TV programmes and literature. Wild birds provide an endless source of pleasure and refreshment for all sorts of people, young and old, town or country dwellers. A growing number of people are concerned about the survival of wild birds and their habitats in our hard-pressed environment of the 1980's.



Attract wild birds to your garden

Feeding garden birds in winter is a widespread national habit for householders who not only want to help birds to survive the rigours of our winter but to enjoy seeing those like robins, dunnocks, blackbirds, thrushes, tits and finches use their garden. The liveliness of great and blue tits coming to a suspended peanut feeder, the songs of robin and blackbird in a nearby tree or a group of starlings busily probing the turf for grubs are only some of the delights for a garden birdwatcher.

Several books or leaflets (including the free *Feeding Garden Birds* from the RSPB) advise on ways to attract a variety of birds to the garden. In summary, this is the regular provision of suitable foods and water in winter, the erection of one or more nestboxes and the planting of native trees and shrubs for birds to make the habitat more like the woodland and scrub from which they originate. Nestboxes and feeders are best sited within view of the window, especially for those who are confined to their beds or rooms. The grounds of hospitals and residential homes may have mature trees and extensive shrubberies, and possibly a pond, so are likely to attract less usual garden species like warblers, woodpeckers and owls. Their songs and calls may be appreciated sitting out-of-doors in Summer. Binoculars will be needed to watch them closely.

Birds in your local park

It is surprising how many different types of wild birds resort to urban parks - not just the plentiful species like sparrows, starlings and pigeons, but others more usually associated with the woods, fields and lakes of the countryside: tawny owl, kestrel, nuthatch, goldcrest, bullfinch, jay, great spotted woodpecker, coot, tufted duck, heron,

continued on next page



Birdwatching. *Continued from previous page*

coal tit, pied wagtail, black-headed gull and mistle thrush. These and other species have adapted to the man-made habitats of park trees, grassland, shrubbery, borders and lake where they can find food, shelter and nesting places. The habitat is undisturbed and the birds are used to human proximity.

The surfaced paths and park seats provide an opportunity for the disabled - whether using a wheelchair or relying on sticks and crutches - to venture not far from home for some satisfying 'birdwatching for the beginner'.

For the visitor who prefers to remain seated in the car, the regular practice of putting food on the car bonnet or just throwing it out of the window in the car park (but not during April-August) will attract a variety of birds to feed close to the quiet observer. A camera mounted on a window clamp may obtain some good photographs.

Now for the countryside

But it is to the wider countryside and coast that the enthusiast must travel for the real excitement of birdwatching. Britain still has a marvellous patchwork of landscape and native habitats which in turn account for the 200 or more kinds of birds throughout the country. There are more places than ever before - ranging from mountains to estuaries and from woodlands to seacliffs - which the birdwatcher may visit: nature reserves, country parks, beaches, open spaces and forests, many of which provide car parks, nature trails, hides, seats and information centres to enhance the visitors' enjoyment of the birds and other wildlife. And the handicapped birdwatcher need not be put off by the prospects of physical obstacles or the lack of shelter and accessible toilets. Many of these countryside sites are equipped for the disabled, while others by good fortune have paths negotiable by wheelchairs and accessible vantage points from which visitors may watch birds and appreciate other natural features.

Disabled birdwatchers do not necessarily have to depend on organised sites for their hobby. Some country lanes and roads can be used safely in wheelchairs to watch birds in the open air; while beaches, riversides and estuary shores can provide some fine birdwatching, often of large flocks and of unusual wetland species. Lay-bys often provide excellent vantage-points from the car. A pair of binoculars and some patience invariably bring reward for the sedentary birdwatcher.

The RSPB - for young and old

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a national charity for the protection of wild birds and the conservation of their natural habitats. It is supported by over 430,000 members, who for an annual subscription of £12 receive a colourful magazine, Birds, each quarter with news of the Society and nature conservation generally as well as articles designed to help members understand birds and enjoy watching them.

The Young Ornithologists' club is the junior branch for children aged 7-15 who receive the illustrated bi-monthly magazine Bird Life, packed with information and projects to



Birdwatching can be very popular, as this picture shows!

encourage childrens' awareness of the natural world and to have fun birdwatching. The subscription is £4 per annum. The YOC administers a special Disadvantaged Birdwatchers' Fund which provides equipment such as field guides, bird tables and binoculars for young disabled people under 18 who need help to enjoy watching birds. Write for an application form from YOC, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL.

Both organisations have local groups throughout the UK which welcome members to their film shows, talks and birdwatching outings. Groups will be pleased to help handicapped members to gain access to meeting rooms and to take them to at least some of the exciting birdwatching places in their programmes. These will include some of the RSPB's own nature reserves, many of which are accessible to some extent to people using wheelchairs, crutches or sticks. There are adapted hides, boardwalks, surfaced paths, accessible toilets and good view-points.

For further advice please contact Anthony Chapman, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, Tel: 0767 80551 or your local RSPB Regional Officer (the addresses are listed in Birds magazine, and are also available direct from the RSPB at Sandy.

Useful reading:

**Opportunities for Disabled People to Visit RSPB Reserves. Free from RSPB at Sandy. This includes details of Practical Aids for Handicapped Birdwatchers.*

Holidays for Disabled People published by RADAR would be useful if planning a birdwatching holiday. It is available from most large bookshops. Price £3.

RADAR's useful publication The Countryside and Wildlife for Disabled People is out of print but is being revamped, and a new version should be available before too long.

A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe, by Peterson, Mountford and Hollom. Published by Collins. Price £8.95 from most bookshops and also from the RSPB plus P and P.

A Guide to Countryside Recreation for Disabled People, Free from the Country Landowners Association Charitable Trust, 16 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PL.



Words of wisdom? The final stages of this year's Conversationalist of the Year contest

Talking our way into the papers

The Conversationalist of the Year contest (previously known as the Chatathon) took place at the end of April, and many of you may have seen coverage of it in the press.

This event was certainly highly successful in the amount of media coverage - not only in the press locally and nationally, but also on television and radio. Such publicity is of great value in increasing public

awareness of ASBAH. It also seems likely to prove a financial success.

One participant alone has already raised in sponsorship money a sum at least three times as large as the previous record.

Our thanks go to all concerned, especially to our very good friend,

Continued at top of next column



Champion greyhound, Ballyregan Bob, with trainer George Curtis (left) and Mrs Kevern, wife of owner Cliff Kevern, with ASBAH's Chairman, Robin Mackenzie at Wimbledon Stadium during the racing evening in aid of ASBAH at the end of February. It proved a much more successful and productive evening than the previous year. Ballyregan Bob was a big attraction; so, too was the auction of two of his puppies. ASBAH's thanks are due to Mr Dominic Magnone and the officials of Wimbledon Stadium..

APPEALS NEWS

Continued from previous column

Barry Cryer, who once again chaired the celebrity judges in the final. They included Alan Coren (now Editor of the Listener), Mike Allen (LBC presenter) and Colin Cullimore (Managing Director of Dewhursts).

And who walked off with the title of Conversationalist of the Year and the prize of a weekend for two in Paris? - Denise Danks, a freelance computer journalist of Wanstead. She beat Neil Warren of Potters Bar, a publisher, whose weekend, in the Lake District, though not quite so glamorous as Paris will undoubtedly be enjoyable

Forty six people took part in this verbose contest which was held in the Glaziers Hall, London Bridge.

ASBAH was given splendid support by the sponsors, LBC Radio (London Broadcasting Company) and Dewhursts your Master Butcher. It was at their request that the title Chatathon was dropped, in order to highlight the change of emphasis from quantity to quality of conversation.

A rosy future

ASBAH is participating in the Alexandra Rose Day appeal this year which takes place on June 21. One of the allotted pitches is at the Mansion House in the City of London.

Sound advice on the shop front

Efforts are continuing to open up more ASBAH charity shops. We have encountered a few problems recently about tenure and lease conditions which have, unfortunately, interfered with some otherwise promising projects. However, we are not daunted by this. Sainsburys and Debenhams have kindly given us some free advice on merchandising and display.

Advertising

FOR THE USE OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER READERS

Rates: £3 for 30 words max; £4.25 for 30-45 words;
£5.50 for 45-60 words.

Cheque or postal order payable to 'ASBAH'

Adverts for the next LINK (July/August) should be in by June 8. Send to: The Editor, Mrs Sue Gearing, The Gables, Long Lane, Wrington, Avon, BS18 7NE. Tel: 0934 862279

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

BORTH, Nr Aberystwyth. 6-berth de luxe holiday home. Licensed site. Suitable for wheelchair users who live independently. Details: Mrs J. Carter, 1 Meadow Road, Craven Arms, Shropshire.

ISLE OF WIGHT. Very well equipped chalet with easy wheelchair access at **Brambles Chine, Freshwater.** Sleeps 6. Indoor heated pool, club, shop. Details: Ring or write: Mrs S. Gully, Old Princelett, Apse Heath, Sandown, Isle of Wight. Tel: 0983 863354

SELSEY, Sussex. Six berth purpose built fully equipped mobile home. Ramp access. Site near sea. Pool, club, etc. Details: Mrs C. Bugden, 27 The Grove, Sholing, Southampton SO2 9LT. Tel: 0703 444921.

PRIMROSE VALLEY Fully adapted luxury caravan. Sleeps 6. Bath/shower. Ramp. Many facilities on site; Details: Mr J. Adams, 105 Blakey Close, Redcar, Cleveland. Tel: Middlesborough 472920

RYE HARBOUR, Sussex Fully equipped mobile home, adapted for wheelchair users. Sleeps 4. Clubhouse on site. Details: Mr P. Borthwick, 170 Hollington Old Lane, St Leonards, E. Sussex. Tel: 0424 51145

FAIRBOURNE. Very well equipped bungalow with easy wheelchair access. Two bedrooms. Sleeps 6. Self catering. Five minutes from beach. Details: Midland ASBAH. Tel: 021 771 0371.

BLACKPOOL Hollywood Apartments, 2 Wellington Road. Ten yards to promenade. Lots to do. Ground floor self-contained flats. Parking. Tastefully re-developed 1988. Autumn illuminations, mini breaks from £75. Bar/cafe ground floor. Easy access. Details: Jenny Fulford-Brown. Tel: 0253 41633.

BLACKPOOL. Bond Hotel, 120 Bond Street, South Shore. Two minutes from the promenade, Sandcastle and Pleasure Beach. Special attention has been paid to making the hotel accessible: wide corridors and doors, buttons and switches within easy reach. No steps. En suite bedrooms. Bath with hoist on each floor. Lifts to all floors. Officially opened by the Mayor Blackpool. Short stays, weekend breaks, mi-week breaks. As a special introductory offer the hotel is offering three and seven nights dinner, b & b breaks per person for £50 inclusive of VAT (three nights) and £125 (seven nights.) April - July (except for bank hols). Details: Bond Hotel, 120 Bond Street, South Shore, Blackpool FY4 1HG. Tel: 0253 41218

EXCHANGE AND MART

SCOOTA PLUS. Only nine months old. Little used. For sale: £750 o.n.o.

Contact: Mrs L. E. Cheeseman, 9 Fenwick Sreet, Warsop, Notts.

V REG 1.3 FORD ESCORT MK 11 AUTO. Hand or normal controls. Webber carb. Very good condition. MOT tested. For sale: £950.

Contact: Mr Wilson. Tel: 0205 311241

TRI-AID HAND PEDALLED TRICYCLE. Suit three to 10 year old. Very little use. Excellent condition. For sale: £40.

Contact: Mrs Green, 4 Whitehouse View, Bearpark, Durham. Tel: 091 3733059

NISSAN PRAIRIE SGL 'E' reg. Beige. 500 miles only. Electrically operated lift system for front passenger side leather bound wheelchair by 'Car Chair'. For sale: £8,500 to registered disabled person

Contact: Mr M. Hopkins, Tone Bridge House, Creech St Michael, Taunton, Somerset. Tel: 0823 442270

LINK welcomes adverts from readers who wish to sell or buy secondhand equipment. The rates are very reasonable. Advertising in LINK is an ideal way to reach into the homes of about 8,000 families with spina bifida and hydrocephalus youngsters and the homes of spina bifida adults.

Advertising of special equipment is also now being offered in Exchange and Mart (see information on page 4, Letters page)

Whilst every care is taken to ensure accuracy of information published in LINK, the publishers can accept no liability. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of ASBAH

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