

A Study of Britain's
Free Schools, 1970-1977.

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VOL II

APPENDIX I

THE AUTHOR'S DIARY

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APPENDIX 1

The Author's Diary.

Between September 20, 1974 and March 1, 1975 the author visited, worked in, studied and discussed Britain's free schools, both past and present. He kept a diary of the main events during that period, and that diary is reprinted below. Many of the experiences and observations made about free schools in Volume 1 are based upon experiences recorded in the diary. This is particularly true in the case of Sundance Children's Community and Barrowfield Community School. Similarly, some events described in the diary were the seeds from which further research developed. Many of the observations about free schools were made by the author from frustrated attempts to learn about the schools as much as they were from the many successful and enlightening interactions that occurred. In fact, the diary is a record of the author's attempts to enter the well-protected and somewhat secretive world of the free schools: of his successes and failures.

Free schools are difficult to study. Most free school pupils are not interested in talking about their schools; many teachers and other workers in the schools are either too busy or simply too reluctant to discuss their schools. What might at one time have been planned as a systematic study of the schools, rapidly, and thankfully, grew into a "mixed bag" of experiences. The author learned that systematic behaviour and well-planned sequences of events are two of the things that most of the free schools were trying to avoid; that the "alternative" they proposed moved with the pupils, not the teachers. Thus, just as the teachers and volunteer workers watched their

pupils, listened to them and followed their leads, so the author was obliged to do the same, watching and listening, standing on the edge of the action, looking in until such time as he was invited to participate or leave, making hasty notes, agreeing to do just about anything that would get him involved with the pupils and their teachers and, at the end of every significant day, writing it down in a diary.

September 20, 1974.

I had received a reply two days ago to my first letter to Leeds Free School, sent from St. John's, Newfoundland, on August 10th or thereabouts. The reply was from a girl called Bridget Robson of Hartley Avenue, Leeds.¹ Yesterday I telephoned the school and spoke to a young man who promised to give her a message that I would be there on the 10th. I had a vague feeling he would forget.

I drove to Leeds with a mixed sense of curiosity - a feeling that Leeds Free School had fallen upon hard times. Bridget had told me in her letter that they were going to use a variety of different houses because they were leaving a church hall. I drove in my newly-purchased 1966 Riley to Barnesley, which eventually merged into Wakefield, which became Leeds. Leeds was in the usual mess that one has grown to expect to find cities in: "poxy" little streets (a friend in Looe, Cornwall, once used that word to describe that place, and it has stuck with me, and it sprung to mind about the third time around one of Leeds' unmarked and seemingly exitless roundabouts) winding between huge skyscrapers and office blocks. Everything seemed to be in some sort of state of "renewal".

Eventually I found Hartley Avenue, a small street of terraced houses, poorly kept and grimy. My knock on the door of No.23 produced a girl, half-asleep and quite disinterested (or possibly ill) who listened to my enquiries about Bridget; said she wasn't in, tore off a small piece of paper from a pad and invited me to write a note. I told her that I had written recently from St. John's in Canada, and that piece of information got me into the kitchen, where I sat at one end of a dirty kitchen table while she sat at the other, saying nothing.

¹The letter from Bridget Robson is in Appendix 11, Item 41.

The house appeared to be the home of some sort of commune - a group that seemed to be involved with a variety of things, if the posters and scrawls on the wall were anything to go by: women's groups, support for the Mexican miners, and a poster of Che Guevara. While I sat there vainly trying to get some information from the girl, whose name is, I think, Margaret Denny, a second young woman came downstairs in search of some Gestetener paper. She ignored me completely - not that we were introduced - and went back upstairs, having failed to find what she wanted, and cursing like the proverbial trooper. A few minutes later - time that had passed, incidentally, in complete silence - a third woman entered the kitchen, this time from an outside back door. She was short and brown-skinned. She also ignored me. The pair - my silent hostess and this woman - discussed tactics for a women's group meeting scheduled for later that evening. It seemed from the discussion that "They" - a majority of the group members described variously as "conservative", "straight" and "out to take over the group" - seemed headed for victory in elections planned for the evening meeting. Miss Denny, at one point, shrugged her shoulders. The brown skinned girl pounced, thumped the table with her fist, accused Margaret of being negative and, screaming "You don't want me in the group" several times, stormed out, slamming the door.

I left.

It was all rather depressing. It will be interesting to see if Bridget telephones.

September 23, 1974.

I left Sheffield on the 7:52 a.m. train, en route to Liverpool to meet Ira Tolbert, assistant to Eric Midwinter. Ira met me at Lime Street station at 12:00 noon. We took a bus to Scotland Road. He is American, studying the Liverpool E.P.A. project for his Doctoral thesis. He has been here for one year. Over lunch, which was taken in a small, greasy cafe off Scotland Road, Ira told me about Midwinter's "action-research". Ira's - and Midwinter's main concerns - seemed to be the political opposition their methods received from local principals, politicians and some University lecturers, all of whom seem very suspicious of anything different from traditional approaches, which Ira told me, waving his hand in a gesture along Scotland Road's depressing flats and terraces, obviously wasn't working very well.

Ira explained to me the difference between the E.P.A. and everything else in Liverpool. The local state school system was, largely, as it had always been: the free school had been a radical experiment; the E.P.A. did not advocate free schooling, nor was it very impressed with the state schools: it simply sought alternative ways of making the state system more relevant to the local children.

Scotland Road, indeed all of Liverpool, has, according to Tolbert, incredible cultural problems, stemming from blunders in city planning that placed the University and two cathedrals among the cultural and aesthetic ruins of the Scotland Road slums; to the opposition to any change of the local educators, particularly the Headmasters of the Catholic secondary schools. For example - and this amazed me - when Scotland Road Free School was closed, albeit by the combined efforts of the city council and the

education committee, these same Headmasters refused to take the Free School pupils back into their schools, and the local authority has had to establish its own centre for them at Blackstone.

Fish, chips and tea over, we returned to the E.P.A. centre, where I met Midwinter, whose first words to me were "You know my thinking about free schools, don't you? I think they should stay within the system." This was really a passing shot as he flew by to some meeting. Later in the afternoon he gave me an extensive tour of the centre - which is housed in a disused school - and listened to my descriptions of various alternative projects in North America. Action-research obviously means a lot to him. He introduced me to three of his project workers, Bill, Jack and Gerry. Jack, apparently, might have been principal of Blackstone if he could have got leave from his headship elsewhere. Midwinter's very witty, and his passing shot as he left for home that afternoon was "I'd like free schools more if they were less totalitarian!"

Ira and I talked for a while about another of the project's concerns: the apathy of local teachers to the changes and reorganization that they proposed; and the similar apathy of the local people. Midwinter's view was, according to Ira, that most of the people there had seen "dogooders" come and go and nothing had ever really changed.

Then I went home.

September 24, 1974.

An early morning train got me into St. Pancras by 11:00 a.m., and in the afternoon I went to visit Elsie Fisher. I'm not entirely sure why I came all this way to see her. She used to know A.S. Neill, and she had replied to my first letter to her last August. Why did I write to her? John Downing, who works with me in Victoria, B.C., suggested I look into the educational problems of gypsies, which I'd love to do, but will leave for someone else!

Elsie Fisher lives in Hanwell, a western London suburb, in a thatched cottage opposite a park. She's quite old - well into her seventies, I would imagine. I had trouble rousing her. I rang the bell, slammed the brass lion against the front door a few times, all to no avail. I was actually walking away, remembering Bridget Robson, when she appeared from a remote corner of the garden and ushered me into her dark study. Cake and tea appeared very soon. She asked me to cut the cake, I remember, and I wondered why. She seemed to read my thoughts and told me she couldn't hold the knife very well. I did not ask her much about herself: it would have been fascinating to listen to her, but she was treating me like an honoured guest (she'd made the cake for my visit) and it would have been vulgar to have probed her life. She was once the editor of New Era. Neill used to write for that magazine. She had spent most of her life in community and adult education. She described Neill as "a marvellous old man".

She wanted to talk about Canada, which I did not. She had heard, she said, much about it, and had the impression that it was pleasant, wild sort of place. A local rugby team she knows spend a lot of their time in Canada out of season - "no careers, living as hard as they can" she said, approvingly. She's a very free spirit!

I asked her about education. What did she think it should be. Children, she replied, should be taught precisely what they want to know, and nothing else.

Then I mentioned the gypsies, which have been foremost in her thoughts for the past few years. She told me that there were "sites" all over England, but that the gypsies were persecuted a lot. She liked - and respected - their sense of freedom; and the persecution of them bothered her a great deal. She told me a little about their origins (East Asia and Egypt, from where they got their name "gypsies"), and of the hundreds of years of wandering, many of which were spent in Hungary. She told it like a personal memory, as though she'd been with them all the time. I cannot remember a more beautiful experience than sitting there, listening to her.

She talked about Britain's 30,000 gypsies, many of whom live in houses, but are always anxious to be on the move; others living in caravans on permanent sites; others just wandering. "They've got very itchy feet - just can't stay in one place." Mainly, they are scrap merchants and seasonal farm workers. Many are illiterate. They want their children taught to read and write and nothing else.

I left her feeling as though I had stepped back in time. The old house, and this marvellous old lady with a sparkle in her eyes, and a love for the gypsies.

Wednesday, October 9, 1974.

I was spending the week in London with my wife and daughter; they were visiting the zoo, art galleries etc., while I hunted out free schools and people associated with them. In this afternoon I had a meeting scheduled with Michael Duane, ex-Risinghill, currently working with some students of Dartington Hall. At 10:00 a.m. I phoned the New School to introduce myself and ask if I could meet them. Leila answered the telephone. I told her my name, said I'd written from Canada, but received no reply, and wanted to meet them. She said no: they had been inundated with visitors, particularly first-year education and sociology students looking for material for essays. I said I was a University professor and, among other things, trying to find out what went on in British free schools; that I wouldn't stay long. She said "Wait a moment."; consulted with her colleague; returned to say I could come at lunch time.

It didn't really surprise me to find the school in a basement flat: it did surprise me a bit when I went in, to discover that the two rooms comprising the school were Leila's bedroom and her children's bedroom, and a small kitchen. My initial comments and observations were inevitably of the kind that make visitors such a nuisance. Over coffee I ascertained that most of the furniture and stereo equipment in the room, and many of the books belonged to the apartment and not the school. Leila talked to me about our common free-school experiences in North America, while Sue Israel played and worked with the kids.

To someone unused to the free schools, the children would have appeared to be doing little more than "messaging around": one playing with Leggo, another drawing something; several others playing a "trusting game" in

which they had to fall backwards into the arms of another child and trust the other to catch them - something they found difficult to do. A group of boys was making a great noise in the other room.

I stayed all lunchtime, and into part of the afternoon, and we talked about the problems of running the school. I detected then some indication of the difficulties the two were having: "We need a man here," Sue said. "We're going to be closed by the D.E.S. before long," Leila said. "I.L.E.A. are a bunch of real fuckers," Sue said. "They know we're having troubles; they know we're helping solve the most embarrassing problem they've got; they know we've had a rough time; but they won't help us at all. They won't do anything other than hover there, watching, but doing nothing."

I described the new teacher-training program I was hoping to direct next year at the University of Victoria - a program designed to produce people who could work in British Columbia's free and community schools; a program with no set courses and a large travel budget. They were interested: said there was little hope of anything like that ever happening in Britain. Soon afterwards I left, saying I would like to return for a few days and make a film with the children. They liked the idea, and I said I would call in a couple of weeks.

Afterwards, I understood why they were so loathe to have any visitors: so often visitors come with the same old questions; they offer very little, take up a lot of time, then leave.

I was also very interested in how the school came to be the way it was. It was clear that Leila, who is American, brought a lot of her experiences in America to the school, and some of her attitudes and abilities - particularly concerning crafts such as macrame, weaving, massage etc. were very familiar to me, and contrasted with Sue's interests in painting,

modelling, dancing and word games. I wouldn't want to imply any cultural difference here, but merely to observe that most American free schools place a good deal of emphasis upon weaving crafts and body-contact, whereas the British schools do not.

Tuesday, October 15, 1974.

Sue Israel telephoned me today. I wasn't expecting it, in fact I had already decided to call Leila next week and ask to visit again, with cameras.

Sue asked if I really was going to come again. I said yes. When? I told her. She asked if I could come sooner. I asked why, and she said they felt they really needed a man there for a while, that they wanted me to help the kids make a film, and that there were one or two organizational problems I might be able to help them with.

I discussed the matter with my wife, Margaret, and told Sue I would be down the following Monday, and would stay all week. It was agreed that I would stay with her and Tim and their family in Chiswick.

Monday, October 21, 1974.

I arrived at the school in the mid-afternoon, and was warmly greeted by Susan Israel and Leila Cadaman and ignored by the kids. One other adult, a middle-aged man named George, was cooking something by himself in the kitchen.

I made a paper plane for Toby, Sue's five-year-old adopted son, who wanted to match those of the bigger boys, but had no idea how to do so. My plane proved to be the best around, so I had to make more, and teach the design to the kids. We flew them in the streets, marvelled at how beautifully they skimmed across the shiny bonnets of parked cars; we discussed the relative merits of different planes and why mine flew better than a very large, beautifully decorated one made by Lawrence, the oldest boy at the school, and considered something of a mechanical wizard; I explained what little I knew about the principles of flight, and we adjourned to the back bedroom, which we set up as an aircraft production centre and testing ground. Mordecai, Leila's eldest son, stormed into the room to announce that his very large craft, which he regarded as Concord, had been viciously attacked by Angelo's spear-shaped fighter, while cruising at about ten feet down Sinclair Gardens. War was declared, sides taken, production increased, experiments about the best and most accurate type of plane intensified, and a dog-fight staged in the street, which only ended when three craft belonging to Angelo's force got lodged on a high balcony, and Leila Cadaman said it was time to go home.

That evening, with Sue Israel and her husband, Tim, I asked a lot of questions about the school - so many, in fact, that we agreed it was perhaps better to ask the questions than to try and form answers at that stage.

(I was expected, naturally enough, to say what I knew, to recount my experiences in starting the Montreal Free School and the Victoria Community School, and to describe in some detail the teacher-training programme we were expecting to offer at the University of Victoria next year.) I also learned about the school, its history, Sue's problem now of keeping it together, her hopes for it, Tim's scepticism. What should we do now? Sue asked if I would stay, at least on weekdays, for three weeks, analyze the school and re-design it. I explained my own point of view, namely that I was not particularly interested in any so-called free school which refused to be structured; that I have considerable experience in systems design and planning, and had applied some pretty tightly organized designs to the Victoria Community School, which had, it seemed, succeeded well enough. I find systems design extremely boring, but time and again it has proved useful. Tim Israel, who is about 30 years old, and teaches classical guitar at two local schools, was thrown out of Summerhill by A.S. Neill because, as Neill put it, there seemed no point in his being there. Tim expressed this evening some regrets that while he was at Summerhill he had not been better organized. While he remained a close friend of Neill's until the latter's death, Tim felt that Summerhill students had suffered a little at the lack of organization leading to some sort of skill. He was, therefore, in agreement with me about the need to structure the New School. He accused Sue and Liela of not knowing what they wanted for the children, and said he was much more likely to work at the school if he thought it was worthwhile.

Sue explained to me that her childhood and upbringing was very different from Tim's. The daughter of one of Britain's leading Communists (her maiden

name is O'Flannery), she lived in a house continually frequented by political figures such as Michael Foot and Hugh Scanlon. Her father has been very rich, very poor, very drunk and very sober. She was sent to a convent school: she disagrees intensely with much of what her father stands for.

I was interested that both she and her husband sought to establish an environment which was the opposite of what they had known as children.

Sue Israel and I agreed, then, that we should work together, to re-design the New School. So then, to begin, she showed me a letter she had recently received from a Miss Taylor of the D.E.S. It was, she said, the first threatening letter she had ever received in her life. It stated - very coldly, I thought - that a Mr. Salter, who had paid an official visit to the school to inspect it, was not satisfied with the premises or education at Sinclair Gardens, and that unless certain quite specific improvements were forthcoming and the D.E.S. received some clear indication that the children were receiving a decent education, the provisional registration would not be renewed. The letter ended with a reminder that it is illegal to run a school without registration. Mr. Salter, Sue added, had asked her whether or not the fact that she didn't wear a bra might have a disturbing effect upon the children, to which she replied that she imagined it did.

Just before we went to bed, at about 3:00 a.m., Sue said: "By the way, I hope Anna's remark about you being another of my boyfriends didn't bother you." I remembered the child saying this in reply to a casual "Who's he?" asked by one of the school kids. I said it hadn't bothered me at all. Sue continued, "Only I've got a lot of male friends, and the kids know that I love quite a lot of people. But they all come from weird and broken homes, so they don't understand how rich human relationships can be."

Tuesday, October 22, 1974.

We were all pretty tired at 8:00 a.m. when Hannah, aged 3, and Toby woke us up. Hannah screamed a great deal, and Sue didn't seem to cope with it very effectively. School supposedly starts at about 9:30 a.m., but it was almost 10:00 when we got there and Liela was mildly annoyed at our lateness.

Planes, and the two 8mm. cameras I had brought with me, took up much of the morning. I vaguely suggested we might make a film eventually, but I didn't press the point. The kids were very intrigued with the cameras, and spent a good hour pretending to film each other. I imagine they'll get around to doing something with them eventually. Mario, for whom I had just made a jet fighter, suggested we film the war that was planned for that morning, but the idea did not seem to appeal to the others, whose main objective for the day seemed to be the total vanquishing of the enemy.

Strangely enough, the war never did materialize. Lawrence stumbled upon a new design which made my original plane look very amateurish: a wider-winged, heavier-looking thing that cut through the air to its target like a great spear. Why? How? Mordecai was shocked and, I suspect, because he knew he'd lose, asked Lawrence to show him how it was built. I was interested too, so a spirit of collaboration replaced the previous animosity. Toby and Hannah had some bubbles, and Sue pointed out how exquisite they were. Several other kids joined the group and they played for most of the day. Certainly Toby did nothing else. Yesterday he'd spent all day with the planes; today it was half planes and half bubbles. By the end of the two days he seemed to have accumulated an enviable amount of knowledge about how things float and fly and land, and crash and burst. Sue showed

them strong bubbles, big ones, small ones; heavy and light bubbles. They joined several together, even tried, with the aid of a straw, blowing small bubbles inside large ones. They examined reflections on the bubbles, colours, distorted shapes, and became increasingly disappointed as each new possibility burst.

Toby said to me, "That was a beautiful one, and now it's fuckin' burst."

"That's life," I replied.

"No it ain't," he answered, "It's just a bubble."

I began to realize that Sue was much more into the whole school than was Liela. I imagined it must have been awful having a free school in her bedroom; and I was not really surprised when she implied, at lunch time, while we wrote more questions, that she hoped the school would soon find a place, and that she was not certain what her role would be. I was interested also in the extent to which there was - and is - an American influence in the British free schools. Vicki was described during lunch: an American who had taught me that his school was modelled after the First Street School in New York. The Summerhill idea got well worked over in North America, but not in Britain, and I began to wonder if the "Summerhill" model being used to some extent at this and other schools in this country was pure Neill, or the urbanized American version.

In the evening, Sue talked about her kids. Kate, aged 6, and Hannah are her own; Tody, a battered child of mixed race, was adopted, and Gane, aged nearly 11, the daughter of a schizophrenic mother who made the child vomit after every meal for fear that they were being poisoned, and frequently locked her in a small room for long periods, was with the family under a court order pending an adoption.

I also learned a little about Tim. The son of an artist, very musical, and interested in trains, he teaches classical guitar, but does not enjoy it much; the pay is low, the students often disinterested and slow.

Sue said we must go to Kirkdale. Then Tim suggested he'd like to take us all back to Summerhill for a few days soon. We could stay at a small cottage he sometimes stayed at, and just be part of the school for a while.

Wednesday, October 23, 1974.

Today I tried to start the film with the kids, and had the kind of response I remember I got from a bunch of kids I once taught drama and film-making to in Montreal about eight years ago. First, there was the question of a subject. Suggestions came thick and fast: King Kong, Godzilla, a Cartoon, The Rescue Rangers, The Ten Who Died, a Ghost film, from the kids; and the relatively mundane suggestions of a supermarket, a car park and the local adventure playground, from Sue and Liela. The final decision was to make a film about Martians.

A rocket ship was needed, so we all went to the local shopping precinct to get some boxes from the supermarket. I said, "Who should we ask?" Lawrence said, "Don't ask anybody. If we ask, we'll only be allowed one each. But we need at least three each, so it's probably best to just take them."

So we took them, and walked out.

Back at school the kids piled the boxes on top of one another and called the result a rocket ship. Remembering the creativity of the previous day, I suspected that we'd done enough on the film and so I deliberately did something else. Mark tried balancing a lot of boxes on top of one another, until Jason knocked them down and a fight ensued.

I noticed today that Catriona, who lives with her mother in a commune, and is, according to Sue, very unhappy, has been reading and writing a lot. Her spelling, while unconventional, is delightful, and neither Sue nor Liela would dream of correcting it. Catriona adores Sue, and clings to her all day; much of her current writing consists of love-letters to Sue, some expressing the wish to sleep with her, and to have her for a mother. Catriona's mother

is called Snowy, and they live in a perpetual encounter-group situation, their commune containing, among other things, a screaming room. Snowy encourages Catriona, who is 6 years old, to scream, and apparently hits her also.

Snowy came to the school for a while in the afternoon, and agreed to return later to massage the kids and teach them macrame.

At lunch time we continued to write questions, and Sue wrote some answers. Liela spends her lunches quietly. Frequently she goes out, ostensibly to get lunch, but also, I think, to be alone for a while. I think she needs to be away from the school more than Sue does.

In the evening Sue and I went to a local pub. She talked a lot about her marriage. She is the only adult associated with the school, including all the parents, who is happily married. She again brought up the subject of her men friends, telling me how much she liked men, especially an architect friend of hers named Pete. Another, an American named Roger, had been close to her for a while, but had now returned to New Hampshire. She does not like America and finds many Americans very strange. Having long since given up trying to combat British insularity, I didn't pursue the matter!

Back home, late as usual, we talked with Tim about the school, and what we were doing. He seemed increasingly interested, and Sue mentioned that he had again intimated that he might be willing to work with the school if it really did get organized. We covered a lot of territory this evening. They said they were atheists, and we talked about Raudive, the German parapsychologist, and Chardin and Allegro. Sue was particularly interested in Chardin's noosphere and kept returning to the subject. Allegro's book The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross started us talking about symbolism and story

and Sue said she felt that many state schools relied upon symbolism rather than practical, daily matters. I wasn't quite sure what she meant. She said it seemed to her that symbols accumulated, and collectively produced points of view and "beliefs", and that there didn't seem to exist a school that called a spade a spade. I asked her what a spade was. "A bloody shovel, that's what!" she retorted. "Then why," I asked, "do you use the word to refer to black men?" Tim asked, rhetorically, if it was ever possible, in education, or in daily life, to get any further into a thing than personal opinion. We talked about a remark I'd once heard Colin Cherry make, that emotions were the only facts.

"You see," Tim said, "Schools are a load of rubbish. They don't take a kid's feelings into account at all. The only thing that merits any kind of formal instruction is a skill, or a craft. All this morality and discipline crap in state schools is garbage - just a trip the adults lay on the kids so they can keep their jobs. If we could have a place for kids where we tried really hard not to lay any trips on them, but just love them and get them working as helpers and apprentices, we'd probably have a good place."

Thursday, October 24, 1974.

We talked, between planes and bubbles, about simulation and gaming. I taught a course to a group of Educational Technology students at Concordia University the summer before last, and did the whole thing in a series of simulations. I've also tried it several times with young children and always enjoyed it. The question of theatre games and the lack of organized drama in the school was touched on. I wanted to try simulation with these kids, so I went into the back room with four pieces of sugar paper taped together to make a large sheet. I put it on the floor and started drawing on it. Kate came up. "What are you doing?" she asked. "I'm pretending I've got lots of money and that I'm a school designer," I replied. "An architect?" "Yes," I said, "possibly an architect." "My mum's friend that she loves, Pete's an architect."

I drew some lines on the paper, roughly the same shape as the floor plan of a legal squat Sue had described.

"That's the building," I said. "And this is the garden." Kate asked, "Can I be an architect too?" I replied, "You can be the architect, and I'll be your assistant." "Well, we'll have a conker tree there then." She drew a tree in the back corner of the garden. Mario sat beside us, felt-tipped pen in hand. "We've got to have somewhere for the planes," he said loudly. It was decided by Mordecai and Jason, who had been watching, that the garden would be too small for an airstrip. What was really needed was a large sandy area so that when the 'planes nose-dived into the ground they didn't get wrecked. Mario, who had one of the fastest 'planes, had the answer. "A nearby desert. That's what we need!" So a sign was drawn and an arrow directed "To the Desert."

Lawrence felt that the planning crew needed a military man; Mark felt that it needed a good organizer; Mario and Jason said it just needed a bunch of kids to say what it was they wanted.

We spent over two hours designing the school. A copy of the plan is in Part 1, page 136.

Sue and I went to the Kensington Children's Bookshop in the afternoon and listed a large number of books we wanted for the kids. I managed to buy myself the recording of Alice in Wonderland that I'd been searching for for two years. Later we talked about the statement we were trying to make about the school. It was obvious that we were going to have to list all resources the school had. Some were in Sue's basement - hastily removed from Norland Road; others were in friends' homes; £800.00 worth of heating equipment was still in Norland Rd.; everything else had been taken by the truants. So, two lists were necessary - one of what we had, and one of what we wanted. The latter list had to be made up quickly and sent to two charities who had recently indicated they would give us some money.

I brought up the usually touchy subject of educational philosophy, and its place in the statement. My point was that there were two types of free schools, as far as I could see. One was a rebellious thing which, for better or worse - usually worse - seemed time and again to attract a certain kind of "freak" who, for all his or her good intentions, was essentially transient. This has happened numerous times in North America, and I know it has been the case here. The other kind of school appealed to a particular type of "Middle-class" family - "regulation trendy", Sue immediately called it, who was frequently well educated, professional, and willing to put money into a good idea. In some ways The New School had started like this, and then,

for its own survival, incorporated the truant children of the out-of-work and the poor.

I said I thought we should go by the latter route in our new statement, and make every attempt to appeal to a wide cross-section of parents. We should, I thought, aim for a total population of thirty children, of whom about half were "referrals" from I.L.E.A. If we were assuming that parents who were prepared to send their kids to a private school - especially one like this - were uninterested in the school's philosophy, we were making a mistake. Sue agreed and added that the only agency who would show no particular interest in our philosophy was the D.E.S.

We agreed that we had certain things to do; get out of Liela's flat; get the appeals to the charities organized; get the statement composed and published; and try to persuade Hammersmith council to give us a large house.

We had been talking on our way to the Kensington Evening Institute, where we were to meet and listen to David Head, the Christian preacher turned agitator for education reform. David had recently edited a little paperback entitled Freeway to Learning which, with all due respect, I can only describe as one of many collections of essays about what's wrong with education and how to put it right. He was teaching the last session of a course on alternatives in education - the first course of its kind to be offered for many years - and we all listened to his account of the work of Paolo Friere. He had two guests: one a woman who was deliberately keeping her daughter out of school, and whose daughter described quite eloquently what it was like to be in a school where the teachers kept resigning and where the only ones who stayed did so because they got promotion that way.

The other guest was a woman who was running a small urban free school near the Elephant and Castle, called The Bermondsey Lamp-post. I was quite

surprised to realize that Sue didn't know of her and she knew nothing of Sue. The Bermondsey Lamp-post took in truants, and I.L.E.A. was offering some financial help to the staff.

I was not very impressed with what I saw this evening. The philosophical meanderings, murmurs of anguish and annoyance, accusations flung at that nebulous thing "the system", and the inevitable, but half-hearted conclusion "We must keep in touch and get together sometime," reminded me of Montreal about seven years ago, and how sick I had' grown of all the cliches. But there, at least we had known each other, and those who tried to do something kept in touch. Here in London, it is so different. David Head is not very effective: very pedantic; among the free schools, few of the people know each other, far less collaborate or pool resources. But it's the lack of constructive ideas, of organized, detailed, well-informed action that is most bothersome. Theodore Roszak once wrote, in Sources, "Knowledge is power. And power is politics." If that is so, the freedom-fighters of the education movement here don't stand a chance!

Andrew Mann, of the Children's Rights Workshop, came back home with us after the meeting, to listen to our plans and advise us. If it worked out, he said, it would be a big step forward for the free school movement. The idea of designing the thing, rather like the very successful White Lion Street Free School, really appealed to him: "Getting rid of the lunatic fringe" he called it. He asked for copies of the statement both to give to parents and to use as a philosophical base for the movement. He said that the trouble with even Alison Truefit's booklet How To Start A Free School was that it lacked any strong base, and that few free schools could explain in depth why they did what they did. He also said we should ask Hammersmith for a house.

Friday, October 25, 1974.

I sat at home this morning and wrote what I could about the school, and tried to plan what I was trying to do. It seemed to me that the job was to try to put together something close to the hearts of the people in the school, and I began to list my observations.

1. Sue and Liela refuse to send their kids to regular schools, primarily because they don't like the regimentation. They deny the right of any adult, at any time, outside of family, to tell their child what to do, and expect that the child would do it. They see no virtue in discipline or obedience within schools. They regard schools as prisons and most teachers as child-minders. They feel very strongly that children have no rights at all, and that many autocratic teachers thrive on this. (They particularly enjoyed my description of primary schools: "The helping hand strikes again!") They consider most teachers to be conservative, middle-class, part of a dying and irrelevant culture, and very undignified. They saw the truancy problem and the raising of the school leaving age to 16 as indicative of the dislike many children have for school, and the authoritarian methods of control used by government.

2. The parents of the children who attend the New School are, by and large, sympathetic to Sue's and Liela's point of view, and do not want their children in the regular schools. But also, they do not want to be too involved with the free school.

3. The children at the school enjoy it. Their behaviour and language is very spontaneous: very few times during the day are they made to feel inadequate. They play all day, but as with the 'planes and bubbles, they learn a great deal.

4. Several of the children are very unhappy people at home, and rely upon Sue for their security.

5. There are no men in the school. Tim comes occasionally, and the kids like him. George turns up sometimes to make soup. An elderly, former mathematics professor who has been recently separated from wife and children, and now wanders the streets for much of the day, he has little rapport with the kids, but does a lot of little things for them.

6. The children are very active. They do not naturally sit down or, if sitting, stay still.

7. Sue and Liela place a lot of importance on physical contact with the children and with each other. They frequently massage each other and the kids: sometimes Snowy comes in and massages some of them. But I notice that whereas the children massage without spoken reason, Sue and Liela nearly always bring out some reference to 'tension' almost as an excuse for the massage. What I learn from this is that the two adults are less uninhibited about why pleasant things should be done than are the kids.

8. They all dream of a day when they'll have enough space, but they don't want many more kids or adults in the school. It's quite an insular, almost precious place.

9. Sue and Liela talk a lot about the resources in the community but don't use them very much at the moment.

10. Sue really wants to run the school. The kids love her. Liela wants to get out of it, probably not altogether.

11. There is a lot of emphasis on sexuality in the school. Discussion is very open. One boy's curiosity about the female body, or another girl's curiosity about men, are explored and demonstrated. Most significantly, the children are openly encouraged to enjoy their sexuality.

12. Sue knows quite a lot about Piaget, and wants the statement about the school to refer to the importance of the relationship between practical experiences and language development.

13. Sue and Liela are both concerned about discipline. They refuse ever to lay a hand on the children and, in the main, can find little wrong with the kids' daily behaviour. Rows, swearing and the occasional fight are seen as part of a child's growth. However, there's a point beyond which the children demand too much of them and they have difficulty coping. They now feel that certain matters in the daily running of the school should not be negotiable. I have already observed Sue in a variety of situations in which she "lost" in confrontations every time. i.e.: "Mordecai and Angelo, please help to tidy up the room."

Mordecai: "Fuck off!"

Angelo: "I fuckin' did it yesterday, and I'm not fuckin' doin' it again!"

Sue: "Please, or Liela and I will have to do it."

Mordecai: "Well, why doesn't Geoff do some? He just sits there all day writing. He doesn't do a fuckin' thing."

Sue: "That's different."

Liela: "Mordecai, stop talking to Sue like that!"

Mordecai: "Fuck you! I'll fuckin' do what I like!"

Exit Mordecai and Angelo. Five minutes later Sue and Liela clear up the room.

Or:

Sue: "Mark, where are you going?"

Mark: "To the shopping precinct."

Lawrence: "He's coming with me."

Sue: "Where's Toby?"

Mark: "He's coming with us. He's gone already."

Sue: "Mark, Lawrence. Toby's only five years old. Look after him. And I do wish you'd told me he was going."

Mark: "Why?"

Sue: "Because he's my son, and he's too young to go off alone!"

Mark: "Well, if you're worried about him, go and get him!"

Exit Mark and Lawrence.

Enter Toby.

Toby: "Come on, you guys."

Sue: "Where the hell have you been? You should never go out by yourself"

Toby: "Well, I wanted to."

I think I'll take a leaf from Thomas Harris's book, and suggest that one of the paths towards being "O.K." is the existence of a few basic rules, made, if need be, by adults, and obeyed by everyone. After all, Neill was an autocrat.

13. The school has no money. Charging fees puts some people off, and has given it a certain "middle-class" stigma that Sue does not like. Also, by charging, it is not eligible for any money from ILEA. Furthermore, the parents don't pay regularly, and certainly not in advance. The only one who does, is a hooker who pays in full, in cash, at the beginning of the term. Abolition of fees would make the school more eligible for funding. If we renamed them "subscriptions" we'd get around it.

Monday, October 28, 1974.

I arrived at St. Pancras at 5:40 p.m. and was happy to see Tim and the four kids waiting there. Gane gave me a big hug; then Kate did the same; Toby ignored me, but whispered afterwards that he was glad to see me and had I brought him any sweets? Hannah sat on my knee the whole way home.

After dinner Sue and I went to meet the Trustee Alan and his wife Caroline. Alan is an executive with I.B.M. He owns several houses: his own home is filled with Victoriana, and has a kitchen which Sue had previously described to me as being "full of machines that make frightful noises."

It was immediately clear that Alan and Caroline appreciate, if distantly, all that Sue is doing at the school. Alan seems to take his obligations as a Trustee very seriously. We talked about the school, and about the ideas Sue and I had formulated. They seemed glad that Sue was getting some support, and particularly pleased about the proposed re-organization.

We drank a lot of cheap Spanish wine during the evening, and Sue became quite drunk and incoherent. And, towards the end of the evening, when Caroline suggested to me that I not let Liela feel that she was not included in the plans for the school, even though she was thinking of leaving, Sue took offence, assuming the inference to be that she dominated the school. We went home soon afterwards.

It's interesting the extent to which personalities and perceptions affect the school so fundamentally. I suppose it's partly because there are so few common rules and no bosses. I would imagine that coming to terms with that sort of things was more difficult for the adults than for the kids in the school.

Sue's drinking habits are beginning to bother me. She seems to bear the responsibility of the school very heavily. Gane's case comes up before the courts next week, and Hannah has some sort of urinary disease which makes her very uncomfortable and bad-tempered. Add to this the fact that Liela is thinking of quitting and there's no known replacement for her, and I guess I can understand why Sue has a few drinks every night.

We've been out on a couple of occasions. She leaves the children with Tim: and remains quite tense and subdued until she's had her second Scotch. Then she relaxes and is, for a while, quite pleasant company. However, should she happen to have a couple more drinks, she rapidly becomes a little incoherent and very easily offended, particularly about the school. I think she is very worried about the school, and not entirely sure what to do about it. She told me she would have closed it two weeks ago if I had not agreed to come here.

This evening, she kept me talking until 3:00 a.m. and while it will soon wear me down, I'm increasingly curious to see how long she'll go on like this, and whether or not any success we may have will calm her down.

Wednesday, October 30, 1974.

I spent this morning at home writing, and the afternoon at the school. Even I, after such a short time, can see what happens to the children here. Catriona, who cried herself to sleep each night not long ago, is laughing: Mark, who was so arrogant, is fast becoming very considerate and enthusiastic about the school. Anna, who, Sue told me, was very unhappy at home, seems so sweet and constructive.

In the evening we met a very strange woman named Peggy Cox who, we were told, knew where the empty houses were in Hammersmith. Peggy has two children. Last year she was forcibly evicted from her home one morning while her husband was at work. The family squatted for a while in various houses, and now have a legal squat in Hammersmith. She is trying to start a youth centre for the many young people truanting from local schools, who have been wandering the streets around her home. She seemed quite pleasant when we met her, but suspicious that we might be treading on her toes, which I took as yet another indication of the lack of co-operation between people concerned about the same things. Her husband seemed surly and uncommunicative, and only spoke twice during the evening, to stop his child from touching something. Two other women at Peggy's house seemed interested in our visit, but also suspicious.

Peggy offered to walk around the area with us, to show some of the houses. It was about 9:00 p.m. She took us through several dreary streets to a place called Galena Road, where there was an empty house. Several of its windows were broken, and the door was padlocked. Peggy assured us it would be a "good squat", and she'd get us help to move in and as much free paint as we wanted on the following day, if we wished. Apparently what you do

is break in, establish yourself, then tell the council you're there; they then charge you a nominal rent of about 75p. a week, and you can stay until the place is pulled down.

The house next door looked equally squalid, and was occupied by a middle-aged black man, who, Peggy said, had the key to the squat. We knocked, disturbed him in the fifth round of the world heavyweight championship fight, were invited in, and given some red wine. We sat for 30 minutes, until Mohammed Ali had won. I looked around the room, not being very interested in boxing. There was a table, covered in beer cans and bottles, a single-bar electric fire, bare floor boards, two old arm chairs, and two wooden chairs, all aimed at the television set. We talked about boxing and about wine. There was no key to the squat, but the man knew how to break into the place. "That's what the dossers do - climb up the coalshed, up the kitchen roof and in through the bathroom window." He lent us a flashlight.

Peggy and Sue kept watch for the police, while I got into the house and looked around, clambering over piles of old, damp magazines, an old bed, a broken sink, the remains of a fireplace, and a small, overturned chest of drawers. The house had six rooms, each of which was basically sound: the bathroom had no toilet. The kitchen looked alright by flashlight. I remember the ceilings were rather attractive.

Getting out was easy. Peggy and Sue were sure a passerby had seen me, so we hurried away. I gave the flashlight back. The man said, "Now if, you understand, if the young lady is looking for a place to stay, she could lodge here with me. You understand, if she wants to. You understand?" I said I did, and, being a little concerned about the passerby outside, left.

Sue said the place looked alright. Peggy took us to another larger house about half a mile from Galena Road. It had, once upon a time, been beautiful, I imagine. It had about seventeen rooms, and a garden big enough for the zoo and commando trail of the kids' plan. It had been badly vandalized. By knocking on a few doors and asking questions, we ascertained that a trust was currently negotiating with the Hammersmith council to buy it. Sue said that a year ago Alan might have offered to raise the money to purchase such a place, but now it was of little use to ask. In 1972 he had raised £25,000 in promises towards the purchase of a place, from supporters of the New School Trust, but has not used the money.

We went home quite elated. Obviously getting a place would present few problems. There were a dozen we hadn't seen this evening. I told Sue what the black man had said, and his offer of at least a bed, or part of one. "Imagine the poor bugger," she replied, "thinking he'd got it made with the bird next door, and then waking up one morning to find twenty little kids charging around the place!"

We talked later about what seemed to be a very important factor in establishing a school: the politics of the local council. The Labour Party has suggested it would like to put an end to a lot of private education and independent schools. Labour councils seem more disposed to give empty houses to potential truancy centres, than to free schools. Possibly the Conservative councils look more favourably upon private education. Each council seems to have a few sympathetic individuals, and a few others who can be very difficult. ILEA comes into this as well. They will support private institutions that keep truanting kids off the streets, but only if the stated objective of the institution is to get truants back into regular school.

Thursday, October 31, 1974.

I spent the morning at the school. Sue seemed very strained and uptight. I think what happens to her is that as each new possibility emerges, she adds it to the very long list of things she is responsible for. She lost her temper with the kids, and was very poor company when we escaped the school at lunchtime and hurried to the nearest pub. Two scotches later she was feeling better and we went into London. We spent several hours at Galt's toy shop, near Carnaby Street, and Hamley's on Regent Street, searching for materials for the school. Our method was fairly simple: we rejected anything packaged, or not requiring very much involvement. Galt's, we decided, had a few things, but precious little beyond variations of the abacus, building blocks and buying and selling games, and models of farms, forts and garages. Precious little really, and expensive. Hamley's I found more interesting, but still full of things requiring little or no thought. I noticed how dull and badly made many of the costumes were. A pound well spent at a jumble sale would give us a marvellous dressing-up box.

We walked through Soho, past a slot-machine arcade. Sue said she had never been in one, so we spent an hour in there, and only lost thirty pence between us.

On the way home we talked about the difficulty we had experienced in finding material - playthings that were really constructive, and not simply vaguely amusing. It crossed our minds that children subjected to the daily drudgery of a regular classroom may well pounce upon these toys, but for our purposes, most of them were useless.

I asked her what toys her children played with. She said that much of their time they spend drawing, or making things. They have an old piano, and a small zylophone in their room. They like dressing up. They watch

about an hour of television a day, and spend a few minutes each evening listening to records.

Back home, Sue told me that she had arranged for us to go to Devon to stay with a friend of hers, and to visit Dartington Hall, and Monkton Wylde. Tim reiterated his wish for us all to spend a few days in Summerhill.

Friday, November 1, 1974.

I stayed at home this morning, trying to write some more of the statement about the school, while Sue, tired and irritable, took the kids to school.

I re-read Jackson's Introduction to Piaget, and browsed through a favourite book, Harris's I'm O.K. You're O.K. I'd had, this morning, the first really clear idea about the possible shape of the school. It should be thought of as a Children's Community, designed specifically for kids, following as closely as possible the kids' plan. I played around with ideas about language development, play, creativity and discipline, ascribed them to suitably respectable authorities such as Piaget, Froebel and Harris.

On the train back to Sheffield this afternoon, I wrote a description of the school I thought the kids, Sue, Liela, Tim and I would like: a children's environment, rich, and very practical, using the community resources, arranging apprenticeships, travelling around the country, using as teachers, people who lived and worked in the community.

Monday, November 4, 1974.

Sue told me the kids had made about £6.00 asking a penny for the guy, and had split the proceeds 50/50 with the school. It had resolved the problem of the felt-tipped pens.

We went for our second meeting with Alan and Carolyn this evening, and showed them the rough copy of what I had written on Friday. They were impressed, in fact excited about it. They offered comments, observations and advice, much of it useful. But, as on the previous meeting, we found it impossible to get them to commit themselves to the hard work involved in getting the thing together. I think their previous experience was enough. Rose, a teacher in a local elementary school, was there also. She also liked the statement, and the directions we're headed in. During the evening I learned of things that had happened over the weekend. Sue had been contacted by a woman teacher at a local secondary school who wanted to send some of her students to the New School one day a week. She had also been called by the Variety Club of Great Britain, and told that an application for a free "Sunshine Bus" - which is a twelve-seater mini-bus - was coming up for consideration that week, and a representative was coming to the school on Wednesday. Caroline remembered making the application two years earlier, and being turned down. There had also been a call from someone connected with the council, giving advice of how to go about getting a squat. Furthermore, Tim had announced that he was quitting work at Christmas, and might work at the school full-time. Sue had got hold of an ILEA pamphlet in which they outlined the conditions of any funding they might give. And the D.E.S. had sent another letter asking why we hadn't replied to their previous one, and what were we doing?

We went home quite elated. A number of things had come together. The Sunshine Bus thing seemed a bit of a joke: but apart from that it now looked like, with a bit of careful planning, we could get a new place, and funding from ILEA, and possible, Tim as well.

Tuesday, November 5, 1974.

Today things began to really come together. It's as if the general approval of our new statement has given us a boost. Sue looks brighter, and was not offended when I said I thought her scotches got in the way of intelligent discussion sometimes. She told me she was on a diet and hadn't eaten for two days. The kids were out all day, and made another £4.00 or £5.00. George made some soup. I think he was a little bothered when I, being a vegetarian, refused to sample from his great, steaming bowl of meat lumps and carrots.

Hunger was getting to Sue by the time we got home, and, around 8:30 she asked me if I'd go with her to the ugliest pub in London. It turned out to be only five minutes' walk away. She was right about its appearance. It was quite new, or renovated, and had, as its main feature, a waterfall, stream and lake, complete with plastic flowers and mauve lights, around the bar. One scotch and Sue was completely plastered, and totally inarticulate. I've never seen anyone so drunk.

Not long afterwards, when she was asleep, Tim and I sat and talked. He seems quite enthusiastic about the school.

Wednesday, November 6, 1974.

I stayed at home again this morning, while Sue, still drunk a little, went to the school. I finally got the grammar and language corrected in the statement, re-named our new institution "Sundance", confirmed the abolition of all fees, and took the thing over to the school.

On the way there I passed Shepherd's Bush market, so I went the length of it buying one each of every exotic or unusual fruit I could find. Then with three paper bags filled with coconut, passion fruit, bananas, quince, satsumas, ginger, peppers, pomegranate and tangerine, I walked to the school.

We put the fruits and things on the table and examined them. Mario got a microscope, Toby ate a banana, Anna cut open the passion fruit, and we all began to taste and talk about the different countries from which they had come. Then we heard footsteps, presumably from the Variety Club lady. Anna yelled, "She's 'ere, so no more fuckin' swearin' till she's gone!"

"Rocky", as she called herself, joined in quite well for an hour, then took Sue aside to talk in the kitchen. Fifteen minutes later Sue called me in. Rocky did not think we were sufficiently physically handicapped to merit a bus: besides we had no money to maintain it, and nowhere to put it. I said we were trying to give some hope to kids who were more socially handicapped; that we were going through hard times. We told her about the truants, the burning, the theft, and how close we were to getting it all together again. She said she'd think about it and left.

It was late and Liela is becoming very insistent that we get out by 3:30, so we went home. The kids had been good while Rocky was there, but obviously we weren't on the books for one of her buses.

At 7:00 p.m. Liela telephoned to say that Rocky had just called. We'd got the bus!



Thursday, November 7, 1974.

Sue and I went out all day today, and Tim went to the school. We felt good about things now. The only free school in the country with a bus. All we needed now was a building! We went to the Commonwealth Centre, which I found very dull - particularly the Canadian section.

We went to Reeves school and art supplies shop, which is better than any others I've seen, though still not very good. Also, we looked around Tridias, a toy shop in Soho. We priced a lot of things, got very specific about what we wanted, and arrived at a figure of £ 650.00 to purchase every piece of equipment we needed.

Sue is much better now. I think the bus did it. She talks now about "when" rather than "if", and while I'm back in Sheffield next week, she's going to get a lot of things sorted out. She also said she's going "on the wagon" for a month!

Friday, November 8, 1974.

Today was a really nice day at the school. The kids are thrilled about the bus and have begun planning great trips around Europe, and out to Victoria. The school reminds me a lot of the Playhouse in Victoria, a free school my daughter has attended for two years.

I said goodbye to the kids. I'll be away for at least two weeks.

We visited Andrew Mann this evening. Freightliners Free School has just got £3,400 from ILEA: White Lion may be taken over financially completely by ILEA. Andrew showed us a new statement from ILEA on their attitude towards free and community schools. If we are a community school, and if we have enough materials, and a decent building, and if we take some children referred to us by ILEA, we'll probably get financed.

Saturday, November 9, 1974.

Sue telephoned this evening. She's going to try and get into a squat on Sotherton Avenue in Hammersmith.

She's just read The Children on The Hill, and The Divided Self.

Saturday, November 16, 1974.

Sue telephoned. One of the charities has 'phoned her: they'll give us a few hundred pounds if we'll write and tell them what we want. That's the equipment problem resolved.

Sue's getting into the Sotherton Road house tomorrow, and if it's O.K. will go to the council and claim it. They just might give it to us. It's a big house - 12 rooms or more.

She and Tim went to Wimbledon today. There's a 20-room house in two acres of land on the common. It's owned either by the GLC or an eccentric old millionaire. Either way, it's worth a try.

She and I are going to Kirkdale next Thursday.

Thursday, November 21, 1974.

I arrived here in London last night, and Sue was in a foul mood, having got into an argument about her sexuality with some friends. This morning I awoke from the uncomfortable bed I sleep in on the living room floor, to discover that she'd fouled up our arrangements to go to Kirkdale. We were supposed to have gone there this morning, but she just hadn't bothered to arrange anything. So, instead, we sat around in the school. I did a little macramé with the kids, and talked to Mark, who is definitely getting more friendly, even towards the women, whom he usually hates.

Then Sue and I went out. We had lunch in a riverside pub, whose name I forget, then we walked around while she talked about her despondency, and her feeling that the school would collapse - that Liela wanted to get out of it, which I think is true. We talked also about local councils, about how she had to argue with them, plead with them; how difficult it was to get anywhere through all the red tape. The money promised by the Violet Melchett Fund may help a bit, but we won't get that until we get a place.

She talked about Sotherton Road, of how she'd tried to get in, then discovered it didn't have a garden, and then discovered that although she'd been told by the Council that the place was to be demolished in February, that simply wasn't true.

Friday, November 22, 1974.

I'm really beginning to wonder why I'm here! Sue is really depressed - so is Liela, as the school seems to get on top of them. The kids are restless as well. Catriona is getting really bitchy. We took them to Hamley's Toy Shop this afternoon and to Trafalgar Square. They were o.k. I suppose, but Sue definitely got them into a situation which required of her a level of guidance she didn't seem able to give - in fact she took off as much time as she could, then was very upset when the kids, left to themselves, took off in all directions. This interests me, this theoretical utopia, with its privileged adults.

Sunday, November 24, 1974.

After spending the weekend in Sheffield, I took the train back to London this evening. I think Sue is a little remorseful about the way she spoiled our planned visit to Kirkdale. She told me one thing that is interesting: she knows the Kirkdale people quite well, and has some of their former students; also she has taught children who are now there. They were, it seems, very reluctant to let her visit some time ago, asking all kinds of questions about why she wanted to visit, which was unusual for them. She observed that a number of her friends who have children at Kirkdale said that there is currently a lot of in-fighting and squabbling going on there.²

²Several months later, on a visit to Lifespan Education Trust, the author heard the same story from an ex-Kirkdale teacher who had left because of the bitterness among the staff.

Monday, November 25, 1974.

We took the kids to Trafalgar Square again today to feed the pigeons - which was a really interesting trip. There were, of course, no restrictions on the kids; and because it was a grey day, I guess, there were very few people there. Mark accidentally trod on a pigeon and killed it. It's quite terrifying, actually, the way the birds are all over you, and peck the seeds from your hands. Sue was better with the kids this time. However, as soon as we arrived, she took off to get some lunch, leaving me with the kids. She came back after half an hour, stayed for five minutes, then went off to the National Gallery to see the Crivelli paintings.

The kids were fun on the bus going home. They had to wait for quite a long time at the bus-stop. We were first in line, followed by about ten or twelve elderly people. When the bus arrived, and the kids excitedly got on, it was surprising to hear the abuse poured on them by the older people. "Come on, you kids, hurry up!" and "For Christ's sake get a move on!" And all quite sincerely angry, in spite of the fact that the kids climbed aboard the bus quickly, and were legitimately ahead of the complainers. On top of the bus - which was crowded - it was really quite amusing. The older people watched the ten children with a certain amount of pleasure for a considerable time, only to be shocked into silence when pretty, blue-eyed, blonde, angelic little Catriona saw Angelo about to get off the bus at the wrong stop and shouted down the aisle at him, "You fucking don't get off yet. Stupid bugger!"

Tuesday, November 26, 1974.

I took the early morning train to Birmingham, and in the afternoon visited Richard Atkinson at the Balsall Heath Community School. Balsall Heath is the site of an E.P.A. project similar to that in Liverpool. As I walked down the street, which was two rows of tight little Victorian terraces with virtually no front gardens, I was joined by a little boy. He was white, about eight years old, and pushed a bicycle along. He told me all that had happened to him at his junior school that day. Did he like school? "Not much," he replied. "But there isn't anything else to do, is there?" After a brief discussion about his bike, he left me. I walked down the half-mile long road which was, by now, filled with children of all ages, nearly all of whom were Pakistani. Their mothers were waiting for them at the doors of their tiny homes. It was a colourful sight, in what seemed to be a colourless sort of street - all those turbans and saris.

The visit with Atkinson was both illuminating and disappointing. The school occupies one of the terraced houses. When I walked in, three teenagers were playing snooker on a table in the front room, which I had entered through the front door. Atkinson was upstairs. He and his associate are both ex-Birmingham lecturers who decided to opt out of that into this school. They were both frantically cleaning the place when I arrived. Atkinson saw me and asked who I was. "Oh, you're the man from Canada. Well, I'm afraid there's a problem. I've got a very important meeting at 4:00 p.m. with a man from the council, so I won't be able to see you." We had previously corresponded by letter, and he had told me to come at 4:00 p.m. today. "We couldn't get in touch with you: you didn't leave a telephone number." He offered me about fifteen minutes, which turned out to be half an hour because

the councillor was late. I gathered that the urgent clean-up job was to impress the man, and that a possible grant was involved. Far more important, I agree, than my visit.

I learned quite a lot about the place in the short time allotted to me. There was a timetable on the wall, which apparently was followed pretty strictly. Initially, I had the impression that the whole thing was very much a "men and boys" affair, which I suppose could reflect the values of the predominantly Pakistani population. Atkinson seemed quite interested to hear about Canadian free schools, but was, throughout our short time together, preoccupied with his other visitor's impending arrival.

Not exactly a wasted day, but almost. And it left a slightly unpleasant taste in my mouth - reminiscent of other interviews I had with academics - vaguely disdainful of my enquiries.

The place certainly needed cleaning! I was surprised by the state of the back garden, which was so wild as to be impenetrable. Atkinson said that the pupils don't go out there. I couldn't help thinking of how much Sue wanted a garden for Sundance.

The school has struck me as being very poor, obviously badly in need of funding. There are two schools like this one: the now defunct Scotland Road, and Barrowfield Community School. I think Balsall Heath's community activities are as important as the school itself. Atkinson mentioned a number of committee meetings he had to attend, and gave me three copies of The Heathan, which show just how many things the school is into - just like Scotland Road was.

I left the place feeling a bit depressed by it - its lack of colour, lack of smiles: the results, I guess, of being poor and anxious for help.

Wednesday, November 27, 1974.

I spent today at Sundance. Another low day, with little more than a dabbling in things. I'm beginning to wonder if Sue can continue like this. She's sharp with the kids; she took a two-hour lunch break from them - which amounted to making them stay for two hours in one room while she, Liela and I sat and talked and ate. I would not, now, want my kid in a place like this.

Monday, December 9, 1974.

I took the train to Glasgow today. I read Lilly's book Centre of the Cyclone on the journey. In Glasgow, I telephoned the school. A girl called Stella, who has replaced the previous woman teacher, Pat, had agreed to wait at the school for me to arrive to be sure I had a place to sleep. Nice of her, and very different from a couple of the others!

Tuesday, December 10, 1974.

I spent today at Barrowfield. I met Stella, who had recently returned from the U.S.A., and Brian Addison. They were quite depressed because they had got up too late this morning to get the train to Edinburgh to be on a television programme.

I gave the kids my movie camera and cassette tape-recorder. They played with them all day. One boy asked me if I was worried that they'd steal the things. I said that I knew they wouldn't, so there was no need for him to have asked. He replied that they always stole anything they could sell at Paddy's. He invited me to go to Paddy's, a market, with them. Brian said that the kids around here steal from two types of people: weak ones, who wander around "like lambs in a den of lions" and people the kids don't like. He didn't elaborate. I wonder if I'll get my camera back!

I enjoyed being with the kids. There are twelve of them - all teenagers. They are mostly from fairly well-built 1930's style houses, or from the local council flats. But they seem to be very poor. They're all truants, and most of the boys have fallen foul of the law a few times.

During this afternoon, I met some reporters from a local "rag" called The Post. Stella was a bit bothered that so few children were there. She felt that the photographer, who was looking for kids to photograph, might have got the wrong impression. Brian had a long interview with them, and then Stella and I were interviewed. They seemed quite interested in my ability to compare Barrowfield with other free schools. I must say I was unimpressed by them.

Wednesday, December 11, 1974.

I spent this morning working with the kids in the school, which I found very interesting. There weren't many kids in today. Brian said that they often have family problems - most of them are from broken homes - they come to school when they can. We observed that truancy rates in such areas might be a lot lower if such things were taken into account by local state schools when adding up lost days.

Some of the boys were working on old Scottish G.C.E. literature papers. Brian makes them - or rather encourages them - to work on academic subjects quite a lot, and they don't seem to mind as long as they aren't being hassled, and can go outside for a smoke when they want to. They work on a different subject each school day.

We had lunch in a pub in town, with a man from the Iona Trust.

Thursday, December 12, 1974.

I spent all morning today looking, with about four or five of the kids, for a pot for the school Christmas tree. We searched all over the rubbish on the demolition site beside the school, and behind the houses, down the alleys. Finally we got one from the "ditch" - once a stream, I was told, but clogged with rubbish for years.

We spent part of this afternoon putting the finishing touches to some puppets that the kids are making for a puppet show they're putting on at the local primary school in a few days' time. Some social workers came in for a short while and talked with two of the boys. Towards the middle of the afternoon I took Gena out filming. We've had this idea of photographing Barrowfield, blowing the pictures up large, and then putting them all out on the floor and getting the kids to draw and design over them to produce a "bird's eye view of Barrowfield as they would like it to be. I've got a lot of film that they can have. Gena's guided tour of Barrowfield was enlightening. It's an awful place. Brian told me today that no-one willingly lives there: they simply haven't got anywhere else to go. It's a "hodge-podge" of flats, old terraced houses and factories. Every wall has either broken glass or barbed wire on its top; every shop window is boarded up; every wall is covered with grafitti, most of which seems to delineate territorial boundaries of the local gangs.

This evening, with Brian and a few friends, we talked about the problems he has running the school; of trying to get support from the local authorities. He said that he has just been told that three trusts are giving him a total of £14,000 but that it's a mixed blessing. He described the Barrowfield culture as based upon theft.

Friday, December 13, 1974.

I spent this morning at the school. Gena and Scobie - who has, I discovered, fourteen convictions for breaking and entering (he's 13 years old) - and I did a lot more photography. One incident reflected upon Scobie's reputation. We were wandering about the remains of a Victorian building - a small chapel, I believe it was. Scobie, who is very interested in my 35 mm. slide camera, had taken several photographs. A woman, out shopping, passed by and shouted to Scobie, "If you've pinched that, Scobie, I'm going to tell your Mother. You're a bad boy for stealing things." Scobie was obviously embarrassed, and defended himself with a string of abuse that seemed not to affect the woman at all, but rather to confirm her worst suspicions about the camera. Finally, I told her it was mine. "Then you're a bigger fool for putting it into his hands," she muttered, and walked away. Scobie was defeated. He stood by the wall of the old building, literally shuffling his feet, angry and confused. I made an excuse to go back to the school and told him that I would be grateful if he would take care of the camera until I came back in a few weeks' time. He said he would like to do that, and that he and Gena would like to take me to Paddy's Market this afternoon. I really felt for that boy. Brian says he steals because it's the most consistently lucrative way for him to get a few pounds.

So, this afternoon we went to Paddy's Market. It's under the railway arches quite close to Argyle Street. A man offered me a variety of watches as we walked in. Stella was with us, and almost the first thing I bought, for 50p., was an old jewelry box. She collects them, and had walked right past this one without noticing it, so I gave it to her. Gena took me into various brick caverns as we walked through the market. It was really just

a large flea market, with an unusually large supply of cheap cameras and watches.

In the late afternoon, I told Brian that I might be able to arrange some sort of exchange visit between Barrowfield kids and, probably, the Bermondsey Lamp-post. He seemed to like the idea. We walked around Barrowfield in the early evening to visit two homes in which kids were taking care of large families while their mothers played bingo. We spent a few minutes in a trailer parked on a grass verge of one street. This is the Citizen's Rights Trailer. Apparently people having problems with the law or the council or the school authorities can find out what rights they may have in the matter from voluntary counsellors.

December 15, 1978

I came back here to London yesterday just to spend the morning. Sue thinks she's found a place - again. We went there in Tim's car. It's a filthy little house at the end of a terrace. It's got a garden that goes right up to the railway line that runs at the back. There's no fence between the house and the railway. We had trouble getting the front door open: it was covered in corrugated iron, as were all the windows. Inside, we went into what had once been a living room. It had no floor. The remains of a sink and a tap were all that was left of the kitchen. The stairs were dangerous, but we got up them to discover that the upper rooms were more usable. There were three small rooms off a narrow corridor. "It'll do," said Sue. Tim was very excited about it, and talked about giving up his job as a guitar teacher at a secondary school to renovate the house. He said that he could get most of the materials for nothing, and friends would help them rebuild the house.

I arrived back home in Sheffield in the early evening, and almost at once got a telephone call from Sue. She had been in contact with one of the trusts that had indicated it might give her money - I guess it was the Violet Melchett Fund, and their secretary had said that if she found a building, they would partially fund the renovations.

Now, I'm reflecting on Sue and Tim. Really that house is in a terrible state, but they are like a pair of excited children. I think that Sue sees herself living in the top half, for nothing, and using the ground floor as a school. She mentioned something about that this morning.

I know they can't afford the rent in the place they have, which is small and uncomfortable, so I guess they'd be prepared to work a lot if it meant moving to larger, free accommodation. I wonder what she really wants: new schools for children, or a satisfactory life style for herself and her kids.

December 17, 1974

Today I walked along Scotland Road. I came here to Liverpool last night and stayed with Ira and his family. What did I see? Not much, really. It's just a long, ugly road, a mixture of new flats and old tenements, of news agents stores and fish and chip shops. It's mostly concrete, covered in spray-painted grafitti, cold and unpleasant. The pubs are ugly - taverns really, rather than anything at all attractive. I've spent all day just walking around. All the side roads are the same. Half of them don't go anywhere; any shops are boarded up and covered with gang slogans. The church hall where the school started is draughty. It looks like one of those cheap pre-war buildings. There's hardly a blade of grass. There's a lot of traffic.

December 18, 1974.

I spent an hour with Bill Murphy this morning. I met him at the Community Transport sheds on Leeds Road. Community Transport is one of the projects of the Scotland Road Community Trust. He told me all about Scotland Road Free School. This is what I got from it all:

- a) He's a local man, a member of the working classes, who got to a College of Education and returned home to teach.
- b) He thinks that the only people who should attempt to run free schools should be "locals" who know the condition of the kids.
- c) He regards "the system" - as he calls it - as the enemy of the working people.
- d) It was not the purpose of the Scotland Road Free School to teach middle-class values, but rather survival skills among the working classes, i.e. how to survive without the system.
- e) He despises Kenneth Richmond, who wrote articles about the free school without ever visiting it. He described Richmond's book about free schools as "a typical piece of middle-class shit."
- f) He explained that the free school was only a small part of many things that were going on around Scotland Road - one of which was the Transport Cooperative.
- g) He said that he thought that any involvement or support from "the system" was the death-knell for free schools. He had little or no interest in the middle-class free schools that I described, particularly Sundance. I guess he was most closely interested in the storefront schools of North America, and the Community Schools

like Balsall Heath and Barrowfield. He did not regard White Lion Free School or Freightliners as particularly relevant.

h) He reckoned that social change would only come about in Britain when large numbers of the middle classes were unemployed.

i) He said that there were more projects in Scotland Road now than there had been when the school was going.

I spent about an hour with some of the former pupils of Scotland Road Free School, who were working there, or visiting from Blackstone, the centre that has been established for them. They said they liked Blackstone more than the free school. They thought a great deal about Ord and Murphy.

I was glad to have spent this day this way. Murphy is my first encounter with anyone from Scotland Road. He used to make £100 a time lecturing at Colleges and Universities about the free school. In his way, he's probably done more for the free schools than anyone else in Britain. He didn't want to talk with me at first, saying he was fed up with the subject. Apparently, he rarely discusses the school now. He feels badly let down by both the Education Committee and the council. I felt that after talking with him I understood a little better just how much the school had meant to him.

December 19, 1974.

I got back to Sheffield today, and Sue telephoned. The Violet Melchett Fund has given her £450.00, so it looks like Sundance is on its feet again for a while. Tim is delighted and says he's going to work full-time on the school.

December 20, 1974.

Sue telephoned today to ask what I thought was a really interesting question: Should we tell the parents about the money from the Fund? After all, it came to us, partly because she distorted the facts a little! Sue doesn't want to tell the parents; Liela does. I told her I think she should decide since Liela is opting out of the school, and many of the parents can't even supply their fees regularly.

She also said that the Violet Melchett Fund had 'phoned again urging her to submit a further detailed application for funding in as soon as possible. She's so excited.

January 10, 1975.

Today I telephoned Gwen Lambert in Huddersfield. She had written an article in the A.S. Neill Trust newsletter about a school she wanted to start. We talked for a long time. She seemed very concerned about the political aims and threats posed by the free schools. She said she thinks that the free schools she knows about - mainly Leeds - seem to discount the needs of the children in order to obtain political ends. She also told me a few things about Leeds Free School. I explained the difficulties

I'd had with them, and she said that she'd been invited to their first meeting, but had left when it became clear that there was a lot of disagreement and dissention within their group. She felt that they were breaking up. She knows some of them, so we'll find out what's happening there.

January 11, 1975

I had a visit today from Geoff Edwards of Lifespan Educational Trust. I wrote them a letter a while ago suggesting we use their place as a meeting point for free school pupils and teachers. He told me a lot about Lifespan and said that they were hoping to start a school, but were having to work very hard just to stay alive. They would welcome help.

January 19, 1975

I took the train to London again today. Sue met me. They have done quite a lot to the school. The upstairs is now usable. I'd come down this time because Sue and I were going to visit Dartington Hall. We took the train to Barnstable, and from there got an expensive taxi through the pouring rain to Ken Sprague's house. It's called Hollwell Farm, and is beautiful. Ken is the owner of "Morning Star" and is also a very good artist. He has recently bought the farm - which was derelict when he got it - and, with his American wife, has really done a great job of converting the place into a residential summer arts-crafts and drama-therapy school.

Sue reckoned that this time she's got our trip to Dartington Hall and Monkton Wylde really well-planned. Then the taxi-driver told her that Monkton Wylde is 120 miles away, and Dartington Hall is 75 miles away.

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January 20, 1975.

We spent the day walking around Combe Martin. It was nice, but Sue is wearing city shoes, and they hurt her feet.

January 21, 1975.

Today we visited Dartington Hall. It was fascinating. We began our visit with a long talk with a house mother, about the daily routines, sex, religions, "useful work" periods, compulsory lessons, fees, expenses, teacher-child relationships, etc., which was all quite interesting. We had lunch with the kids. This happens to all visitors. We were taken to the dining room and told to find our own way around. We talked to many children. They all love the place. They were all very sensitive, very bright, very talkative, and, from appearances, very rich!

We had a meeting in the afternoon with a Vice-principal and got into talking about various matters. I don't think that Sue liked the place very much, though she seemed to enjoy the discussions we had with staff and kids. She dislikes rich children, and the people who educate them.

January 24, 1975.

Today Sue and I went to the Bermondsey Lamp-post. Sue fractured her foot, so it wasn't much of a day for her, but I really enjoyed it. They've got about fifteen children, many of whom are quite small (i.e., 2-4 year olds). The place is pretty run-down, but, as usual, there's a lot of good will there. We were received courteously enough, although they do get bugged by a lot of visitors. There are obviously a lot of people working with them. The two teenage girls we met were lovely kids. Sue Peace, who helps run the schools told us that the kids are money-mad and really not very sensitive to others. Apparently the kids just can't understand why Sue and Fred Butlin, and the others there work at the school for no pay. The kids, we were told, come from quite poor homes, and in some cases, there's not much love in their lives. We talked for a lot of time - between cleaning up a leaking bathroom pipe - about a possible exchange with Barrowfield. They liked that. I also found they were really interested in the Lifespan idea.

January 25, 1975.

I learned a lot more about the Bermondsey Lamp-post today, because, in the afternoon, I travelled to Sheffield on the train with Sue Peace and Fred Butlin, who, it turns out, live near to my home. They talked a lot about the problems of visitors, getting money, and the lack of support from various councils and local authorities. I said I'd help them prepare an appeal to the Social Sciences Research Foundation.

January 26, 1975.

I took the train to Glasgow today.

January 27, 1975.

I spent virtually all day today sanding the floors of the Community School. Brian got hold of a sander free for one day. It was horrible work, and right now I feel full of the dirt and dust of the place.

January 28, 1975.

On our newly cleaned floors today, I worked with the kids on mathematics and geography projects. Scobie gave me my camera back today. Stella said she is thinking of leaving, because she finds Brian difficult to work with. I think Brian knows this. He was saying at lunch that now that he's got some money, he wants to employ another man there and keep a woman on a part-time basis.

January 30, 1975.

Today I spent at Kilquhanity House. John Aitkenhead took me round, and I spent most of the morning in and out of rooms where children were engaged in most of the kinds of things you'd find them doing in any school.

The afternoon was taken up with a General School Meeting, chaired superbly by an eleven-year-old girl. Afterwards John explained the school to me.

February 13, 1975.

I spent today at Lifespan. I got the tour. They've got one hell of a lot of work to do!

Mostly I talked with Hylda Sims about the project with the free schools. My friend Les Black was with me. We suggested that we'd invite free school teachers to the place first, and have them taught how to do a particular job in building, plumbing, renovating, etc. Then they could bring up their kids, and supervise the renovation, while at the same time providing them with a lot of other experiences - a sort of working holiday. We asked if a couple of cottages could be set aside for the project. Hylda was agreeable to the project. Over supper we explained it to the others, and it was agreed that we would go ahead with it.

February 25, 1975.

Sue Peace and Fred Butlin visited me today, here at home. We finally straightened out arrangements for the exchange with Barrowfield. They want to stay at Lifespan on the way to Glasgow.

March 1, 1975.

David Graham came to visit me today, from Manchester. He brought his son with him. We spent about three hours talking about - what, I wonder! I found him very political. He would not discuss Parkfield Street, though that may be because he discovered that I knew a lot about it already. He's very political, and seems much more interested in Community Action than he is in the free school. I'm really beginning to wonder if there is a Manchester Free School.

Sue 'phoned this evening, just to say that Sundance is much of what she always hoped it would be. They've got twenty-one kids now, and the downstairs has a floor.

Conclusion

Shortly after this date, the author stopped travelling between schools in order to begin the task of learning the histories and practices, personalities and problems of each school, not only from the schools themselves, most of which were visited several times, but from the Directors of Education Committees, the parents, writers, and politicians who encountered the schools, and, wherever possible, the children who attended them. The letters and questionnaire responses, newspaper cuttings and magazine articles that he subsequently gathered for use in this study are gathered together in Appendix II.

A Study of Britain's
Free Schools, 1970-1977.

Geoffrey David Potter

A Dissertation for the
Degree of Ph.D.

Division of Education
The University of Sheffield

June 1978

APPENDIX II

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Item 1.

Punch, M. "Tyrannies of the Free Schools", Manchester
Guardian, May 18, 1973.

Footnotes:

28, p.20

85, p.50

The County Hall London SE1 7PB

Mr R. P. Potter, Esq.
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria,
P.O. Box 1780, Victoria
British Columbia, CANADA, V8W 2Y2

Mr R. P. Potter, Esq.
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria
Date 15 November 1976

Dear Mr Potter,

Thank you for your letter of 25 October. I hope that you will find the following information and the attached documents of use in your research.

Under the Education Act for England and Wales, it is the duty of a local Education Authority to provide in its area schools 'sufficient in number, character and equipment'. The school population of Inner London is falling and will continue to fall for some years, so there is no shortage of places in the Authority's schools, and it has to revert to its policy only to consider aid to organisations offering a 'character' of education different from that possible in a normal secondary school. The Authority has therefore selected organisations able to provide education for school non-attenders and other children with educational problems, which have accepted the six principles stated below:-

- (i) The aim is to get children back to school as soon as possible.
- (ii) The organisers of the project are willing to work in co-operation with one or more local secondary schools.
- (iii) They have sufficient financial resources to provide and maintain suitable premises.
- (iv) The Authority, in conjunction with the project organisers, selects the teachers to work under the general oversight of the District Inspector.
- (v) There is sufficient financial provision in the estimates, and a suitable teacher is available without depriving schools.
- (vi) Any arrangements are subject to review after one year.

Independent schools registered with the Department of Education and Science usually cannot accept that one of their aims is to return children to the mainstream of 'state' education. Therefore, with respect to independent schools, the Authority only recognises a responsibility to ensure that children from its area but attending independent schools, and who would normally be so entitled, are provided with free milk and meals, and so, in some cases, we do reimburse their costs.

However, aid was given for a period to Freightliners Free School because it was willing to accept the Authority's conditions. Following an

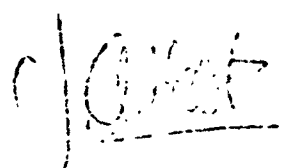
Some report from the Director, this committee was withdrawn
to summer. We are currently discussing with the re-instituted
and consideration should be given their application for a trial.

We are generally re-identifying with voluntary organizations
and the school-age children, and the authority currently
is to be done set plans. One of the enclosed documents
is a list of organizations and briefly describes their aims.
Another document explains our current policy with regard to local
children helping children with educational problems which are not
of the type warranting 'special' education. You may find of
particular interest the Little Lion experiment (not to be confused
with the free school), aimed at re-directing older pupils back
into the education system.

Further document describes two specific projects (associated
with particular schools), aimed at helping particularly long-term
problems. Other projects are currently being worked on, as well
as the development of additional Educational Guidance Centres.

I believe that the documentation will give you a reasonable idea
of the Authority's separate approaches to dealing with the problem
of truants and disruptives. Should you need any more
information, I should be pleased to provide it.

Yours sincerely,



J. A. BURT
for Education Officer

Item 3.

The membership list of the A.S. Neill Trust suggests that several hundred people support the existence of the Trust and its sponsorship of programmes related to A.S. Neill's principles. However it may be worth noting that listed among the Trust's supporters are advocates of progressive schools and de-schooling. So, although its orientation is towards free schools, not all of its members are advocates of free schooling. The list as of August, 1975, is in the Appendix 11, Item 3.

Footnotes:

35, p.23

Date of
joining

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|---|
| 17. 8.74 | | 11 + 3, 45 Avenue Road, Hallingbury, Hertfordshire |
| 2. 15.74 | John Hilton | 14 Park Road, Newbury, Berkshire |
| 7. 2.74 | Elizabeth Lane | 711 Liberty Road, Little Wymondley, Bedfordshire |
| 16. 5.75 | David Lightfoot | ditto |
| 3. 6.74 | Paul Littlewood | ditto |
| 30. 9.74 | Eric Lindeman | 209, 18 Rathbone Place, London W1P 2DQ |
| 3. 1.75 | Jan Manning | 23 Spensere Road, Little Wymondley, Bedfordshire |
| 23. 7.74 | Rony Margul | 18 Carlton Road, London W1P 2JQ |
| 8. 1.75 | Nigel Martin | 29 Elbow Terrace, Luton, Bedfordshire |
| 14. 2.74 | George Lyre | Bridge House, Church Lane, Stevenage, Essex |
| 20. 1.75 | Ken Baker | 36 Queens Avenue, Woodford Green, Essex |
| 25.10.74 | Shaz Dill | 282 Park Road, Luton MK4 3 |
| 27. 7.74 | Helen Banks | Templehill Co. Lodge, Glenborough Lodge, Auchincloss, Perthshire |
| 1. 3.75 | Dorothy Baren | Town & Country Club / Kincardineshire. 58-40 Ardnamoyn, London W11 3. |
| 9. 3.75 | Donald Barenfeld | 2811 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, Calif. 90025 USA |
| 11. 4.75 | David Barnett | 11 Claremont Gardens, London W11 6 |
| 4.10.74 | David Barton | 24 The Priory, 140 West Road, London W11 3 |
| 4.10.74 | Kerstin Barton | ditto |
| 21. 1.75 | J. Barby | 15 Albany Park, St Mary St, St Andrews, Nife. |
| 29. 3.75 | A.P. Bateman | 85 Shaftesbury Road, Brighton |
| 15. 6.74 | G. Benton | 9 Beaumont Crescent, Dundee DD5 3LS |
| 1. 4.74 | Leila Berg | 25 Streatham Common South, London SW 16 |
| 21. 4.75 | Bernardsey Lamp Post | 184 Long Lane, London SE1 1 |
| 30. 6.75 | Rubin Bild | 12 Lenholme Road, London W11 3 |
| 12.12.74 | Sarah Black | Horwood, Station Crescent, Invergowrie, D.yside |
| 1. 1.75 | Leonard Blbastrand | 27 Hurlstone Road, South Norwood, London SE25 6JD |
| 16. 7.74 | David Bondella | Abbotsby, nr Weymouth, Dorset |
| 14. 6.74 | Jeffrey Bond | 36 Hammond Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 4DG |
| 27. 6.75 | Malcaine Bonnet | 6 Rue Leschet, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland |
| 31. 5.74 | S.R.Booth | 437 Hastilar Road South, Sheffield 13 |
| 20.12.74 | Booth Wood CP School | Old Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leics., LB11 0PG |
| 8. 4.75 | Hilarie Bowman | 14 Flass Street, Durham |
| 14. 2.74 | Reggie Bradbury | 5 Tollgate Road, Margan, Port Talbot, S.Wales |
| 20. 3.75 | Annette Breitenstein | 6143 Reppenhein/Bergstr. 1, von Hees Strasse 5, West Germany |
| 11.11.74 | Stan Bremner | 41 Findhorn Place, Dundee. / West Germany |
| 7. 2.75 | Jon Bright | 30 Ross Street, Cambridge |
| 30. 9.74 | Iain Brodie | 3 Nelson Terrace, Dundee |
| 1. 6.75 | Terry Brown | 6 Manor Gate, Long Newton, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland |
| 20. 1.75 | John Bruce | 64 Stenbridge Road, Anerly, London SE20 7UF |
| 21.10.74 | Susan Burnes | 253 Brodie Avenue, Liverpool, L19 7HD |
| 4.10.74 | Sylvia Burns | 89 Rosebank Road, Countesthorpe, Leics |
| 19.10.74 | Margaret Burston | 25 Pound Bank Road, Malvern, Wores. |
| 18. 4.75 | Isabel Cobot | Pudding House, Totnes, Devon |
| 16. 5.75 | Rosemary Caple | 53 Chansborough Road, Richmond, Surrey |
| 22. 4.74 | Mrs J.Cayll | 22 The Pavement, Clapham Common, London SW 4 |
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| 16. 1.74 | Jane Catchpole | The Coach, Swan Lane, Merbridge, Kent |
| 16. 1.74 | Peter Catchpole | ditto |
| 4.10.74 | Margaret Catlin | 92 Gertrude Road, Norwich |
| 4.10.74 | Nick Catlin | ditto |
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| 16.1.74 | John Gifford | 147 North Street, Hill Top Road, Northampton |
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| 21.1.74 | John Gifford | ditto |
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| 2.12.74 | John Gifford | ditto |
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| 15.6.74 | John Gifford | 28 Eskdale Avenue, Dundee |
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 Mornings, 7 Manor Road Extension, Oadby, Leicester.

Item 4.

Moorsom, S. "Free Schools", Where, 80, 1973, p.148.

Footnotes:

37, p.24

84, p.50

121, p.88

236, p.168

Sasha Moorsom

There has always been a two-way traffic in educational ideas across the Atlantic between England and America. In recent years we have sent paddling across the waters the Leicestershire experiment, infant school teaching methods and the Open University. In our turn we have heaved up onto our shores such explosive concepts as de-schooling and free schools. 'Free schools' as a descriptive term can be taken to mean many different things. It was first used in the 'twenties and 'thirties to describe such educational experiments as Summerhill and Dartington Hall, places where, in the eyes of an outraged general public, children smoked, swore, ran about naked and didn't have to go to any lessons.

The free schools that have been springing up in American cities over the last seven years must be seen in a very different context. They came into existence in response to the urgent needs of the children and parents of particular neighbourhoods, those run-down inner city areas where families have suffered for years from multi-deprivation. They are schools that are, in the broadest sense, political; that is to say motivated by the desire to do something to alter the unjust conditions of society, conditions that are reflected in the way so many people are forced to live in such districts.

The decay and breakdown in communication that has affected such places in America is beginning to be felt in Britain. Where education is concerned it can be seen in increasing truancy and in the growing number of disaffected children going to schools that seem to them to be meaningless prisons. The kind of education these children are offered is, one that they have, in many cases, totally rejected, because they have failed in it. Free schools give them an

alternative to school - to a teaching environment that can radically transform their lives.

The transpiring behind such free schools is often frustratingly simple. The setting up of such a school is the first step towards doing something positive to change the environment. The impassioned, radical tone of such a book as Jonathan Kozol's *Free School* (Bantam Books) demonstrates the total commitment of Americans in the free school movement. The schools he writes about are, in his own definition:

- 1 - outside the public education apparatus
- 2 - outside the white man's counterculture
- 3 - inside the cities
- 4 - in direct contact with the needs and urgencies of those among the poor, the black, the dispossessed who have been most clearly victimised by public education
- 5 - as small, decentralised, and localised as we can manage
- 6 - as little publicised as possible.

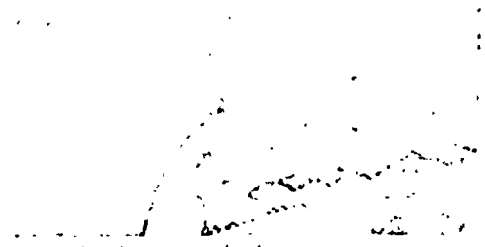
It is this kind of school that I am concerned with in this article (though clause two hasn't the same relevance to the existing English free schools). I should also add that to be included in this definition of 'free schools' they must also be free in the most literal sense of the word - that is they must charge no fees.

A new movement

I think there are enough schools of this kind now flourishing in America to be able to talk of a free-school movement over there. The beginnings in this country are too tentative and vulnerable to warrant such a term. There are at the time of writing only six or seven such schools in existence. I am doubtful about the exact number because it is not easy to get precise information about them - Kozol's clause six certainly operates here. By the time you read this two or three more may have got going.

I don't think it's possible to talk of any broad common philosophy behind free schools, since the very essence of them con-

sist in being localised groups of people who are meeting the particular needs of a particular bunch of children. The essence of the people concerned could be anything or a consist at all. The main effect of success in attempting a co-operative form of free schools would be to say that they are small and intend to remain so and that they do not believe in any coercion of the children that come to them. In both these things they are, consciously or unconsciously, following the influence of Summerhill and I think that A. S. N. They do so all right.



One of London's free-schoolers

described as the grand old man of free schools. But where they diverge totally from him is in the importance of their ties with the local community. Several of the schools are closely linked, and even share premises, with a community association.

Since generalisation, in this context, seems to me a misleading approach I will instead list the schools individually with a short note about each of them and a longer description of the first one where I was able to spend a few days observing.

White Lion Street Free School, 57 White Lion Street, London N1

White Lion Street runs parallel to Chapel Street near the Angel where on most days of the week there is one of the busiest street markets in London. 'Everyone around here', one of the parents told me, 'is on the edge. A lot of them have been to college you know - Dartmoor College.' Another teacher described the locality as 'a terrible environment'. A spot check in the borough recently showed that 600 children of secondary age were absent from school that day 'for no good reason'.

The free school is housed in what was once a fine red brick house with 16 rooms whose Georgian portico dates back to an era when the squares and terraces of Barnsbury were the comfortable homes of the genteel merchant classes. An enormous white lion, made by the school, has draped itself over the doorway and looks down benevolently, white paw dangling, onto the passers by. The windows are painted yellow, purple, red and turquoise, the downstairs windows are bright orange.

The building is leased at £100 a year from Islington Council, but the school has been responsible for all the repairs and decorations. (It took 10 weeks and the help of 40 volunteers to repair the decoration.) They are supported at the moment by donations and grants from charitable foundations. They hope in time to be financed by Islington Council and the Inner London Education Authority. The ILEA is already paying a contribution towards the cost of meals for those who would be eligible for free meals (almost all the children), and gave secondhand furniture and equipment for a token payment of £30. At the moment there is enough money to last till next summer, but not enough to pay the teachers.

There are 38 children in the school, ranging in age from three to 14, and they would not want to expand to more than 50 children. There are six full-time and seven part-time workers in the school, two of

whom five of the mothers. The school starts at first school time and the children starts to go to children until year nine and then some of the work then afterwards. The school is open Monday to Friday all through the year, holidays included, and two parents out of three. In the week it is open from 9 to 4.30 and 6 to 9, and at weekends during the afternoon. All the children have their midday meal at the school.

This means that the adults, besides teaching, are also doing caretaking, cleaning, administration, youth work and welfare work. The sharing of all these activities is a basic principle of the people that started the venture. They want to avoid the power structure inherent in existing state education. They are determined that there should be no second-class citizens doing inferior jobs and no hierarchy of authority - what George Dennison in *The Lives of Children* (Penguin), an account of the first American Street School, has called: 'all that petty and disgusting pecking order of the school bureaucracy which contributes nothing to the wisdom of teachers and still less to the growth of the child'. For this reason there is no 'head' of the school, no secretary, no cleaners. Responsibility is shared and decisions are taken mostly informally - much as they would be in a large family.

There is a weekly meeting for adults and children every Monday after lunch, and the adults meet for discussions once a week. That is the 'formal' structure. But the small size, informal atmosphere and lack of hierarchy make it fairly unimportant. Parents have taken part in meetings and may well do so more as the school becomes more deeply rooted in the community.

A working group prepared carefully over the previous year for the opening of the school in September 1972 and it is perhaps for this reason that the aims and policy of the school are clearly articulated:

We have to try and move away from institutions which are narrowly defined as 'educational' (ie schools and colleges) towards something which

is more child-centred, where children are free to explore their own interests and to learn from their own experiences. The very concept of 'education' must now be seen as providing a way of learning.

The school's approach is based on the belief that real learning is only possible when it springs from each individual's own will and interests, that the aim of education is to allow each individual, men and women, to take part in his own environment. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are essential to economy. Starting from a real knowledge of the children it is possible to individually structure their learning of these skills - of course without coercion. A real knowledge of the child involves the closest possible contact with their families and their lives in the locality. Besides the materials provided at the 'base' of the school, the media, the immediate neighbourhood, the city, and the accessible world beyond are also essential sources of learning.

Freedom for children doesn't imply a submissive role for adults. Inevitably adults are taking initiatives - in providing a building, equipment and their own skills. Total freedom is a meaningless concept, interesting only to academics. We have to provide as wide a range of meaningful and relevant choices as possible.

How does this policy work out in practice? There is very little formal structure to the organisation of the school. The children and adults arrive between nine and ten to start off the day in the large kitchen/eating room with a cup of coffee or tea and toast while they talk over what to do. A teacher may offer them certain options but, as one said, 'it's their say in the end - we don't coerce them'. There are some fixed points in the week such as regular visits to the swimming pool, the gym and the public library.

Each teacher has a responsibility group of about six children but if something particularly interesting is going on the group may swell to twice that size. As the budget of running costs is kept on a weekly basis, each teacher being responsible in turn for the money bag, outings and visits can be arranged at short notice. One morning that I was there, for instance, the whole school went ice-skating and it was a remarkable sight to see stout four year olds

standing confidence into the job. When we first began, it had been provided by two of the parents. Parents are playing an increasing role in all the activities of the school on an equal basis with other adults.

In the afternoon I noticed that one group of girls were reading a play with a teacher who has a special interest in the teaching of reading. Next door another group were writing their own play. The nursery group were outside digging on the site at the back of the school (they are making a collection of the clay pipes and old bottles that they find) and the older boys went off to Hyde Park. I would guess that no two days at the school are the same.

I wondered whether the lack of any formal organisation would impose a strain on the teachers over a period of time but they said that, on the contrary, they found it a relief compared to the rigid timetabling of an ordinary school. Sheila, who had been teaching before at one of the better London primary schools, said that she had particularly disliked:

Having to stop things when you're just getting into them, not knowing how much money is available for doing things, and having no say in the set-up of the school. It took me six months to persuade the head to let me expand into the corridor.

The teachers work on a rota basis and take their holidays at different times of the year. None of them is yet paid. In spite of this there were 200 applications to work in the school last term. At the moment the school, a registered educational charity, is provisionally registered as an independent school and is therefore outside the state system. But they would prefer in the long term to be financed by the local education authority, provided they could keep control of what goes on in the school.

The children are mostly self-referred and a third of them had been truants at their previous schools. Many of them took part in repairing the house over the summer holidays and asked if they could join the

project. Their parents were then contacted for their approval. The policy is to take only children from the immediate locality.

The parents I spoke to were enthusiastic about their children's new eagerness to go to school in the morning and felt that 'they're brighter than they were. They're learning more'. One father said, 'I gave the school six months' trial and now I'm satisfied with what they're doing'. He felt that before they came to the school his boys had been heading for trouble with the police. His wife particularly appreciated the visits the children were making all over London - to Farringham, the Old Bailey, a local bakery, museums - and the short holidays in Essex and Wales where they have the use of country cottages. 'We're just poor people ourselves. We could never afford to do that for them.' Some of the parents, to whom the ideas of the school about freedom may seem completely alien, seem to be adopting a 'let's wait and see' attitude. They will, in the long run, judge the school by what it

does for their individual children.

To me the most important aspects of the school were its smallness, the warm relationships between adults and children, relaxed and unauthoritative, the close links with parents, the open and flexible approach to learning, and the fact that the centre is open at all times of the year. They regard influencing the state system as an important role for the school, so they are serious about their relationship with local schools and spend a lot of time speaking about what they're doing. They will soon be taking their first student on teaching practice (from Leicester University Department of Education). So many people want to visit White Lion Street that they are asked to come only on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 pm. One of the teachers, Alison Truelitt, has written a pamphlet on *How to set up a Free School* (25p or more plus stamped foolscap envelope) which deals with alternative education and the law.

Brighton Free School: Ian Bickel, Top Bot, 65 The Drive, Hove

This is not the school address as they don't want visitors. There are 10 children from five to 14, plus three full-time adults. They are looking for larger self-contained premises so that they can take up to 25 children. If more than that number want to come they would prefer to start a second school. They are provisionally registered as an independent school but hope to have links with the LEA. The school was started by a group of families distressed by their children's experience in school. It is financed by donations and fund-raising.

Coventry: Owen Bishop, Polly Headly, Gerry Rogers, 37 Beaconsfield Road, Stoke
This project for a possible free school is at the beginning. The three adults work at an adventure playground where they are making contact with children regularly playing truant. Coventry Council has given them an old school building which they are repairing. They are trying to get money through fund raising and will develop in ways that best meet the children's needs.

Freightliners' Free School, York Way, London NW1

There are 17 children from eight to 15, plus five full-time adults. Freightliners is housed in an enormous disused railway yard leased from Camden Council with an adventure playground on the site. It started as two tutor groups in January 1972 to save eight children (habitual truants) from going into care. The staff do not like to think of it as a 'school' and it seems more like a very large family. They do not want to increase the numbers.

They are part of the Maiden Lane Community Centre and two of the staff are paid as teachers, two are youth workers, the rest unpaid. They have a short-term grant from Camden Council and hope to be financed by the ILEA. The school is open all the time. They have the use of an old bus and a Labour councillor's cottage in the Lake District. Finances are precarious.

Leeds Free School and Community Trust, 25 Hartley Avenue, Leeds 6, Fildes, Robinson
There are 27 children and six staff. The school is housed in an old church, rented for £3 a week but they need help in repairing it. They are a registered charity, financed by donations and fund-raising.

Liverpool Free Centre, Major Street, Stanley Road, Liverpool 5, John Ord, Bill Murphy, Tom Weld and others

There are 60 children and six full-time teachers. This was the first free school, part of a Community Trust that opened in June 1971. They have moved several times and are now housed in an old school building given them by the Liverpool Education Authority. They are open all the time. Visitors have bedevilled the work of the centre and are now limited to Fridays only. The centre is not just a school but belongs to the whole community with its own transport system of buses and coaches, a food co-operative, country cottages and a holiday scheme for local families. It is financed by voluntary contribution.

Organisation Otherwise, 45 Barby Road, London W10

David and Jean Head are trying to set up a learning community of about seven families with children of secondary age who will meet regularly and take joint responsibility for the teaching of the children.

Stroud Green Community School, 16 Ossian Road, London N4

David Kuhrt and Jane Fremonger are taking advantage of the Circular 6/70 issued by the Department of Education and Science to set up a community nursery school. They hope for local authority support and are registering as a charitable company. They hope to develop from there and will send a newsletter to anyone interested.

There is also a free school in *Birmingham* but they don't want any publicity. There was one in *Manchester* but unfortunately it closed in February. The teachers involved blamed the failure on their own inexperience and insufficient planning. A new set of teachers overruns the children involved even worse, so that they were left, with yet another experience of failure.

All free schools urgently need money for any educational equipment you can think of like microscopes, old typewriters, good children's books and reference books.

Other alternatives

The ILEA has opened several *Intermediate Education Centres*. These take small groups of secondary children who are long-term truants or in serious difficulties at school. The children are referred by the schools or welfare officers and the hope is that after a period of tuition in small groups some of them may be able to return to school. Other areas have similar schemes. It is a hopeful sign that education authorities are beginning to take some responsibility for truants, though such centres, like free schools, are only reaching a small minority of the children in need. The ILEA also has a home-based teacher scheme which Peggy Jay describes in *London Today* (1973) from 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1.

The Learning Exchange, Centreprise, 34 Dalston Lane, London E8

Since March this has operated as an information switchboard for people in East London to encourage the use of latent resources and facilities within the community and to make it easier for people who may not be registered as students or teachers to learn and teach. For instance someone might register as a teacher of Yoruba. Someone might ring up wanting to learn jazz piano. The exchange will try to find matches for them.

Schools without Walls

This group has an open meeting every Tuesday at 6 pm at 101 Gower Street, London W1, basement entrance, for anyone wanting to exchange information and contacts on alternatives in education.

Sasha Moorson is a freelance writer.

Item 5.

Mann, A. Children's Rights Workshop Newsletter, (London: Dec.,
1974), p.3.

Footnotes:

39, p.25

...not be limited to... information... different alternative... provide information... publish this "Index..." for about a year... of money and raised difficulties... 1975 (15 pence including postage)... from the "Index" in this Newsletter, including a few names to parents looking for a School for their children, as well as to parents and others trying to find or create alternative learning opportunities in their own area.

This list of Free Schools is given then, partly as a foretaste of the "Index of Alternative Education", partly because it continues to be in great demand and partly because the Schools listed have all been going for some time and have worked out their system of receiving visitors, of which we give details. This is the very minimum information for each School; fuller details will be available in the "Index". If this list is reproduced, we specially ask people always to include details of how to visit the Schools, if at all.

What is a Free School?

Another and perhaps more important problem in the listing of Free Schools is that it selects according to criteria that are as yet not generally agreed, and thus runs the risk of pleasing no one. Bearing in mind that the Free School and alternative education 'movement' is barely 4 years old, it would indeed be surprising if there were general agreement about the basic principles, methods and structure of an alternative education project, or about what constitutes a Free School.

For the purposes of this list of Free Schools, and at the risk of general disagreement, we have based our selection on the following criteria: a) these Schools are small, have a flexible non-hierarchical structure, and are housed in non-specialised premises; they cater for a small number of children - never more than a 100 - and practise a high ratio of adults to children; b) these Schools have a child-centred approach to learning and child-care, and encourage the maximum access to choice in the learning process; c) these Schools are urban and serve inner city populations; d) these Schools have been set up as clear alternatives to the state controlled educational system.

All the Schools listed overleaf satisfy, to a large extent, the 4 basic criteria above, although it is clear that these criteria are not water-tight, and certainly they could be extended to cover the method of financing as well as the kind of 'community' they relate to. On the other hand, while these 2 issues (of money and class) remain uppermost in people's minds when discussing alternative education, they are also the 2 issues on which there is most disagreement. Also, this list should reflect realities on the ground not what we or anybody else would like to see, and if we insisted that all Free Schools must a) not be fee-paying, and b) only serve their immediate neighbourhood, then this list of Free Schools would be very short indeed.

Suffice it to say that British Free Schools differ significantly from the Progressive Schools (eg. Dartington Hall,Neill's Summerhill etc.) and from the majority of Free Schools elsewhere in the world, in that British Free Schools are not rural, residential and fee-paying Schools for the children of the rich. The 3 British Free Schools listed here that started as fee-paying all say that they are working towards other forms of financing and that they cater anyway for all social classes.

Finally, we must stress that this is a list only of Free Schools, and does not include any of those other numerous alternative education projects such as truancy projects, special units, tuition schemes, home-based learning projects, etc. These will be covered in the forthcoming "Index of Alternative Education", in which the more detailed descriptions will hopefully give a clearer idea of the possibilities.

Item 6.

Mann. E. "The Newark Community School", The New England
Free Press, (Newton, Mass., 1967).

Footnotes:

43, p.26

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The Newark Community School

ERIC MANN

OUR COMMUNITY called Lower Clinton Hill all white, middle-class neighborhood where most people owned their own homes. Today, almost all of the residents live in crowded apartments and are quite poor. Our community is the same as most other Negro ghettos, but despite our problems we have reason to feel some optimism. During the past few years many of us have worked together in a local community organization, the Newark Community Union Project, and have spearheaded a movement to change the living conditions of people in our area.

The basic idea of our movement is that by working together and organizing others, people can build the power to make changes. Tenants who have spent long winters without heat and hot water, women who must sleep during the day because the rats control their homes at night, welfare mothers who have been abused by their caseworkers and exploited by local merchants, and teenagers who have had their creative capacities thwarted by an insensitive school system are beginning to feel that our neighborhood must and can be changed. Our activities include picketing, rent strikes, developing organizations of welfare clients, consumer boycotts, campaigns for municipal legislation, and active participation in—and challenge of—the local War on Poverty.

We have thus far been able to bring about some changes in peoples' immediate living conditions and have involved hundreds of people in a long-range movement to change the fundamental nature of life in our community. Our ultimate goal is to control the institutions in our community—not to substitute a local elite for an alien one, but to provide a qualitative difference in the way these institutions are run.

To us, a ghetto is not a bad place to live because its residents are all Negro or because most of them are poor. What makes a ghetto despicable—and what keeps it that way—is that the people in it have no control over the decisions that affect their lives. Store owners, welfare officials, school administrators, police, landlords and city officials are usually unresponsive to the desires of ghetto people. In fact, most often they exercise their

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power directly counter to the aspirations of the people in the ghetto. We see the creation of the Newark Community School as our first real venture into building the type of institutions we would like to see in our neighborhood.

The Newark Riot

Several months after the plans for our school began, our neighborhood was the scene of a five-day conflict which—depending on one's politics—can be labeled a riot or a rebellion. Actually, these terms are unimportant—especially to the people who participated in the rebellion. The rebels never read any of the press releases of the Office of Economic Opportunity, but in Newark, the rebellion was the first instance where "maximum feasible participation of the poor" was a reality.

In the wake of the rebellion has come a shake-up of the political equilibrium of the city. The right has moved to the right. The Negro center—middle class Negroes with no real program except that black men replace white men in government positions—has increased its militancy. The white center—the mayor's coalition of Negroes and Italians—is crumbling. The most encouraging development is that the black left is moving to the left.

This is the political context of our school. The Newark Community School will be one of the new institutions in our community that will strengthen and give direction to the growing movement on the left. Our school will become a focal point for a new group of community residents who have never been involved in political action before. We expect that other radical community groups will be part of the movement for education reform and many of our parents will become involved as individuals on a wide variety of issues such as slum housing, police brutality and the war in Vietnam.

Education in the Ghetto

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Public education for the ghetto child is largely irrelevant to his interests and creative capacities. The middle-class child, however, has more incentive to adapt himself to an unstimulating school situation. Although school itself is not particularly satisfying, the middle-class child learns at an early age to postpone immediate gratification to earn future rewards. He enters school with well-developed pre-reading skills and usually achieves reading competence with relative ease. Thus, the initial school experience reinforces postponing gratification: the student didn't particularly care what Dick said to Jane but by learning how to read he won the approval of his teacher and parents.

Immediate Gratification
The ghetto child does not enter school with the same skills as the middle-class child. The exigencies of a large family and the small number of material rewards from his parents have made the pursuit of immediate gratification a logical life style. His initial experience with nonstimulating curriculum does not produce the same success that the middle-class child experiences. The work is harder for him and he is less willing to attack a difficult and boring lesson for the promise of future rewards. Some ghetto students refuse to accept the challenge and "turn off" at a surprisingly early age.

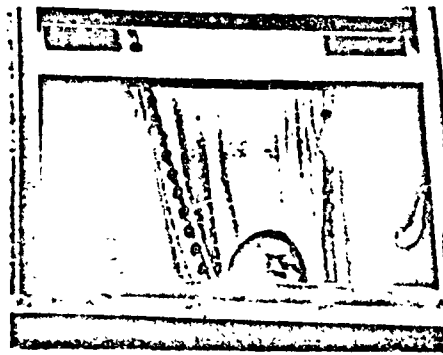
area the average reading score in the sixth grade on the Stanford October Reading Test was 1.8 years below the national average. The average score on the Stanford Mathematics test—given in the seventh grade—was 2.0 years below the national average. Recently, 150 students in the junior high school in our area were suspended in one day by a principal who declared, "Something has to be done to shock these students into proper behavior."

Like many public-school educators we, too, are deeply concerned about the academic and behavior problems of ghetto youth. Unlike many public-school educators, however, we believe that the public-school system is primarily responsible for these problems.

Public education—for the middle-class child as well as the ghetto child—is largely irrelevant to the child's interests and contrary to his creative capacities. The middle-class child, however, has more incentive to adapt himself to an unstimulating school situation. Although school itself is not particularly satisfying, the middle-class child learns at an early age to postpone immediate gratification to earn future rewards. He enters school with well-developed pre-reading skills and usually achieves reading competence with relative ease. Thus, the initial school experience reinforces postponing gratification: the student didn't particularly care what Dick said to Jane but by learning how to read he won the approval of his teacher and parents.

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Others accept the challenge and fail: they also didn't care what Dick said to Jane but despite making some effort to learn they do not get the rewards and reinforcements of reading success. A third group manages to get through the obstacle course of immediate gratification and difficult work and is on its way to developing middle-class skills.

As the middle-class child grows older the unpleasantness of the school situation often becomes a stronger force than the rewards stemming from academic competence. At this point a more fundamental reward system comes into play. By fourth or fifth grade the middle-class child is conscious of some kind of relationship between academic success and his middle-class environment. Although this relationship is often explained by his parents in crude economic terms, it is doubtful that the child studies hard because he is afraid of jeopardizing his long-range financial situation. He is, however, capable of perceiving his parents in more generalized material terms: they are successful; they tell him that school is the key to his success. His desire to please his parents and his general feeling that his parents are able effectively to deal with the world give their arguments considerable force. Learning becomes even more removed from an intrinsically rewarding activity. It gets tied up in a complex set of expectations which the middle-class teacher and parent convey to the student, and which eventually becomes internalized in the "well-adjusted" student.

Models of Failure

As the ghetto child grows older he discovers that the arguments about the material benefits of a good education are, at best, quite tenuous. He has seen most of his friends, relatives and neighbors with varying degrees of education living in similar conditions. The Negro college graduate rarely moves back into the ghetto and, therefore, does not provide a role-model for the student who is struggling in the public school. The Negro high-school graduate, more often than not, still lives in a rundown building, still experiences police abuse and brutality, and still is unable to get a good job. The ghetto family often is lacking a father, and even in families where a father is present the success models projected by the schools and television make the child increasingly aware of his parents' "failure." Thus, the ghetto students who hardly tried at all and the students who tried and failed become further demoralized as they get older. As the sequential presentation of irrelevant material continues these students become hardened into a disloyal opposition. This large body of alienated students obviously affects the performance of all the others. Even the ghetto students who were more successful in the early stages find their numbers dwindling.

The teacher in the middle-class school starts out at a great advantage. His students have already developed many basic skills before coming to his class and are reinforced by strong pressures from home. A process of mutual reinforcement takes place. The teacher, while adhering to the basic curriculum, employs a few new twists in presenting the material. The students respond by enthusiastically participating in the lesson and learn-

many basic skills before coming to his class and are reinforced by strong pressures from home. A process of mutual reinforcement takes place. The teacher, while adhering to the basic curriculum, employs a few new twists in presenting the material. The students respond by enthusiastically participating in the lesson and learn-

ing the material presented. The teacher feels successful, becomes more confident and more open, and rewards the students for their success. These rewards, in the form of verbal praise and good grades, encourage the students to continue to participate in the learning process. A whole success syndrome is created.

In spite of the large numbers of teachers who are racially and culturally prejudiced, a large minority of teachers in ghetto schools start out with a genuine concern for the students and the ability to communicate with them in a non-school atmosphere. These teachers in the ghetto schools have a terribly difficult task. They, too, try to make small innovations in teaching methods and curriculum, expecting the same enthusiasm that such improvements would receive in a middle-class school. Since they accept the basic conceptions of learning theory, curriculum and classroom discipline, however, they soon discover that their students are unresponsive and unappreciative. Their attempt to sell the status quo in the face of this student rejection produces a warfare situation between the teacher and his class. The students have little interest in the material presented, little reason to believe they will be successful someday, little reason to believe their new teacher will be different from the oppressors of previous years and little incentive to be cooperative members of a classroom group. Since the school has become associated with embarrassment and failure the only real pleasure remaining for the student is to take out his aggressions on the teacher.

"The Kids are Animals"

If the teacher is extremely competent at repressive discipline practices, he may be able to defeat the students in this war and force them to hide their aggressions behind a mask of compliance. It is the teacher who tries to avoid such repressive measures—while still trying to push the basic educational program of the school—that finds himself most victimized by the students. He is the "easy mark." As the students express their hostility to the school by verbally—and sometimes physically—attacking him, the well-meaning teacher often finds himself losing much of the sensitivity and concern he came in with. Rather than evaluating the situation and deciding the students' hostility is justified—perhaps the irrelevance and inhumanity of ghetto education creates "blackboard jungles"—the teacher usually decides that his original conceptions about the kids were romantic. Somewhat reluctantly, he finds himself feeling a certain amount of empathy with the teachers who complained all along that "the kids are animals."

This inability to accept the validity of the students' rebellion is not surprising. Many teachers are overwhelmed by the massive powers that stand in the way of educational reform—principals, school boards, city administrations—and feel threatened by arguments that link educational reform with challenging those in power. Also, despite the fact that the school administrators are most responsible for the educational policies in the ghetto, it is the teacher who experiences the hostility that these policies produce. After becoming involved in

a warfare situation with his class it is difficult for him to extricate himself from his emotional framework and develop a new analysis of what went wrong. Perhaps most importantly, the systematic discouragement and weeding out of innovators among the new faculty and the absence of experimental private schools in the ghetto provide the ambivalent teacher with no visible models to support his initial faith in his students.

Three Causes of Failure

We can isolate three major causes of the failure of public education in the ghetto:

1. The school is an alien institution in the lives of the students and parents of the ghetto.
2. Learning is based on the development of operational skills which are unrelated to the interests and experiences of the students.
3. Discipline is based on rules that are arbitrarily made and arbitrarily applied.

Our solution, which we plan to apply in the Newark Community School, involves developing alternative conceptions of the school as an institution, of the learning process itself, and of the means of developing a working relationship between students and faculty.

1. The school must be perceived as a community resource responsive to community influence. To accomplish this:

We will provide a real decision-making body to replace the traditional form of the P.T.A. The Community School Committee will consist of all parents, representatives of the students and community residents who have been active in religious, civic and civil-rights activities. One of the myths about ghetto life is that the parents are apathetic and unconcerned about the education of their children. Actually, the daily pressures of physical labor and managing large families make poor people more selective about their leisure time. Getting out of the house to attend a P.T.A. meeting at which nothing of substance is discussed and where no real power resides with the group is a middle-class luxury.

We plan to make the school into a year-round community center with extensive after-school recreational and educational activities for students and parents.

We plan to hire staff who are committed to sharing their expertise with people in the community, rather than using it to protect themselves from "nonprofessional" influence.

2. Learning will proceed from the students' most immediate interests. This principle is not merely a handy means of facilitating the teaching of skills; it is the essence of our approach to learning.

Many people feel that learning for immediate gratification is somehow a more primitive outlook than learning for extrinsic rewards. We believe that learning for its own sake is the far more sensitive and mature approach to education. In our school situation

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What Our

We plan to... in our area... students will... modeling... does not need

We plan to be... furnished with... the schools... chairs for... over, several... small conference... for work... tables. Each... with books... levels. The... integral part... be furnished... can be used... the activities... photography... rooms, for... small groups.

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We have chosen... their obvious... do not want... size. The... issue of class... deficiencies... elementary... attention on the... educational approach.

We are beginning... several reasons:

1. One of the... to show... of behavioral and... independent... elementary... students than those in the... early grades.
2. Many of the faculty we are considering for the

definition of the teacher's role and who are committed to collective decision-making in the classrooms.

- We will develop a mechanism, with the students, whereby students and faculty collectively determine rules, procedures and responsibilities in the school.
- And we will develop a grievance mechanism whereby students can bring complaints to the Community School Committee if problems arise in the classroom that cannot be resolved by the group.

What Our School Will Look Like

We plan to rent a loft or storefront and convert it into our school building. There are many available facilities in our area. During the summer, the staff, parents and students will spend time painting, decorating and remodeling our school. We will choose a building that does not need fundamental structural changes.

We plan to have three large rooms: two classrooms and an activities room. The classrooms will not be furnished with the straight rows of desks used in the public schools. There will be rugs on the floors, many easy chairs for students, movable boards that can be placed over armchairs when a writing surface is needed, a few small conference tables where students can do cooperative work and chairs arranged in conversational groupings. Each classroom will have a well-stocked library with books on a wide range of subject- and reading levels. The library will not be an activity. It will be an integral part of the classroom. The activities room will be furnished with large sturdy tables and benches that can be used for shop, art and science projects. Part of the activities room will be used for a darkroom and photography lab. We will also need several smaller rooms, for tutoring, individual counseling, study in small groups and an office.

For the first year we plan to begin with two grades, the sixth and the seventh, with thirty students in each grade. In the second year we plan to add an eighth grade and perhaps a fifth as well. Within four years we plan to operate a complete elementary school with eight grades and kindergarten.

We have chosen to work with fairly large classes despite their obvious limitations. If our school is successful, we do not want its achievements attributed to smaller class size. The public-school system has too long used the issue of class size as an excuse for most of its educational deficiencies. By utilizing the same class size as the elementary schools in our area we can better focus attention on the more substantive differences in our educational approach.

We are beginning with the sixth and seventh grades for several reasons:

1. One of the experimental goals of our school will be to show that students are capable of a great deal of behavioral and academic independence. These independent capacities are more developed in older, elementary students than those in the early grades.
2. Many of the faculty we are considering for the

school have had experience with and prefer working with older elementary school children.

3. Many of the parents who are most actively organizing the school have children in those grades.

The Curriculum

Reading will not be taught as a separate subject. It will be a natural component of our core curriculum in history, literature and social problems. As students develop interests in particular subjects they will be encouraged to improve their reading skills to further those interests. Reading will center on "free-choice" books and books and magazines for specific areas of curriculum. Reading skills may be developed in an optional reading workshop with emphasis on an individualized approach.

Creative writing, like reading, will not be a separate course of instruction. Writing will be taught as a skill to improve the expression of thoughts and feelings.

Jointly with Herbert Kohl of the Teachers and Writers Collaborative at Teachers College, Columbia University, we are exploring methods of integrating creative writing into a core curriculum in the humanities and social sciences. Several principles elaborated in the Manifesto of the Hunting Writers and Teachers Conference may give some insight into the focus of our writing program:

- Teachers must learn to accept the language of children without imposing arbitrary standards of usage that frustrate the free flow of expression. Early emphasis on "correct" usage can make the act of writing no more than an anxious, crippling exercise for many children.
- No arbitrary limits should be placed on the range of experience and language used in the classroom. If children or teachers feel that words or references or ideas that are important to them must be censored—or are out of bounds—then the classroom itself can become a sterile place.
- The grading of written work should be eliminated. A child's writing should be considered an intimate revelation of his feelings and impressions, one to be respected.

There is a distinction, however, between grading and evaluation. We plan to work with students to analyze how their work is able to express their thoughts and in what ways their writing does not serve those ends. Standards of excellence must be set by the student himself. (Quarterly reports to the students and parents will evaluate the children's work in all areas at some length, without assigning grades. Since evaluation will be an ongoing process, there should be few surprises.)

Creating and Building will be a unique combination of activities and disciplines geared towards involving the students in roles as creators and builders.

- *Film making*—We have arranged with an independent film maker in New York City to train one of our local community people in the skills of film making and film processing. The community person

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will then become a volunteer staff person who will work with the students in a film-making course. We plan to purchase movie cameras so that the students will be able to make their own films.

● **Masonry**—A local resident who is a finished mason has agreed to work with interested students in masonry, blueprint reading, and elementary architecture. Students can continue their work in this area after they have gone on to high school. Unlike many skilled crafts, masonry has many opportunities for Negroes, and finished masons make over five dollars an hour in our area. Students will not have to take this course as a vocational training program, however, and many of the projects involved—such as designing and building model homes—will be of interest to many students who have no interest in becoming masons.

● **Poetry reading and writing**—A well-known woman poet is working with our school to arrange for her colleagues to spend time with our students exploring expression through poetry. A group of several poets will be running a poetry workshop with interested students.

● **Auto repair**—A local mechanic will work with our students on automobile repairing; the donation of several old cars has already been promised. This is another field in our area that is well paid and open to Negroes: in a nonvocational sense, the ability to fix one's own car is both economically useful and emotionally rewarding.



6

● **Theater workshop**—We plan to have several fairly elaborate dramatic presentations during the year. Students who are particularly interested in the field will get experience in such activities as acting and play writing, as well as personal contacts with professionals.

● **Appliances repair**—We will have a course in repairing television sets, radios and other household appliances. Although this course could have vocational value, its primary purpose is to give students a greater sense of mastery over everyday living problems.

● **Book publishing**—Early in the year, we plan to have the students tape their impressions of the school, each other and their neighborhood. The tapes will be transcribed for a book that we might use as a school reader, with the students doing the editing, lay-out, illustrations and so on themselves. A local printer has agreed to work with the school on this.

History will be taught from the point of view of specific problems and trends rather than through a chronological presentation of events. A typical history unit will be:

The history of insurgent minorities

- The civil-rights and community-organization movement in Newark.
- The early Christians as a political movement in Rome.
- American slave revolts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- The anticolonial movement in the twentieth century, with particular attention to Ghana, Puerto Rico and Vietnam.
- The Zionist movement and the founding of Israel.
- The civil-rights movement in the South.

We plan to begin with a subject the students are most familiar with and most interested in. Studying about many of their parents and the parents of their friends will encourage the students to see them as part of a long historical tradition of insurgents and rebels. Our approach to this subject will be analytical as well as descriptive. Why are some people in our neighborhood insurgents? Why are they a minority? Who are their allies? What are their goals? What are their chances of success? What groups and institutions stand in their way?

After studying a subject close to their personal experiences the students will be able to apply many of these analytical constructs to other subjects further removed from these experiences. The unit will include readings in the S.N.C.C. *Freedom Primer*, discussions with Israeli students, discussions with Robert S. Browne and Tom Hayden, who have been to Vietnam, and talks with Puerto Rican activists who feel that their country is in a colonial relationship with the United States as well as with Puerto Rican students who oppose the separatist

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movement. Civil-rights veterans of the South and local community leaders will also make important contributions. Films such as *Troublemakers*—an acclaimed documentary about the problems of civil-rights organizers in Newark—will be used. We expect to use films extensively—not the usual didactic “educational” films, but films that take full advantage of the medium in conveying a situation visually and in stimulating responses and feelings. Students will be encouraged to study particular aspects of problems in greater depth and will be able to spend school time involved in independent study.

Sex education will include familiarization with birth-control devices. Much of this program will be in the form of informal discussions between staff members and individual students. The key to the program will be the attitude of the staff on the subject. Many different views on sexual behavior are consistent with the broad goals of our school, but we feel that it is of great importance that our staff convey a healthy attitude towards the subject and help dispel the guilt and anxiety that many young people feel about sex. This may be therapeutic for the teachers too.

Mathematics—We are excited about the possibilities of introducing a genuinely mathematical course to replace the arithmetic computation and rote application of formulas that most of our students have associated with “math.” Our general approach and many of our specific curriculum ideas are drawn from the report, “Goals for School Mathematics,” which was a product of the Cambridge Conference on School Mathematics. Although some of our students will have competent arithmetic skills, we doubt that any of them will have been introduced to a conceptual approach to mathematics. Thus, we plan to start our students at the most elementary level in order to build a firm conceptual foundation for more difficult work.

Out-of-school Experiences—We believe there is a great deal of validity to many aspects of ghetto life and do not believe in giving our students “higher horizons” by teaching them contempt for their own community. We also realize there is much lacking in our children’s daily experiences and we plan to provide many opportunities for stimulating visits and trips.

Many of our trips will attempt to involve the students in acts of participation, rather than mere observation, and in discussions with people who are attempting to define their lives in creative and courageous ways. Some examples are: visits to the studio of a group called Black Choreographers in which the students could observe dancing, have discussions with Negro artists about their work, and learn elementary dance exercises and movements; discussions with African students who are studying in this country; trips to restaurants where the students would be able to visit the kitchen and see how the food is prepared; and visits to other schools that are experimenting with curriculum and approaches to classroom organization that the students might want to try in our school.

Not all of these experiences will be of interest to all of

the students, and most of them would be less valuable if an entire class of thirty attended. Also, some students may be more than superficially interested in a particular subject and want to repeat a trip several times. Many of our trips, therefore, will entail five or six students going somewhere with an interested parent or volunteer staff person rather than the touristlike extravaganzas that most school trips have been.

Staff

The full-time staff will include a head teacher, a teacher and a teacher-in-training; the latter will be a local resident who has not had any college experience. A considerable minority of the people in our community have developed middle-class skills—reading, arithmetical and verbal facility—but hold working-class jobs. Due to economic and racial factors they were never able to go ahead with their education. We believe that many of our neighbors can play an important role in the teaching process, and in a few years can be trained to be fully competent teachers. The effective performance of a non-college-educated local resident will be an inspiring example for many of our students. It is often the case that a college degree is used as an arbitrary weapon against poor people to prevent them from competing for more lucrative jobs. We also expect to have paid tutors and a volunteer secretary-receptionist. One of the teachers will act as an organizer-curriculum developer until the opening of school.

Our elementary school will go up to the eighth grade; our students will have to go to public high school upon graduation. The adjustment process—both academically and emotionally—may be somewhat difficult. We therefore intend to maintain a cooperative relationship with our students after they graduate. Our graduates can participate in the life of our school by serving as tutors in our tutoring program and by giving first-hand observations about how our school can better prepare its students for high school. The staff of our school can help our graduates by providing informal counseling services. Hopefully, the staff can help the students maintain a pragmatic approach that will allow them to transcend the frustrations of high school and make decisions that are in their best interests. This does not mean simply telling the students to “stay in school.” Despite the figures about increased life income for those who graduate from high school, staying in school is not necessarily the best decision for every student. For some students their immediate emotional situation and their long-range financial situation might best be served by dropping out for a while.

Our school will have 60 students the first year and will serve only 120 students when it expands to a fifth-through-eighth-grade upper elementary school. In the three elementary schools in our neighborhood alone there are over five thousand students. The Newark public school system is responsible for educating over seventy thousand students—over seventy percent of whom are black. Our orientation differs from A. S. Neill’s, when he declares that “my primary job is not the reformation of society but the bringing of happiness to some few children.” The Newark Community School

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is a Movement school, and as such can measure only its initial success in terms of the happiness of its children. Our ultimate success must be measured in terms of building a movement to take over and change the public-school system in Newark.

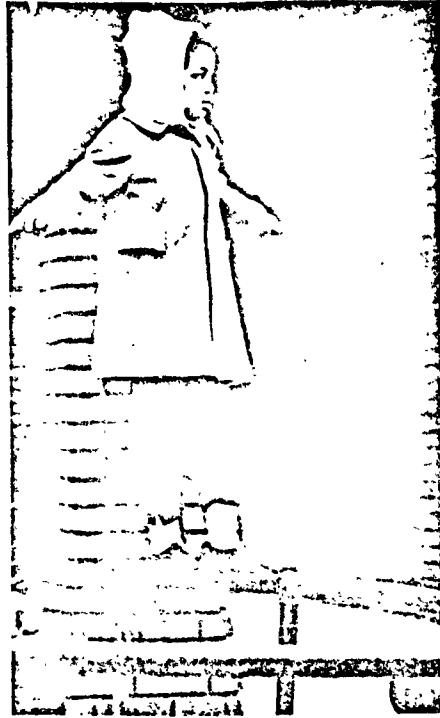
Developing a Constituency

Our first job is to develop a constituency among the parents in our area. At present, although many parents are upset about their children's experiences in the public schools, they are not clear as to the causes of their children's failure and unhappiness or the program that would remedy the situation. The awesome consistency of the failure of black children in the public schools has mitigated the militancy of many parents. Some have little formal education and feel intimidated by school authorities. Others—and among them some of the most radical parents on issues of police brutality, housing and job discrimination—are strong advocates of more discipline and more homework. When demands are made to the Board of Education by ghetto parents they usually concern the material aspects of the educational process, e.g., more schools, more teachers and newer books—and rarely the content of the teaching or the effect of authoritarianism on the emotional and ethical development of the students.

Our experience has shown, however, that much of this conservatism among the parents is due to a belief that the only alternative to the ghetto school is an idealized hybrid of "those no-nonsense schools down South" and "those good schools out in the suburbs." Many parents are receptive to a radical analysis of the failure of the public-school system but find it difficult to translate this analysis into concrete political demands. Also, many of the parents feel ambivalent toward an educational theory that encourages their children to break out of traditional behavior patterns. They emotionally identify with their children's resentment of arbitrary authority and stifling subject matter—but also harbor feelings that a democratic learning situation is incompatible with material advancement. People in our neighborhood like tangible evidence. The Community School will be essential to organizing parents in our area by providing an observable model to substantiate our radical approach to education. The Community School hopefully will demonstrate that the historical fear and distrust between the ghetto parent and teacher is not inherent in the school situation but has been fostered by public-school administrations. We plan to show that an alliance between parents and teachers is the key to reforming the public school system.

We also plan to organize public-school teachers. We plan to encourage them to observe our programs. Our after-school programs will involve many public-school teachers. We intend to develop a publication describing the achievements and problems of our school that will also include contributions from public-school teachers and analyses of common problems. Our faculty plans to work with the Newark Teachers Union and Newark Teachers Association to develop maximum exposure and support for our ideas. We have already received several offers from faculty members at teachers colleges

Photographs by Horie Epstein



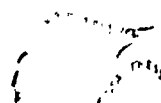
in the area to discuss our program with their students, many of whom will be teaching in our area.

Radical Decentralization

This alliance of teachers and parents will then be in a position to push for local control of neighborhood schools. The specifics of such a strategy can be discussed in a separate article and will necessarily depend upon the political situation at the time we are ready to move on to such a demand. At this point, it is most important to note that if school decentralization took place right now in Newark, the schools would differ little from what they are at present. We believe that by providing an alternative model for the Movement in Newark we are laying the groundwork for radical decentralization in the future.

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Item 7.

Dix, C. "An Alternative School", Manchester Guardian,
June 18, 1971.

Footnotes:

43, p.26

66, p.38

67, p.39

73, p.42

76, p.44

Pt. 11, Chpt. 1

273, p.206

Alternative school

CAROL DIX on a Summerhill in the slums

"WHEN THE FIRE ALARM ring out the building?" "Yes," said John Ord. The public health inspector checked his papers. "And will the kids be doing lessons?" "A sort of, projects and things, but nothing that goes against the curriculum. I've checked all that." "That's of interest then, why don't they go to their own school?" John Ord smiled. "But that's it, you see, this will be their school." He had to explain. The health inspector looked worried and bemused.

John Ord opened the Scotland Road Community Centre in Liverpool this week. It is a four-teacher six-week term. It is registered with the Department of Education and Science, but offers an alternative to the State system of education. The term "free" refers not to a lack of money, but to the fact that the school belongs to the community, not to the education authorities.

The Scotland Road-Vaughall area of Liverpool is one of those physically depressed areas of Liverpool. The old surviving shop and pub standing out like the only remaining molars in a jaw that has been badly knocked and broken. It is a depressed area in all the senses. But John Ord, who was born round here, believes that the State system of education makes no attempt to give the local kids an education that meets any of their needs.

"Most of the children leave school at 15. They have no faith of the benefit of their education that would lead to a university entrance. They are still driven to take exams, as part of the machine. If you treat them in a freer fashion and encourage them to be better personalities, they will be able to take a more critical approach to life."

The plans behind the school are not new. They are inspired by the work of A. S. Neill and also the example of other people's private education systems. There are over 170 free

schools (friskoler) that are 85 per cent funded by the Government. What is unusual for England is that an alternative education be offered to the poor; it's not only the upper bracket socio-economic income groups can opt out. And the school is very much involved in community action.

They will operate on similar lines to Neill's Summerhill experiment. Lessons will not be compulsory—education must derive from stimulated interest. Learning will be based round discussion and outside projects. They hope to gather in the mornings and talk about the day's newspapers, then go on into the city, to the museums, libraries, and factories, and learn from life. There will be no atmosphere of competition—no assembly-line examination fodder.

But the teachers of the free school are aware of their responsibility to the children. "We can't afford to be too far ahead of public opinion," said John Ord, "we can't stop them getting jobs and they will have to take exams, we're obligated to doing that. We've been accused of running away from the system when all kinds of progressive reforms are under way in schools now, and why leave the system just when things are happening? But we don't see it as trying to step outside, just a side.

"For instance, we've tried to interest the official teaching bodies. But we've had no response from the Institute of Education or from the training colleges. They think enough is being done. We want to form links with local teachers and invite them to run it during the holidays. That's all part of what the free school is about. It's not just a merry trip into the blue."

They seem to be more than aware of the pitfalls; they suspect their own motives and fear that the kids are only excited because it's something new and surrounded by publicity. But they believe that freedom has not in dropping out of society, but in being fully involved. It's this kind of attitude

they want to teach. The kids in the Scotland Road area have been pushed out of society already; they want to make them aware of this, to develop their creativity and imagination, and make them question the society they live in. "The trouble with the kids that come from places like Summerhill," says John Ord, "is that they're very aware of the problems of the world; they just can't get themselves up in the morning to do anything about it." To him, lack of discipline and formal regimental schooling does not necessarily lead to laziness and apathy.

The scheme began when John Ord, BSc (Econ), came off the dole and returned to teaching in St Catherine's Roman Catholic secondary modern in Liverpool. There he met Bill Murphy, another teacher, and they talked about how depressed they were with teaching within the State system. "That was last September. The idea took its roots in the local pubs in the evenings." Last Christmas he left teaching and has been technically "unemployed" ever since, trying to set up the free school. They rented four tiny rooms above a greengrocer's in Lincolnton Lane, off Scotland Road, and began their work of getting to know the community; mostly by drinking with the people in the local pubs.

The committee of the Scotland Road Community Trust (soon to be a registered charity) now includes as many local as visionaries. It includes Frank Connor, a Ford worker; James Hunter, a local architect; Robert Erle, a docker; Dave Stevens, and Michael Griffiths, social workers; John Ord, Bill Murphy, Mary Baxter and Denise Pyle, teachers; and Micky Keating, fund-raiser.

Under section 70 of the Education Act (1944), you can register an independent school offering alternative full-time education, provisionally, upon inspection by the DES. For the pilot scheme they have taken on eight kids, aged 10 to 14, with five more waiting to join in. "We have to ask the

parents and they write to the headmaster. The head of the local secondary modern is good. He's been reading A. S. Neill for years and is quite keen on some of our ideas, so he doesn't mind their being withdrawn." All they have to do now is convince the education authority's inspectors.

They do stress, though, that the school is only a part of their work. That what they are setting up is a community centre. They hope to get the parents in as well. "Mind you, we had nice ideas about school councils," said John Ord, "where we'd try and get the parents in to discuss ideas, until we realised that most of the parents work, at least the mothers do, the fathers are probably out of work and down the pub. But we want to offer them the chance to come back and take the exams they missed by early school leaving, or even learn a skill. We'll accept everyone, child or adult, if they'll accept us."

In September they hope to be able to take on their maximum number of 60 kids if they get their building as they are in the process of knocking for a local warehouse tailor-made to their purpose, which would cost them just £780 a year rental. In the meantime the pilot scheme is being run in a local youth and community centre. To fund the pilot scheme they sold books of tickets from which they made £112. They exist solely on donations. They are managing on little money and a lot of energy and faith.

"People say that if we get going, we can hardly affect the system because at best we'll only get through to 60 kids," said John Ord. "But I don't people say the same about Neill and we wouldn't be here without his example. So we hope our example will be support enough for others to set up free schools. We get letters from young teachers saying how fed up they are with the education system and that they would leave if they could come and join us. What we should say to them is—stop complaining and go and start your own free school."

Item 8.

Dewhurst, E. "Free School Under Attack", Manchester
Guardian, January 25, 1972.

Footnotes:

80, p.47

81, p.48

274, p.206

Free school under attack

Townsville, 22/11/47

The Liverpool free school experiment is being challenged by Councillors R. S. Charles and K. W. Edwards. They want the city council to ask the Secretary for Education and Science to withhold registration of the school in view of the "serious concern" felt by the council about its educational standards and "the physical condition to which its children are subject."

The council, which meets tomorrow, will formally refer the motion to the education committee.

The school—the Scotland Road Free School—began in June with five pupils, is now housed in St Benedict's church hall, off Scotland Road, and claims to have more than 10 children between 9 and 16.

Councillor Charles said yesterday that it was in a district where children had a "rough time" growing up to adult life and he did not think the alternative to State education would help to fit them for it. He was sure the organisers had the best intentions but he was concerned mainly for the welfare of the children.

By ERNEST DEWHURST

He understood there were no fixed classes or curriculum, little discipline, and that "facilities" were poor compared with those of council schools.

Mr John Oid, its joint founder, said yesterday he was surprised and disgusted by the motion because the school had asked the education authority several times for better premises, for which it was prepared to pay, and for secondhand furniture. These had not been granted.

The school was run by its teachers (now five), parents, and children in a rented hall which they had improved, and would continue to improve. It was not as warm as it could be because of the coal shortage but when they had tried to send the children home they would not go.

It had been registered provisionally with the Government before opening. Inspectors had since visited the school but no copy of their report had been received. They had come before the school had

had time to settle down and demonstrate its principles.

The school had no hierarchy or compulsion and was based on freedom, and the children decided whether to attend the lessons. The curriculum was based on the immediate environment of the children and any discipline was imposed by them.

He went on: "The children passed a rule about three weeks ago, banning smoking from school altogether. It has not been fully lived up to but they are trying to keep it."

Money was from public donations. Most of the children were already staying away from State schools when they came to the free school. They now attended a school which might not give the formal type of education of secondary modern schools but was designed to bring the best out of them and allow them to discipline themselves in a free atmosphere, he added.

The education committee has extended the school meal service to the free school and allows its children to use playing fields and swimming baths.

Item 9.

Gwilt, Rick. "Free School Neutrality" - a letter to the
Manchester Guardian, May 15, 1973.

Footnotes:

86, p.51

Free School Feasibility

Sir.—I live in a slum area. I read with interest Maurice Pugh's article in the *Free School* (Education Guardian, May 3).

Last year I was chiefly responsible for a mother's decision to send her seven-year-old daughter to the nearby Free School. Because of the child's home background, her attendance at the LEA school was very irregular, whereas at the Free School she was at first happy to get herself off to school every morning, and if she overslept she was not a rail to go in late.

But after a while the novelty wore off. One day she burned her gloves, another she had her paintings. She spent her time "painting, reading, and walking in the park." Presumably she would never have studied arithmetic, because she herself would never have expressed any wish to do so. Now she is back at the LEA school, which seems to be the lesser of two evils.

The LEA education system was apparently designed by middle-class people with no real understanding of the handicaps which children of deprived, working class homes have to carry into the classroom with them. Bad diet, irregular meals, overcrowded conditions, excessive noise; these are some of the more obvious problems. At home, children are things to be passively accepted. They will have been made by the Social Security office, or the council's social services or housing department, or the landlord, or by "fate" as in the outcome of the bingo session, or the Hollywood film on TV, to which all eyes are glued until long past a healthy bedtime.

The problem with the Free School is that it is neutral: children, having been conditioned to be more or less active or passive, are likely to remain so. And the notion of "freedom" which is encouraged is likely unrelated to our crowded, technological society. As Richard Hoggart pointed out back in the 1950s: "It is always freedom from, never freedom for; freedom as a good in itself, not merely as the ground for the effort to live by other standards."

Meanwhile, there is one eight-year-old girl in an LEA school who has a very feeble notion of what she has no use for and cannot afford to keep. If she does not manage to lose it before she reaches adolescence, it can only serve to torment her. It is the sort of imagination that will either drive her to self-hypnotism or inspire

the rest of us to make the struggle more equal. — Yours faithfully,

Mark Gault,

10 Walmer Street, Manchester 14.

Sir, — It was most interesting to read Maurice Pugh's article. One agrees that efforts to structure a school in terms of a negatively collected freedom can sometimes result in a "Lord of the Flies" type of hierarchy or an unconscious commitment to a narrowly partisan political ideology.

Additionally, one recognises "the large-scale failure of conventional schools to cater for the needs of deprived children." Among these needs are those that result in "swearing, smoking, and rough working-class behaviour and language." Whether one condones such conduct or not appears to have little influence on its being manifested in one place or another — either overtly or covertly.

It is possible to reflect on this problem in the pseudo-political terms of "freedom" and "constraint." As Mr Pugh observes, one is then left with a "cruel dilemma."

Another approach could be one openly committed to a metaphysical determinism (as opposed to the implicit "free will" position of the other scheme and contrivance). It would differentiate between behaviour which prevents individual and group survival, cohesion, and growth, and that which does not. Like Socrates, the educator would see himself as midwife. His task would not be to stand as "super-ego" to a group to avert the danger of the children forming a brutalised intolerant one of their own. His role, on the contrary, would be that of "group-ego" — helping members to detect and articulate powerful and conflicting motives and expectations. These would be thought of as, at best, capable of modification and deflection but never of total suppression.

In immediate terms such efforts may result in increasing some human frustration and disillusionment. On a long view they may imply another approach to society which regards pseudo-political analysis — especially with regard to "freedom" and "constraint" as metaphysically false, sociologically superficial, and practically impotent. — Yours faithfully,

Brian Smedley.

The Special Unit, Halton Bank School
Rotton Road, Salford 6.

Item 10.

"City Free School is told to quit", Liverpool Daily Post,
July 17, 1973.

Footnotes:
78, p.52

City Free School is told to quit

Daily Post
17 July 73

LIVERPOOL Education Committee have decided not to continue giving assistance to the experimental Scotland Road Free School and have told them to get out of their present building by the end of next month.

Nearly six months ago the committee wiped off debts of £479 incurred by school and gave them the tenancy of a former school building in Major Street at a nominal rent of £1 a year.

But yesterday, in a brief statement to the committee, Labour chairman Councillor John Hamilton recommended that the tenancy should

be terminated by August 31.

"They are not fulfilling their tenancy obligations," said Councillor Hamilton. The committee also refused the free school a grant to cover their rates.

It is understood there had been complaints from residents about behaviour at the school.

Outlook now for the experiment is grim. In September last year, HM Inspectors of Schools gave the free school another year's grace. They are due to make a decision on its future in September this year.

Item 11.

"Teachers prepare to do battle", in Liverpool Echo,
July 27, 1973.

Footnotes: 88, p.52

Edno 27. 1. 73

Teachers prepare to do battle

A campaign is being launched by staff at the Scolland Road Free School to reverse the Liverpool Education Committee's decision to give the school notice to quit their Major Street premises by the end of August.

Labour members of the Council are to be lobbied, and the teachers hope to persuade the corporation to give financial support.

The decision to campaign was reached after a meeting of teachers and parents with the chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor John Hamilton, and the deputy chairman, Councillor Stan Thorne.

He added: "We hope to approach the leader of the council in the next few weeks to propose that the council finance us on a three or five-year basis."

The school, he said, would be run on an experimental basis during this time, which could be monitored by an independent body and observers from the Education Committee could visit the school at any time.

"We feel that with city council help we could in a year be able to put all our ideas into practice, and the school would blossom."

Item 12.

"Eviction decision for free school", Liverpool Daily Post,
November 18, 1973.

Footnotes:
89, p.53

Eviction decision for free school

Daily Post
18 Nov 73.

by Ian Craig

ORGANISERS of Liverpool's experimental free school are to be evicted from their premises in Scotland Road by the owners, the city education committee.

But now a new consortium of community organisations has appeared on the scene. Yesterday it pledged itself to take over the tenancy of the building, a former school in Major Street, and to keep the free school going.

This news was broken to the education committee yesterday by Liberal Councillor David Alton, who asked that the new group, called the Scotland Road People's Centre, should be allowed to administer the building.

Councillor Alton said the new group represented about eleven local associations who had been working with the free school. They had has fifty-four children on

told him that they would honour the terms of the lease.

"The free school still the register, and ten new teachers are coming in January," said Councillor Alton. "It would be a retrograde step if you closed it down, a sad day. It is obvious that formal, orthodox education in the area has failed."

But he failed to persuade the committee to make a stay of execution and his move was defeated by three votes to seventeen.

After the meeting, Miss Barbara Shane, secretary of the Scotland Road People's Centre, explained: "We want to widen the scope so that it will not just be a free school but will include facilities for adult education and community facilities and continue the present facilities for old people. We are appealing to various organisations for financial support."

Item 13.

"Pupils without schools", Daily Post, January 25, 1974.

Footnotes:

90, p.53

Daily Post 25/1/74

Pupils without schools

TWO weeks after the closure of the Scotland Road Free School the majority of pupils have not found alternative places and in some cases children have been refused re-admission to their previous schools, it was revealed last night.

But 14 of the 60 children from the free school are now attending Roscommon County Secondary School.

Liverpool's Director of

Education, Mr C P R Clarke said that school welfare and attendance officers are in the process of visiting the parents of children who are still without school places to ensure that applications are made to schools in the proper way.

He said: "Most of the schools in this area are Roman Catholic and it is the governors and the managers who have the powers of admittance.

In those cases where they have declined to re-admit children, they probably explained to the parents, before the children were withdrawn, that if they decided to take them away they may not be able to re-admit the children.

"Obviously there will be some difficulties where children have been withdrawn against the wishes of the gov-

ernors. But we are hoping that the children will be found school places as quickly as possible."

Mr Clarke added that the re-admission of some pupils may have been refused because they had a bad record of attendance at the Free School and the governors may have thought that it would be against the best interests of the other pupils to re-admit them.

Item 14.

"Free School may be revived - with discipline", Daily Post,
April 15, 1974.

Footnotes:
91, p.55

Free School may be revived— with discipline

Daily Post
15/4/74

MORE than 50 children who were pupils at the experimental Liverpool Free School in Scotland Road have not been found school places since it closed.

The aftermath of this experiment in handling difficult children has been far-reaching. Because the free school failed to pay its bills to the corporation even the then, controlling Labour group grew disillusioned. And the Free School had to end.

But it left 77 pupils who had been associated with the free school without traditional school places. Of these, 66 were pupils who had previously gone to Roman

Catholic schools in the area, of which there are a number, many of them with vacancies.

But after meetings between the education department and the Roman Catholic school governors, it became obvious that the governors were generally reluctant to accept the Free School pupils back.

The headmasters argued that admitting them would place intolerable burdens on the staff and, in some cases, accommodation. Some of the children had been away from any formal teaching situation or discipline for up to three years.

The education director has written to all the parents concerned and warned them of their legal obligation to get their children to school regularly. Failing that, he says, "action" may have to be taken.

To date, some of the children have gone back to normal school. But at the beginning of this month, 53 of them had still not returned.

Agreement for readmission

Most of the 12 schools in the area have agreed in principle to readmit the children provided the parents agreed to "reasonable conditions". In some schools, the governors feel they could not take the older children, part way through the school year.

Director of Education, Mr C. P. R. Clarke, says it may prove impossible to get school places for the fourth and fifth year pupils.

tem, the education committee is to be asked at its next meeting, to set up a special unit for the Free School children who are left. To attract someone to take charge of the unit as quickly as possible, a high-grade salary scale may be offered, even though this could have repercussions on the staffs of local schools.

Building for special unit

The thinking is that a building in Blackstock Street, could be used for the special unit. Later, the principle of a free school may even be revived by the new Liberal-controlled education committee.

Education committee chairman Councillor John Bowen explained their thinking.

"The idea of a free school is not lost or thrown out. But it has got to be monitored by us and if it shows signs of going off the rails then it must shout out, or we will shout out. There must be co-operation with other schools. This is why the experiment got off on the wrong foot last time.

"I think the lesson to be learned is that you can't have absolute freedom. You need some discipline too."

Worry over break-ins

The governors and managers of Liverpool schools are getting increasingly worried about break-ins and the loss of valuable equipment.

A variety of suggestions for combating this were discussed and some burglar alarms put in. But there are still many schools who want precautions for which there is not money.

Since break-ins cost the department £63,000 in a year, and the cost of burglar alarms and alterations to buildings would cost only £40,000, there seems to be a lesson there somewhere.

Item 15.

"The Liverpool Kids with no school to go to". Letter to
the Editor, Education Guardian, Manchester Guardian,
March 12, 1974.

Footnotes:

92, p.54

Two Liverpool kids with no school to go to

Mr. ... in 1977 ... to close at a Liverpool ... a school ...

At the end of 1977 the school, which had the use of a former BIA social school building in the vacational area of Liverpool, closed abruptly, throwing 78 children aged between 11 and 16 years on the streets. This is substantially the current situation due to the fact that local schools are unable or unwilling to readmit all but 15 of these boys and girls. The policy of Liverpool Education Department is to encourage local schools to readmit ex-free school pupils, in the light of the response of local schools so far it appears to us that this may prove an abortive procedure but in any event is likely to be time consuming.

Meanwhile, 63 pupils are without schooling, an unusual situation at the very least and one we believe is likely to lead to serious social and educational consequences:

1. These children are on the streets and in an area with few facilities and limited constructive outlets for young people, frustration and boredom are likely to be the result with a consequent increase in acts of petty delinquency and vandalism. Apart from possible physical damage to the area and

annoyance to local residents, these children are regarded for all practical purposes as delinquents and should the Courts are likely to be punished for their response to a situation which is not of their making and is beyond their manipulation.

2. The children tend to congregate in groups and inevitably place pressure on their counterparts who are at school to truancy, with the increased risk of their involvement in high-spirited behaviour and fringe delinquency.

3. The process of reintegration of these children into local schools is likely to be extremely difficult, many had a pattern of truancy prior to attending the free school, this in some cases being a factor in their wish to transfer. If reintroduced into local schools it is likely that their educative needs will not be met and that deliberately, or otherwise, they will constitute disruptive groups within local schools.

4. Parents of the children are placed in an invidious position. The implication is that it is their responsibility to see that their children receive schooling but in reality many schools will not readmit, inevitably, some feel embarrassment even anger and can be forgiven for assuming that such a situation would not be allowed to exist in a more prosperous area of the city.

5. It is reasonable to assume the

children will get used to roaming the streets. Many of them in any case can look forward to very limited job opportunities but a period of extended inactivity at this stage will not help.

We, as an Interdisciplinary Service Group in Vauxhall, comprising community workers, probation officers, adult educationalists, other workers in the area and local residents, must express acute concern at this situation. In the light of the above factors we feel that the response of the Local Education Authority has been unhelpful and unimaginative. There is a need for special provision for these children, for example, the establishment of a unit designed to meet their particular needs, serviced by sympathetic, experienced teachers. Most important of all, the situation demands urgent attention and action.

F. J. Bisbury, M. M. Duncan,
David Godman, S. Hill, N. G.
Hodgson, Dorothy Jarman,
Mrs J. Kerfoot, Allan Latham,
Christine Knox, J. Lees, S.
Luff, M. McGivern, Terence
Page, P. Murphy, M. E.
Nixon, Tom Roth, B. Rowan,
Tony Seaton, Anthea White,
Jean Shelton, Colin F. Smith.

Vauxhall Community Services
Centre,
Silvester Street,
Liverpool.

DA F...
Chief... Officer

Reference: ...
Date: 21st June 1976.

If this has been changed please
ask for
extension 7022

G. Potter Esq.,
Assistant Professor,
University of Victoria,
Faculty of Education,
P.O. Box 1700,
Victoria,
British Columbia,
Canada V8W 2Y2.

Dear Mr. Potter,

The Headmaster of Oswald Road County Primary School has passed on to me your letter of 27th May, 1976, in which you ask for information about "Free Schools".

The City of Manchester has a school age population of approximately 100,000 children. Though the position as regards free schools in the city is not stable it would, I think, be realistic to say that the number of pupils in attendance at a free school at any time has never exceeded 50 and most probably is below 20. In fact at present, to the best of my knowledge, there is no free school operating. The contribution, therefore, of this educational project in numerical terms is so slight as to most probably escape the attention of most teachers working in the city. The Education Committee in Manchester has never taken a hostile line towards ventures such as this but I am bound to say that what we have learnt about their activities in the last few years has not promoted the view that they have anything very useful to offer.

You may be interested to know that the Authority is establishing two detached centres specifically for young people who have fallen out with their schools and yet are not seen as requiring specialist psychological assistance. The aim of these centres is to provide an atmosphere rather different from that in a school where, with a good pupil/teacher ratio, continued academic studies can be provided whilst at the same time due attention can be given to the pupils other needs.

Yours sincerely,

Item 17.

"Manchester Free School Information, May, 1977", printed
and distributed by the school.

Footnotes:

112, p.74

113, p.75

MANCHESTER FREE SCHOOL

We are a registered charity and this has helped us get money from certain sources, particularly the money which we've had from the Manchester University Rag Fund and also the £5,000 donated for the purpose of buying a building.

We have regular money coming in from different sources. On The Eighth Day, a wholefood shop on Oxford Rd in Manchester give us £5 a week and have done so for years. GrassRoots, the community books stores which has premises next door to 8th Day and also at Newton St off Piccadilly, allows us £5's worth of books a month. Various people have signed banker's orders which mean we have regular amounts coming in from their accounts. Manchester Polytechnic Student's Union has granted us a sum of money ever year in the past but due

to a misunderstanding we haven't as yet had anything this year.

At present we have 8 children registered with the school, three sisters and one brother - Johnny (aged 15), Leseley (14), Elaine (13), Doana (12); two sisters - Sue (16) and Linda (15); Pete (15); Joey (16). In the past we've had as many as 36 children in the school and when we move into the building, which will be within a day or two of duplicating this sheet, we will start accepting more children.

Two helpers work at the school fulltime - Alan and Tony. We both receive unemployment benefit and work voluntarily for the school. This is not a very secure situation because if a job ever becomes available for us we would have to take it and stop working at the free school. Isabelle and Doris work part-time for the free school and part-time in paid jobs. Recently we printed an appeal for more helpers to join the school. This was posted in public places and published in about 10 magazines and community newspapers. As a result about 4 - 6 people will probably give us part-time assistance once we're in the building.

The beginnings of the free school were in 1971, when a number of discussions took place about the possibility of setting one up. Two people came to speak from the Scotland Road Free School in Liverpool and gave the group a lot of inspiration and encouragement. But nobody had the time/commitment/enthusiasm to get anything going in South Manchester. Then in December, two sets of parents got together. Two of their children (at the time aged 5 and 7) had been subjected to bad experiences at two primary schools. Their parents felt the need to do something themselves about their education. They withdrew them from school, acquired a short-life house in Parkfield Street, Moss Side, did a bit of renovation work, and set up what was then known as Parkfield Free School.

The hurriedness and lack of planning resulted in many initial difficulties but the free school was now in existence and people weren't just sitting around theorising any more. The next eighteen months were productive, but at times very chaotic and uncertain. At one point Parkfield Free School closed down, but soon reopened as the "free school" or Manchester Free School with largely different people. At the end of the summer of 1973 there were about five teenagers who wanted to come to the free school, but there was no building, and no full-time adults involved. But instead of collapse, new people became interested and a scheme was started using different peoples homes on different days of the week. This lasted for a term, by which time contact had been made with a worker at the Hideaway Youth Club and the free school was able to use the youth club's building just off Moss Lane East during the daytime on Mondays to Fridays and only had to pay a small rent.

INTRODUCTION

In England it is law that all children between the ages of 5 - 16 years of age must attend school (Section 36. Education Act 1944). Most children attend state schools. These schools are financed partly by the state and partly by local government. The state organisation which controls education is the Department of Education and Science. This body has a large amount of control over what is taught in schools and how it is taught. All state schools are periodically visited by inspectors from the D.E.S. In addition the local education departments have a large degree of control over schools in their area. These departments have their own inspectors or advisers, as they prefer to be called, who visit schools. Actually the picture isn't anything like as simple as that because all kinds of individuals and groups influence the way the schools are run but we haven't space to go into the matter more fully.

Although many children might go through state schools and be content with their education and their parents also have few complaints to make there are still many children, parents, and other people who are not happy with state education. We read in the papers that there is violence and disorder in classrooms, many children don't turn up for lessons, some truant from school for months. State education is criticized for a number of reasons:-

It's said that state education is still weighed in favour of the children of the middle-classes. The system is competitive, those coming from comfortable homes where it is easy to study and there is more reading amongst parents, where there are fewer problems which discourage learning - these children will respond more quickly at school. They will be placed in higher classes where they will be given more attention by better qualified teachers, in classes with smaller numbers of children and with much better equipment and resources made available to them.

Also it is said that there is unnecessary authoritarianism in schools and that the curriculum is largely irrelevant to the needs of many children. Because children have little interest in what is being taught and because classes are large and therefore little individual attention can be given to each child, teachers find they often have to shout at children and use threats and punishment to keep any sort of order in class. Great emphasis is put upon obedience, children must do what they're told, there is no questioning of authority either within the school or in society as a whole. Often there are a lot of petty rules and in some schools the strap, cane or other forms of corporal punishment (legal and illegal) are used extensively. There is no discussion about whether or not the discipline is needed, whether or not the school system makes sense. Most children more or less accept the system but others rebel completely and are labelled as uncooperative and anti-social.

From this point (January 1974) there was a considerable expansion in numbers - there were soon 20 kids on the register, a good number of adults involved and many activities taking place both inside the building and elsewhere. After two terms at the Hivesway the freeschool's base was moved to Aquarius Neighbour Centre in Hulme where the freeschool now shared premises with other groups including a playgroup and youth club. There was a further expansion - by November 1974 there were over 30 pupils (aged 11 - 16) on the register. This building had previously been a school and needed a lot of renovation work done on it. This work was going ahead slowly, but in February 1975 disaster struck while most of the free school were away on a half-term camping trip. We returned to find much of the building badly smashed up - we counted 53 broken window panes, in two of the rooms we had been using - and there was no choice but to move out for the time being. For the next few months three of the helpers' homes were used plus other facilities such as the Childrens Art Centre on Moss Lane East. It became impossible to move back to Aquarius and other premises were sought. A short-life home was found in Loughsight and it was expected that the council would agree to us using it temporarily. But this didn't happen and in September 1975 we squatted. It meant that for a term we had a building that was our own. But, not for long - the adjoining street was demolished, part of our street was smashed up, and although our block was safe for the time being, it became more and more uncomfortable to stay there with dereliction all around us. The Department of Education and Science who had been very patient, following us through every move, were talking of a full inspection in three months time and it was obvious that our building would be declared unsuitable.

So in January 1978 we moved on again and withdrew our provisional registration as a school. A tutorial system was set up using various helpers' homes and the parents informed the local education authority of the change. It was decided to take in no more kids until we had a building, numbers fell as the sixteen year olds left, and we began to get very dispirited as activities decreased and attempts to find other premises fell through. We found we were losing contact with each other through being so split up. We were getting pretty desperate - attempts to find a building at a low rental came to nothing. Some adult helpers left, and those of us left were feeling that somehow we must raise the money to buy a building - or bust!

We had nearly £1,000 from two years Reg donations but the other few thousand were going to be a problem. Then the impossible happened and an anonymous benefactor came up with the money. The first property we were very keen on proved to be no good when we got it surveyed - we looked around a bit and eventually came across 103 Withington Rd. It seemed a bargain. A survey showed it to be structurally sound - the timber survey uncovered only a small bit of dry rot - and it had four bathrooms! We settled with the owner, acquired the 'Which' guide to buying a house, got some legal advice and started the buying process.

People ask us many questions about the free school -

What sort of children come to us?

What activities do we do with the kids?

What if anything do we teach?

Do children attend regularly?

How do we select helpers to join the free school?

Do the kids actually participate in the running of the school?

Why are we called a Free School ?
What contact do we have with official bodies ?
What is our attitude about sexism and racism ?
What contacts do we have with other freeschools ?

THE KIDS

Children may come to us for any one of half a dozen reasons. The biggest number of kids join us after a brother or sister has joined the free school and told the rest of the family that we've got a good set-up. The first member of the family to join may have come because they'd been having a bad time at state school; bullied by a particular teacher or teachers, treated like a 3 year old instead of a 13 year old, forced to take lessons in which they had no interest, made to feel stupid because they couldn't keep up with the rest of the class in a particular subject or unable to work well at a subject in which they are interested because they're surrounded by noisy kids who aren't interested in that subject. There are many kids for whom state schools have been a failure for a lot of different reasons. Equally state schools may have quite suited a lot of kids, we want to be objective but it isn't our job to defend the state system.

Sometimes it is the parents who are disillusioned with the state schools and want to give their children a happier time with much more interest than they themselves experienced at school. Sometimes kids come to us because no state school will have them. We don't see ourselves as being social workers in any sense and there are some kids who are so screwed up that we can't handle them. But at the same time the system is often too ready to reject kids when not enough has been done for them so we treat each kid as an individual not being too biased by official reports.

ACTIVITIES

The activities of the school depend on a number of things. Because we have not had a building for 18 months we've had to work in small numbers in peoples' homes. This has been very inconvenient, we have had to consider other people living in our homes who have nothing to do with the free school. This has meant we have to be quiet, often have to keep in one room with poor working facilities. We've had no purpose-built workshops for art and craftwork etc. The children have had to do a lot of travelling around on buses sometimes to a different place each day.

The activities during the last 18 months have depended very much on the particular helper. The kids have been able to do a number of activities - candle making, filming with video, leather-work, magazine production, silkscreening, shoe-making, clothes making, drama, art and craft activities, reading and writing, mathematics, social studies.... and this is not by any means a complete list. As a group we go ice skating, swimming and camping; there is an interest in the group in yoga, massage, nutrition, herbal medicine and other subjects. Some boys have done some weight training.

We place a great emphasis on trips to the country and only 2 weeks ago came back after spending 9 days at a rural commune in Scotland. Many kids will have little or no experience of the country before they come to the school and we believe it is very important that they should have this experience. At the commune they can help in the gardens or help to look after the animals - goats, hens, pigs, ducks, a pony. They were eating mostly vegetables grown in the gardens and bread baked in the kitchens.

There was lots of space at the commune, children played in the tree houses, kicked balls around, rode bicycles, went canoeing on the lake. In the woods there were rabbits and deer and many different species of birds. At night we had a bonfire and all joined hands round the

ACTIVITIES (continued)

We're going to be moving into the building within a day or two of duplicating this handout and then the scope of activities which will be available for the children will be much greater. We haven't as yet decided what each room is going to be used for but we're already talking in terms of needing a library, an arts and crafts room, a woodwork room, a large room where meetings, drama activities, musical activities etc. can take place, a dark room plus film workshop. Also we're thinking of a general play/mess about area which would be separate from areas where more serious activities are going on. There will have to be a number of tuition rooms where reading, writing and mathematics etc. can be taught plus maybe one or two other rooms for particular activities. Everyone has got to be given a chance to express their opinions on the matter before any final decisions can be made. The choice of what activities are going to be going on in the school is flexible. Immediate choices only reflect the interests and experiences of those people who are currently involved in the school. When we have someone join us who is interested in physical sciences or car maintenance, for example, then we can arrange so that it is possible for those activities to be carried out.

WHAT DO WE TEACH?

What people usually mean when they ask this question is whether or not lessons are actually structured and timetabled regularly. Also they want to know whether or not any lessons are compulsory. During the period when we have been in tuition groups, each child has arranged with the available helpers a timetable at the beginning of each week. Usually kids will spend most of the time with the particular helper who is registered as being their tutor. It is compulsory that children attend for tuition every day as they would in a normal school. As a general rule no helper has ever found it necessary to insist that a particular child should turn up at a certain time regularly every week to learn reading and writing for example. If it is seen that a kid is lacking in basic skills then any helper who has had dealings with that kid will be aware of the need to direct him or her towards making an effort to learn basic skills. But this has all happened in a situation where we have deliberately kept numbers of children low because of lack of a building. At the same time over the last 18 months we've had 6 full-time helpers for most of the time (it's only since Christmas that 4 helpers have left and haven't as yet been replaced). We've been able to give the kids a great deal of individual attention and have been able to avoid the whole issue of whether or not any lessons should be compulsory. Once we're in the building we might find we have to make some lessons compulsory, as the White Lion Free School does. These lessons would cover basic skills which parents, helpers and kids themselves agreed that they needed to learn.

HELPERS

We've got no set procedure for selecting helpers. Most people tend to select themselves as they find out what we're about. Usually if someone approaches us wanting to join as a helper they are invited to a helpers meeting. This gives them the opportunity to meet us and to get some idea of whether or not they might be interested in working with us. At the meeting they can ask us questions and likewise we can ask them questions. They listen to the business of the meeting and get some idea of our structure or lack of structure. After the meeting we encourage people who are still interested to join in group activities, swimming, trips to the country etc., so that they can meet the kids. If the kids didn't like a particular person that person would soon know about it and it would be unusual if they still wanted to stay with us. Events then take their own course. People either drop out or become more involved with us. Some will become full-time helpers, most will only help part-time.

The curriculum is said to be irrelevant to children's needs in that it is not concerned with the interests of the children. The state wants people who will fit into the social, economical and political machine. So many judges, lawyers, doctors, clergymen and other professional people are required. So many people are needed to work in offices, so many miners, so many labourers, so many people to work in factories and, of course, that the ever increasing section of the community who are unemployed. This is society's main concern, that there are enough people able to do the particular jobs that society considers necessary.

Also children are exposed to a great deal of propaganda in state schools, they learn that their country is the greatest in the world, religion is presented to them as if it were a proven fact, they are taught that boys and girls are intrinsically very different.

Lessons are compulsory and the subjects for study are laid down. Children spend so many hours studying reading and writing, mathematics, history, geography, science, foreign languages, woodwork, metalwork, art, etc. etc. If a child has a particular interest at any one time nobody is going to give that child individual attention to develop that particular interest. Perhaps a girl or boy wants to know about pregnancy. In learning about that particular subject she or he also learns a great deal about many subjects :- medicine, biology, natural methods of childbirth as opposed to childbirth within state hospitals, relationships between men and women, nutrition, religion, birth control, massage, physical exercise, ecology....and so on, each subject leading to another subject. But in many state schools no one has time for a child's individual interests instead they are expected to learn like parrots and very soon forget the information which to them was meaningless, which was drummed into them by teachers who themselves are often under too much under pressure to be able to respond to kids with sensitivity.

The same Education Act which makes education compulsory also allows parents to have their children educated outside of state schools. This is usually taken advantage of by rich parents who want children to be educated to take their place amongst the privileged classes. Children can be educated at independent schools registered with the D.E.S. or in small home tuition groups registered with the local education authority. In recent years people who are critical of state education have taken advantage of the freedom allowed by this law. A number of schools have been set up which aim to give the child more freedom and much friendlier relationships with their teachers or helpers.

All these schools have their own individual character but many of them share common aims. Children and parents are encouraged to participate in the running of the school, activities are based on the interest of the children, lessons are not compulsory or at least there is a great deal of choice between different activities. There are far less children to each teacher or helper than in state schools, many of the teachers or helpers don't have state teaching qualifications. Children get a great deal of individual attention. There are various local authorities which have set up experimental schools called 'truancy centres' or 'community schools' in an attempt to find a solution to what is seen as a breakdown in the education system. Many of these are in practice similar to freeschools, but are integrated with the education system and some of them aim to return the "truants" back into ordinary schools after a period of time.

Item 18.

"Expanding Movement treads many pathways to the same
ideal." Times Educational Supplement, July 28, 1972.

Footnotes:

114, p.77

EXPANDING MOVEMENT TREADS MANY PATHWAYS
TO THE SAME IDEAL

The free school movement seems to be steadily growing. Since the Liverpool Free School started in July 1971, Parkfields in Manchester, and South Villas School in Camden Town, London, have opened. Two more are planned for London and Manchester for next term, and working groups wanting to start schools have sprung up in Brighton, Guildford, Leeds, Coventry, Cardiff, Hull, Newcastle and Leicester.

No two are the same. A few can be described as middle-class ventures, rather like most previous progressive schools. Most, however, are would-be Summerhills set in the slums, aggressively providing for working-class children, and occupying church halls, youth centres, or even the most convenient vacant building. Some might occupy private homes; one plans to have no fixed address at all.

But each free school must eventually meet the requirements of the 1944 Education Act, which says that children may be legally educated in four ways: in state schools, direct-grant schools, independent schools, or "otherwise".

An independent school is "an institution providing education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age, which does not get government grants, and is not maintained by a local education authority" (Section 114). To function legally as an independent school, a free school has to be registered by the D.E.S., and this cannot happen until the school has been inspected.

Alternatively, free schools may resort to the fourth way, covered by the Section 36 reference to "otherwise". Local authorities use this section to give home tuition to needy children. Free schools, if they do not become institutions using central premises, can do the same as long as they provide "efficient full-time education (an l.e.a. duty under Section 36).

Full-time basically means at least four hours' daily regular instruction. What counts as education is not defined by the Act. So here, as with the law on premises and equipment, the free school has to rely on administrative precedent. To get legal approval, the pupils will have to be doing things a lot like children in ordinary school for a good part of the day. There is room for authorities to ban free schools, but there is equal space for the free schools to do their own thing within the law.

In Guildford and Brighton, and in two of the four possible London schemes, there is less talk of a free school for working-class pupils. The organizers are mainly discontented parents or disgruntled teachers worried about the fate of their own children in the state system. They are not about to plant a progressive school into a working-class community.

In Fulham, London, five teachers are looking for a building to take their own children and troubled pupils from all over London. Like Guildford, and unlike all the other free school groups which plan to raise money by becoming charities, the Fulham group would ask most parents to pay.

The most unorthodox free school may be that planned by Mr. David Head, former general secretary of the Student Christian Movement. It will have no building, indeed no fixed address. Small groups of children and adults will meet at each other's homes. "The city will be the school" explains Mr. Head. They hope they will only need money to travel to libraries, museums and galleries. Mr. Head talks of these study groups as "extended families". About 25 people are interested.

But with these exceptions, all the other free schools want to be working-class Summerhills - or another Liverpool Free School rooted in the worst area. Planned by young community workers or students, they hope to make the school spring out of successfully run youth clubs, pre-school groups, or adventure playgrounds.

In London, the South Villas School has eight pupils aged 7 to 15, seven of them from a family that has always had difficulty keeping their children in school. It was started by Jenny Simmonds, a second-year college-of-education student, and the children go to her basement flat during school hours each day. With other adults, they go on frequent excursions together. It started with an anonymous donation of £200, which has since run down to £3.

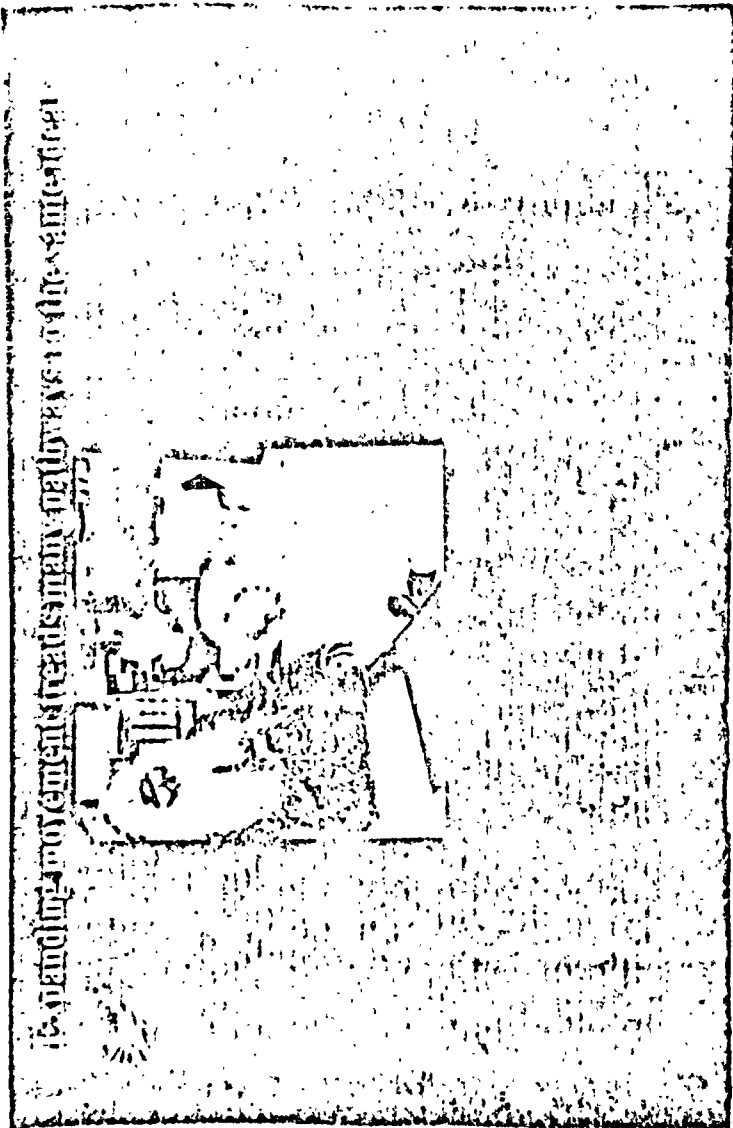
It has, however, been approved. ILEA inspectors have inspected it twice, and next year, when Jenny Simmonds hopes the school will have the use of a room at a new Camden youth centre, they hope to be registered by the D.E.S.

Parkfield School in Manchester, which has five children aged six to nine from three families, has also had sympathetic visits from local inspectors, who have advised the school to register with the D.E.S. The school, which was started by Community Research Action Group, occupies a room in a Victorian villa in Moss Side in a street due for demolition, and is well stocked with educational

materials. They hope to move to a whole building next year in North West Villas where they will be able to take in more of the local children.

Both Parkfield and South Villas are tiny beside the Liverpool Free School, which now has over fifty pupils aged 11 to 14, at least 20 of whom come from the bottom stream of the neighbouring secondary school.

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Item 19.

Letter to the author from Fay Hiscock of Freightliners
Free School.

Footnotes:
118, p.85

Maiden Lane Community Association

9 YORK WAY
LONDON N7.

01-485-3750
01-485-3399

4- March 1977

Prof G Potter

Faculty of Education

University of Victoria

PO Box 1700

Victoria

British Columbia

Canada V8W 2Y2

Dear Mr Potter

Thank you very much for sending us a copy of your letter to ILEA. At present we are negotiating with London Borough of Islington to find a site for the farm project and I am still hoping that it may be possible to include the tutor scheme or some related educational project, probably on a voluntary basis and allowing it to develop at its own rate out of the farm's cafes on the site. We have found through experience that it is more difficult to run something like a Free School which entails inspection by ILEA and

a much more formal set-up to deal with their regulations & expectations. It appears to be easier to do the same work under the tutor-scheme arrangement by which parents voluntarily remove their children from the state system and sign a form for the Educational Welfare Department stating that they wish them to be privately educated by named tutors. We are still subject to inspection by Education Welfare but they seem less inclined to interfere, and you don't feel that you have to compete with ordinary schools in the same way. As you know, our tutor scheme is voluntary receiving no funds from local bodies or parents & the work is "fitted in" with the other activities on the site. At present severe lack of staff & uncertainty about the future have badly affected the running of the tutor scheme, but I feel that we have something positive in the sense that several children are continuing to attend & involve themselves fully in the project and maintain their close relationship with the workers.

I hope our experience may have been able to help you in your research and we are all very grateful for the support you have given.

Yours sincerely

Fay Hiscock

Item 20.

Letter to the author from Mary-Lou Clarke,
Chairman of Schools Sub-committee, Inner London
Education Authority, April 22, 1977.

Footnotes: 119, p.85
120, p.86
132, p.97

April 1977

Dear Mr Pouton,

I was extremely interested by what you had to say in your letter of 23 February concerning these Schools. I was glad that the information sent you earlier was of value, and incidentally, we would be pleased to receive details of your book when it is published.

Concerning the Freightliners School can I say that the school did not collapse for lack of financial support from the Authority. We were aiding the project to the full extent of our ability from mid-1974 until 1976 when deteriorating physical conditions at the School and concern at the education being offered there led the Authority to a decision to withdraw assistance and to return the children to local secondary schools where possible. However a full term's notice was given before financial support was withdrawn. Following adverse reports from local inspectors the Department of Education and Science subsequently closed the school.

In this case despite a willingness on the Authority's part to work in partnership with Freightliners we were faced, I think, with the school's failure to achieve its own aims and objectives.

We have more optimistic hopes for the future of the White Lion Street venture. I recently met a deputation from the school and we hope to be able to work out a way of harnessing their work in a supportive role for pupils who, for various reasons, seem unable to benefit from the disciplines of normal school life. (It means essentially that they would cease to operate as an independent school, in which capacity the Authority does in fact have no powers to assist as long as there are adequate places available for our pupils within the maintained system.)

Yours sincerely,

Mary Len Clarke

Geoffrey D. Potter, Esq.,
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University of Victoria,
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Victoria,
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Canada. V 8 2 Y 2.

Item 21.

White Lion Free School Bulletin, No. 2, p.8.

Footnotes:
122, p.89

Item 22.

White Lion Street Free School Bulletin No. 2, pp.12-13

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124, p.91

the nursery and need to be returned when found on the stray. Everyone, including adults, is invited to visit us, and this has worked out better. Under-fives parents have taken turns running the nursery, gone swimming with us, joined us for daytrips, brought us fruit pies, given the school money and invited children to come over to play during the day. One mother helped us to pack the van late one night to get away to Scotland, another went with us. And one father whose wife was in hospital spent three days in the nursery mixing paint and washing the children's faces.

When older children in the school are at loose ends they often pop into the nursery. Small children need to play with older ones to imitate, to be carried away in games beyond their imaginative capacity, to hear the chatter. There have been some very successful moments with the fourteen-year old boys who have the time to arrange the track layout of trains, and built a garage for matchbox cars. And Eddie, another 14-year old, disappeared into the kitchen, out of earshot, to read to the little ones. Kim, a 13-year old, offered last week to go swimming with us to help teach. The older girls have helped with nursery activities, and invited under-fives into their room to make music and dance. Adults do not make the best companions for children. We go across streams picking our way more and more cautiously as we get older. If a five-year old has been that way before, he seems to get across mid-flight. When we go from one room to another, we don't pass through India to China, with jungle on one side and ocean on the other.

On a regular day, there might be just the two of us looking after 10 children. It sounds easy. But we are working on the premise that there are a million things to show a child how to do, so that he can do it himself next time on his own. The current philosophy in the nursery is 'A child from whom nothing is demanded which he cannot do, never does all he can'. We are always asked if our three-year olds are learning to read and write and work with numbers. The answer is 'Yes'.

We also think there are a million things to undo; the child-rearing practices that have slowed normal progress towards independence. Adults do too much for small children, to save time and tantrums. To render as much as possible of what the young are required to learn as easy and interesting is in itself a system of manipulation. They will never want to take on a disagreeable task. The longer a child is treated like a doll, the less the satisfaction he will take in being able to do things himself. The more adults think for small children, the less the children will assert their ideas.

The argument we often come up against, is that especially in a free school we don't need a list of do's and don'ts, shoulds and should nots. This suggests that the things that run spontaneously come what may. What we have accomplished can be described as: we've made a set of rules - mostly for ourselves.

Report of a six year old's reading and writing progress:

Teachers in the school keep detailed records of the children's progress: this brief report has been compiled from one such record. Sally writes:

Zoe is a six-year-old who joined the school on January 8, some time after the school opened. She made a few attempts at writing together and at first she wasn't keen to start any reading and writing. She did like to be sung, both in books and on the folder. She liked playing the fishing game which involves catching cardboard fish and reading a word written on them.

On January 19 she read eight pages of an easy book (Puzzling, Oxford Colour Picture book 1B) guessing most of the words. At the beginning of February she began to do written work. This involved her relating sentences to me about a drawing she had made. I wrote them down and put them in her book beside the picture. She also began a list of words beginning with the same sound. I went through all the words and the sound they made, and by March 7 she knew most of them. She played a game matching letters.

Some Activities

Activities of one adult with six children in January 1973 - Pat, aged 12, Fiona 10, Wendy 11, Spud 12, Ian 9, Andy 8 and (sometimes) Mark 10.

Visits: (not all including everyone). In January: a visit to the Kings Cross Police Station and to Islington Town Hall (guided by councillor who works in the Market and whom we all know); Fire Station (Cannon Street); in February, the Chinese New Year Celebrations, Natural History Museum, and six go for a week to a Welsh cottage; in March to Southampton and the New Forest (one day), and to Bicester School; Epping Forest for horseriding and birdwatching; in April to the Camden Free School and to a Kentish Town playground for a football match; to Richmond for deer stalking; and to the Eco(ecology) house in Dulwich; for two weeks, end of April beginning of May, to stay in a farm house in Belgium - visit Paris, Ghent, Ostend etc; in June Pat and Fiona go to the Essex cottage for the weekend; some of us visit Garnett College for a festival day; Pat, Wendy and Fiona make visits on their own in London as part of the 'London belongs to us' plan.

There are also regular visits to the library, swimming, gym, skating etc. And we saw various films - 2001, Alice in Wonderland, Bubble, Magic Donkey. The girls also visited an old lady to clean her windows.

Activities with this group: up to a point everything, except reading and writing, has been done with everyone together. (Reading and writing have been done individually); in number we have tried to do measuring of time and of space - in yards and metres; some have done area; we also made some solids, cubes etc, fractions, and with Pat, percentages. Pat and Wendy have begun averages; we have also done some graph charts - played battleships to practise reading these; we've discussed symmetry and Ian has discussed perspective. We've made simple electric circuits, examined (very unsuccessfully) the fields of some magnets and made some crystals and watched them growing under the microscope. The microscope has been used to look at everything conceivable, and the cellular structure of living things more or less understood. We made some hot air balloons that didn't work. They've brought some paper to try again but we haven't yet. We've discussed insides and where your food goes. We've done some sketchy examinations of cave men present and past, and child labour (Jackdaw used here). The girls have had some sessions on menstruation and sex - some have included boys, but mostly not. Pat's sister came in for a bit of first aid (she's St John's Ambulance) but that's stopped now. We've done some singing round the piano, and also upstairs with guitar, xylophone, tambourine, triangle, drum, shaker etc. They've all done a great deal with other people - pottery, cooking, sewing, fishing, some French etc.

The under-fives

Alice and Carrie, who work primarily with the under-fives, write:

In the school's initial pamphlet, a playgroup was proposed as a possible service to the community. We started with five pre-school children in two separate rooms, when the whole school was twenty-five strong . . . visualising older children reading to small children in a cosy family. Six months later when the size of the school had nearly doubled, we found it necessary to knock a hole between our two nursery rooms to keep a better eye on things. The older children came in and out like raiding parties creating havoc and sometimes carrying a little one off to keep for a mascot. We wondered if we should put a gate on the first floor landing so that the little ones could go upstairs, but not wander down and out the front door and follow others to the corner sweet shop. Would a gate serve to slow down stampedes on the stairs, or cause more accidents? When we found that the little ones were clinging to the nursery door for a chance to get downstairs, and the bigger ones were standing teasing them, we decided to make a rule: all nursery children must stay in

Item 23.

White Lion Street Free School Bulletin No. 3,
p.20.

Footnotes:
128, p.94

joint "staff" meetings with a local primary school, and swapped visits, ideas, films and equipment with other schools, both primary and secondary.

We have been members of a joint schools' working party on a community oriented curriculum, backed by Islington Council. We've also had quite a lot of contacts with our local further education college, adult education institute, and we use the local teachers' centre and media resources centre.

Our local ILEA inspector spent a morning with us recently at our invitation, and of course many ILEA teachers and other workers come to Tuesday open evenings.

We attend a lot of local meetings, including protest and council meetings about planning, redevelopment etc. There is also an informal organization of London Alternative Education Projects which meets about once a month (details from Children's Rights Workshop, 73 Balfour Street, London SE17, 01-703 7217).

Planned activities for older children

About the only generalisation that can be made about the work done by the older ones in the morning is that it usually involves writing. While in practice the distinctions are not clear, there are five basic types of writing going on: English "drill", English "writing for the sake of writing", comprehension and appreciation, information-based work, and O level English work.

English drill is based largely on a fairly well developed work card system (of several hundred cards) which we have produced over the past 18 months. (A great many of our present work structures really started then). This system is always being added to and updated, but we feel it is quite useful. It is based on a graded English "syllabus" we arrived at with the help of many standard grammar text-books. It includes conventional exercises ("put speech marks in the right places"), and less conventional ones ("write this out 'posh'"), but most of the actual content relates to the school or the area and we try to make some of it mad and crazy. The cards are used as "medicine", prescribed when someone is making a particular kind of mistake, or is ready to move on to a new skill.

English "writing for the sake of writing" is all the conventional stories, letters, descriptions, discussions, poetry, conversations, reports that written language is for. The Free School is lucky in that the range of shared experience and the variety of different things that happen provide an endless source of starting points for writing. And since children are involved in the running of the school there are many occasions for

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"real" as distinct from "simulated" writing needs; few of the letters written by children are just for letter writing practice. Besides "real" starting points, we have also built up a card system of suggestions and starters for essays, conversations etc.

We try to do a good deal of writing in the context of stories, poems, factual material, comics etc. read by the children. Every day the newspapers and magazines taken by the school provide lots of material for comprehension exercises, written reactions, letters etc. Good science fiction short stories are specially useful here. Several children have enjoyed re-writing the speech bubbles in cartoon stories.

Information-based work is still done within the (deliberately all-embracing) framework of the four curriculum areas that we introduced eighteen months ago; bodies, employment, thinking and futures. But they remain guides to the selection and presentation of the work suggestions we make, rather than specific courses in their own right. Information-based work is sometimes sustained over a period of weeks: a local history project, one on cities, sex, the human race, monkeys (Martin has a pet monkey), various pop stars, slavery, and others. But most often only one or two sessions are spent on each item of work. (We feel that much of the internal 'structure' attributed to traditional subject categories is meaningful only to those with a full command of the subject. This is something that can follow, rather than dictate the course of study. Internal connections between items of information should be indicated, but it is the external connections - how this item relates to the rest of the world that needs stressing when it is first introduced.)

We use some commercially produced series (e.g. the Longman's Reading Routes) and a large array of reference books (we have four large and famous encyclopaedias, none of them any good), supplemented by those we get from our excellent local library each week. And we use a great many school-made materials, in particular photocopied worksheets with pictures and other material raided from any source (especially colour supplements). We are slowly building up a filing cabinet of useful materials cut from all kinds of magazines, packages etc., filed under headings such as Islington, pollution, population, Women's Lib, bodies, animals, cities, etc. etc. We also use pictures from the library Phalen has collected in the art room.

We try to keep at least two information topics going all the time. Mostly children work on them individually which means that differences in ages and attainment can be catered for, either by presenting the same area differently, or by preparing different topics for individual

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meeting which they can attend to make some decision about their future involvement with the school.

We have had several students helping us for a month or three months (see section on 'Students'), and also some visitors from Europe working voluntarily for shorter periods.

(For details of pay for workers, see section on "Finance").

Our building

The building needs constant maintenance, and children share this work with the adult workers — putting on locks, wiring, mending stairs and windows, laying lino, plumbing, painting etc. They also share the work of ordering and collecting materials.

Since our last bulletin the use of several rooms has changed to meet changing needs — the pottery has expanded out of a tiny converted bathroom into another room, as the production of pots and clay models went up and we acquired a cheap kiln. The basement has acquired a DJ box and a "bar" for the Friday night disco, built by some of the older boys.

Outside, we had part of the site that is lent to us by a local firm tarmaced at great expense (largely paid for by the Wates Foundation), and the council gave us some top soil which is slowly becoming a garden, full this spring of rapidly-picked daffodils, and miscellaneous other plants purloined from the gardens of demolished houses. We built an impregnable 14 foot corrugated iron wall to protect the garden and playground from rubbish throwers and others, but after eight months the Borough Surveyor noticed it and made us take it down to a six foot fence.

He also condemned the papier-mache lion that adorned our portico (and the cover of the last bulletin) as a fire risk.

The nursery area has expanded with the number of three to five year olds, through a hole in the wall to an adjoining room.

Adult activities

Our determination not to limit learning activities by age means that just about all the activities in the school, outings etc are open to parents and other adults living in the area.

Adult use of the school's resources ranges from borrowing equipment (tools, TV, saucepans, books etc), and money, using the telephone, joining in discussion, to preparing for a Mode 3 O level English Language examination with some older children. Parents help by cooking lunch sometimes, looking after the building when it is closed, and working in the office. Two parents

started and run — helped by older children — the regular Friday night disco. Others have taken driving, typing, reading and pottery lessons through the school.

We find that adult contacts with us develop slowly, and do not believe that any conventional "advertising" is appropriate.

The growth of our local tenants' association gives an example of one development since our last Bulletin. Late in 1973 the subject of city development was discussed by older children and some parents, as part of a general study of cities. The local redevelopment plan, and in particular the future of our nearest Council block — Mandeville Houses in which over a third of the children who come to the school live — was discussed. Then the parents and some older children filmed and recorded on video tape the reactions of residents to the idea of redevelopment. The tape was shown at a local open meeting arranged by the Council to encourage discussion of their plans, and following this a tenants' association was formed. Its secretary has been closely involved in the school since we opened. The association uses school printing and other resources, and until recently met in the building.

The Association's secretary, Joan, writes: The association started from the White Lion Free School, when I as a parent, with four children at the school got together with one or two other tenants.

Our main aim is to fight for better living conditions on our estate. To do this, however, we have to work very hard at all times.

Mainly we have to attend many council meetings, to put forward our grievances to our local councillors, and sometimes we feel that we are banging our heads off a brick wall. But other times, of course things happen that make everything worthwhile, such as Christmas time when the association gave the pensioners a gift of £3. Many of them admitted that nobody gave them anything before without wanting something in return, others had tears in their eyes and couldn't find the words to thank us. Also the kids' Christmas party for the under nines — to see their faces was enough thanks.

I always try to go through life with this philosophy: 'Make each Burden a Pleasure, as life's road you pass along, and if we all try this things will never seem so bad.'

Several parents and other adults have expressed interest in the English O level course: one parent is taking the exam this summer and two others have started work on the course. One girl who came to work voluntarily in the nursery wants to take four O levels through the school.

One full-time worker is helping a local student

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One full-time worker is helping a local student

Letter requesting support from White Lion Street
Free School, February, 1977.

Footnotes:
130, p.95

57 White Lion Street
London N1 9LE
Tel: 01-253 7077

February 1977

Dear Geoffrey Potter

We are likely to have to close this summer if the Inner London Education Authority cannot be persuaded to join Islington Council in supporting us.

In 1975 our application to the Authority for support was turned down by 'chairmen's action' with no public discussion. A petition we collected urging the ILEA to support us was not even acknowledged. We have survived since then - just - on further foundation support.

Now, after considerable delay, the new chairman and vice-chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee have visited the school and have arranged a meeting at County Hall on March 7 when we can put our case. We would like to be able to take with us an up-dated indication of local and national support for our continued existence, and therefore ask you, if you agree with it, to sign the enclosed statement and send it back to us as soon as possible in the enclosed stamped envelope. If you can collect other signatures, so much the better.

Islington Council already fully fund our community and pre-school activities, and the ILEA have already agreed to help with the cost of school lunches and milk, and evening youth activities. We are asking them to fund our educational activities - at least for an experimental period - on the basis of no more than the per capita cost of educating children in their maintained schools.

If you want to know any more before signing, please phone us, preferably after 4 pm any weekday.

If you feel able to lobby the ILEA yourself, either directly or through the press, please do so.

Best wishes
from all at 57 White Lion Street.

Could you please sign

Item 26.

Newell, Peter. "Threatened Alternative", Times
Educational Supplement, March 18, 1977.

Footnotes:
131, p.76



Threatened alternative Peter Newell

The alternative school movement is in danger of retreating into the official world of academic discussion and theoretical argument. One of its leading exponents, the White Lion Street Free School in Johnson Road London, will have to close this summer unless the Inner London Education Authority grants aid.

We see the relevance of places like the free school in terms of their capacity to change the main stream education system in the direction of the needs of its community. That change is not going to come through official channels, but through contact and cooperation with those working in and around the system.

We have fostered that sort of contact and cooperation, which is the one role our local movement has but local schools and inner LEA institutions, social and educational workers of traditional schools do not (and national and even international movements do not).

In the face of this we are pleased we have been able to tell the authorities that our legal status of the free school is not a liability but an asset. It is the only one of its kind there. What the authorities should have done is to give the authorities the right to do it.

would allow them to do so without stifling our experimental characteristics. Alternatively, they could fund us as a voluntary organization, as Islington Council does. We are looking for no more than the minimum of education for the same children in maintained primary and secondary schools (and we do have many children who are indicated in one way or another (truancy, disruption, etc) that they could not accept the education offered in local schools).

All 16 parent with two children in the free school since it started in 1972: "The children come here, I think that should be enough. If I wanted them to go anywhere else they couldn't go—they like it here."

Why is it not enough to convince the authorities they should pay for it? We have heard a lot of reasons—some based on strict information on our own perceptions—that our teacher-child ratio is unattractive, that local schools regard us as some kind of threat, that the authority has no legal powers to fund us.

We suspect the main reason has a stronger ideological base. Those who have spent their energies on reforming selection and building up comprehensive schools see no place for "alternatives". This is not to

say we fear the ending of selection, or the passing of the voluntary aided grammar schools. But we see a danger in a centralized bureaucracy creating a unified school system and strictly limiting the development of new structures, when there is no consensus over the aims of education.

Surely there is a case for authorities spending more money on developments involving children and families in areas of proven social and educational difficulty, which have the support of their local community and are no more expensive in terms of money or manpower than conventional schooling? Our aims (more or less logically translated into practice) are more or less identical to the long term aims for schools identified by the ILEA in reports such as *An education service for the whole community*.

Some "alternatives" have been so pressed for funds that they have had the opportunity to develop beyond a fight for survival. We have been lucky. Almost from the start, Islington agreed to fund our under-fives and community activities (about a third of our total

budget). Various trusts (chiefly Wates, Calouste Gulbenkian and City Parochial Foundations) have given us grants. The ILEA has so far limited its aid to school meals and youth activities.

This compromise security has forced us to come to terms with the realities of working as adults in a non-hierarchical and cooperative way, sharing cooking, cleaning, accounting and administration, as well as teaching.

This way of working is of increasing appeal to many in traditional schools. We only pay ourselves £20 a week, yet we had more than 60 replies to one advertisement for a new worker (before the current teacher unemployment scare)—including several from heads of departments in large comprehensives. "You may have just the job I am looking for, as I have reached screaming pitch with the present education system", one wrote.

Our way of working helps to encourage non-professionals to become fully involved in education—both as learners and teachers. A young parent who has had two children in the school from the start became increasingly involved

in helping, particularly with the older ones. As she had become a full-time worker we decided she should be paid as one.

Sharing other work roles enables us to work in much smaller groups with the 50 children. This is the key to building an individual curriculum genuinely based on a child's needs. Frequent outings and use of community resources also become easier in small groups. Some involve long term planning—others are surprised to find that we spend a great deal of time meeting and curriculum planning; non-compulsory learning does not imply a lack of either structures or planning. Others can happen in response to a sudden interest or local event (blackberry picking, the picnic at the Trico factory, an urban farm; a building site; the Old Bailey).

Our weekly meetings, with its open agenda and free discussion, has not confirmed anyone's fears of the results of children's full participation in more or less all areas of decision-making. Calling and organizing a meeting and making decisions have contributions seem to us to be basic skills of the same level of importance as literacy and numeracy. Talking—particularly discouraged by the structure of many schools—happens all the time.

We have no compulsory learning activities in the school, but that seems insignificant. The questions we have to ask ourselves are about the degree of encouragement of children which is compatible with curriculum building, and with not limiting their autonomy and to their learning.

The Great Debate must be widened to ask questions about aims, and about the sort of institutional structures which foster different aims. It is in the context of that sort of debate that we believe our survival is significant—as a working model of an alternative, cooperative structure designed to encourage autonomy within a community, and to provide basic educational and social services for more of its members.

Descriptions of White Lion Street Free School's development are available in bulletins 2, 3 and 4, available from the school at 57 White Lion Street, London N1. The school welcomes visitors many or less every Tuesday night, from 7 to 9 pm. Peter Newell is a worker at the school.



Children in the Free School allows for a good child/adult ratio.

Item 27.

Wilby, Peter. "A Mean Death for a Free School",
New Statesman, July 1, 1977.

Footnotes:

133, p.97

system: they feel it has let them down, and intellectually and emotionally they reject it, even if they have only the haziest idea of what socialism or marxism can offer them. These young blacks resent Mr Young's assumption that their countries' economies, even if nominally independent, will be tied nevertheless to the Western market system; and it should be remembered that the leaders of the Black People's Convention (the umbrella organisation for black consciousness movements in South Africa) refused to meet Mr Young when he was in South Africa.

If neither the 4 million whites nor 21 million blacks in South Africa will be per-

their power and privileges: the decision was taken for them by metropolitan governments sitting thousands of miles away. If there has been movement towards a settlement in Rhodesia and Namibia, it is because South Africa has tried to assume the role of metropolitan power towards these 'colonies'. But where is the metropolitan power that will take it upon itself to settle South Africa's fate? Will the Carter Administration be prepared to play this role? In the final resort, this is what the international power game in South Africa will be about, because beyond that lies the white-black struggle, in its dreadful and starkly familiar terms.

used and purified, to the mainstream. White Lion, however, believes that the system, not the children, is at fault. It wants change education in ordinary schools, to persuade children to accept it, and it does not agree that the free school style is suitable only for semi-delinquents. But this attitude, of course, strikes at the heart of the ILEA's philosophy. One of the arguments frequently used by the authority's politicians is that funding White Lion would cast a slur on the work of the authority's own schools. How very odd, then, that the heads of several Islington schools, including White Lion's nearest primary school neighbour, should be among its firm supporters.

Another ILEA contention is that funding would be the thin end of several wedges, leading to financial support for fee-paying private schools and for dozens of other community projects. Yet it is perfectly possible for the ILEA to state that it is prepared only to aid non-fee-paying non-selective schools, on the same per capita basis as state schools. (If Westminster School cares to open its doors on this basis, so much the better.) As for other community schools, if they are as good as White Lion (it is impossible not to admire the dedication and skill of its founders and the excellent relationship between adult and child that is evident throughout reports the authority's own chief officer) they can get started under their own steam, they deserve the money.

The ILEA's stand looks shabbier when you compare the British record of alternative schooling with other Western countries. Denmark has a century-old tradition of parents starting their own schools with state help. In the US, more than 10 million children attend publicly-financed alternative schools. Free schools flourish in Australia and Canada. Yet, apart from the White Lion, Britain has just three small alternative schools in Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow, which are also wobbling on the brink of disaster. No education authority has yet given free school significant financial support. Despite the substantial research budgets of the Schools Council and the National Foundation for Educational Research, nobody has bothered to evaluate the White Lion experiment.

The trouble with the British Left is that it lacks the courage of its convictions. The authorities up and down the country shamelessly subsidise fee-paying schools to the tune of some £23m. a year. The Independent University raised £1.5m. from big business to get started. Oxford and Cambridge colleges, already rich, have the nerve to launch public appeals for new buildings. Yet, for the sake of some piffling bureaucratic principle, the Labour-controlled ILEA cannot even part with £20,000 (which will have to spend anyway) to help a handful of dedicated idealists and deprived inner-city kids.

Peter Wilby

A Mean Death for a Free School

The White Lion Free School, Islington, is one of the few survivors from the many alternative community schools set up in Britain over the last decade. Now, as it nears the end of its fifth year (and survival for so long in a species characterised by high initial hopes and rapid degeneration is itself a miracle), the school will almost certainly have to close. Its initial grants from charitable foundations have run out and, last week, the schools sub-committee of the Inner London Education Authority decided that it could not spare £20,000 a year to keep the school alive.

White Lion has 40 school-age children (ranging from five to 16) and ten pre-school children. Their future matters because they attend the White Lion School and they learn things there, which most of them never did and never will do in an ordinary school. But what matters equally is that White Lion, in an area of pre-war council housing where social workers will call as frequently as the milkman or the postman, represents one, small, encouraging approach to the growing social and educational problems of the deprived inner cities.

The school is free in two senses: there are no fees, and attendance is voluntary. Although there are no rules, lessons, curricula or timetables, the staff are adamant that reading, writing, and manipulating numbers are essential skills and that they have to be mastered systematically. So in the mornings the children are explicitly 'expected' to work on their basic skills. The expectation is reinforced both by the lack of alternative activities at that time and (if a child insists on playing table tennis or watching television) by the incessant nagging of the adults. In the afternoon, each pupil, in effect, writes his own timetable, choosing from such activities as swimming, horse riding, art, pottery, woodwork,

museum and zoo visits, music, gardening and country walking.

The central philosophy of the school is that, beyond a strong encouragement to acquire basic skills (amounting, for the more easily intimidated younger children, to a compulsion), it is no business of adults to tell children what they should learn and when they should learn it. But that doesn't mean anarchy. On the contrary, it means more careful planning and record-keeping. Each child has an adult responsible for keeping a close eye on his progress and for giving him a straight, unequivocal assessment of how he is getting on.

When White Lion approached the ILEA (for the second time in three years), it asked to be given the money for 30 of its children that would otherwise have been spent on educating them within the maintained system. The authority's own divisional office admits that it would have difficulty in placing those 30 children in any ordinary school. In a few cases, the divisional office has actually sent the children to the school and, indeed, juvenile courts have sometimes given the White Lion the job of supervising offenders. The stumbling block to funding is the ILEA's insistence that White Lion deregister as an independent school (it has passed a Government inspection) and accept a grant as a sort of rehabilitation centre which tries to get difficult children back into the mainstream system as quickly as possible. That condition is unacceptable for two reasons. First, the school would have to lose the ten children who have never disrupted or truanted from a state school and who, therefore, provide an essential element of normality and stability. Second, the condition strikes at the heart of the free school philosophy. The truancy centres, maladjustment centres, sanctuaries and sin-bins that have mush-

Item 28.

Atkinson, M.R. "Professionalism and Inner Ring Education",
a pamphlet written for The Balsall Heath Community School.

Footnotes:
134, p.98

PROFESSIONALISM AND INNER RING EDUCATION

THE PLACE

Balsall Heath is typical of Britain's Inner Ring urban areas. One mile from the expensively rebuilt commercial centre of Birmingham, it is a collection of drab and dirty terraced side streets, cut by radial roads rushing from the City centre to the suburbs. The depressing gloom is enlivened by pockets of activity in the side streets and the market-stall, cosmopolitan atmosphere of its shopping areas.

Seventy years ago, it was itself a fairly well-to-do artisans' suburb. But it has been overtaken and spoiled by successive waves of urban expansion. Its terraces are in disrepair. Many houses stand empty and vandalised, awaiting demolition. The better off and more ambitious residents have long since moved, their places taken by Irish, West Indian and Asian families, further replacing and leading to the eroding of the standards and values of the original community. The village atmosphere has gone. Few new standards and values have emerged to replace the old. In place of spirit there is depression.

Too many people have stopped caring for themselves and their homes. Rubbish litters the streets and rubble-strewn building sites. Where there are no or few rules anything can be tolerated. Standards have slipped so much that residents are unable to sustain a sufficiently resilient communal social and educational life for their children to develop to their best potential. Adults have little confidence in their own ability and are suspicious of all social, educational and industrial institutions.

The decline in morale and confidence in educational aspirations and social standards joins a similar decline in housing, industry and enterprise which is aggravated by factors entirely external to Balsall Heath.

A solution in one area cannot be more than partial, for the decline in the social and educational arena cannot be fully arrested without a healthy industry offering job and decent wages or without homes and a decent environment for the young family to mature in within a context of security and high communal morale.

With social, educational, industrial, housing and environmental standards all in decline it is not surprising that as the child in such an area moves through school, he becomes increasingly sceptical of his ability to contribute anything to it or to learn from it. It becomes difficult for the ordinary professional even to reach him, let alone teach him.

The child may become an under-achiever, a truant, the subject of a probation or intermediate treatment order or simply at risk of failing to develop his or her potential. Delinquency, vandalism and the forming of gangs as a consequence of multiple communal deprivation further add to the problems and depression of the area. This is the vicious circle of decline.

A variety of vitally important local forces work, often in hidden ways, to contain this situation of disintegration and despair in Balsall Heath. In particular, there are many adults and families who still care. The area teems with humble and honest people of all races who have energy and talent, ordinary men and women who do their best.

But even amongst them, the predominant feeling is that nothing can be done. Before the vicious circle of decline in Balsall Heath can be broken, their hidden reserves of strength and the indigenous codes and standards of the community must be tapped and regenerated as the Inner Area Studies recommend. But how can this be done?

For several previous attempts have failed - the E.P.A. experiment, the C.D.F. even Urban Aid have not seriously halted the downward spiral in any single inner ring area. It is as if the Government pulled a lever, money and professionals poured into an area, but after the three year experiment was over and the lever released into place nothing of significance remained which was not quickly eroded by the downward spiral of decline. There was not enough response on the ground, no comparable lever swinging in accord with that pulled by Government initiative. The community did not know how to take advantage of the opportunity offered. It had neither the spirit nor the skill and knowledge to realise the powerful potential in the Government lever.

THE ORTHODOX REMEDY

The orthodox professional solution to the problems facing Inner Ring areas like Balsall Heath urges that more professionals and a further extension of the Welfare State are required. The development of the Welfare State and the attendant proliferation and specialisation of professional roles has had at least one debilitating side effect in areas like Balsall Heath. It has robbed people of their initiative. It has hindered the growth of self-help, local enterprise and home-grown solutions. The professional cannot do his job without a genuine local response. Yet far from helping, more professionals can only succeed in making people more - not less - dependent on their expert services.

It is tempting to blame the local people for not responding to those professional appeals which have been made. But before the professional/client relationship can be developed for the benefit of the community, the role of the professional must be redefined. The client's contribution must equally be reassessed.

A NEW PROFESSIONAL ROLE

We have seen that both social and educational factors in such communities as Balsall Heath combine to produce decline. Therefore, both sets of factors must be tackled before the situation can be remedied. The ordinarily separate professions of teacher and social worker only tackle the separate halves of what in real life is an inseparable home/school equation from their different institutional standpoints. Yet how can a social worker alone make progress if a child's education is deficient? How can a teacher teach effectively if the child's social welfare, home and community background are ignored?

The teacher must "follow the child home" and understand the social pressures and constraints which are put upon him which may hinder his ability to learn in school. Equally, the social worker must have an interest in the child's schooling. How can the child be helped not to be delinquent or at risk if he plays truant from school?

Important aspects of a new job definition start where school and area office traditionally finish.

This job cannot be undertaken by one more specialist - a home/school liaison officer or an intermediate treatment officer attached respectively to school or area office. All teachers and social workers in such areas as Balsall Heath must act in this way. That is, their separate roles must be combined. We must have teacher/social workers who both teach and are socially involved with the child's family and community.

This new definition of the professional role must have a further dimension added to it before it can become effective. For how can the teacher/social worker hope to influence the social and educational progress and development of the child if the child's parents and the community are not in tune with his aims? The professional's aims must come to terms with and accept the reality of the child's background. The child cannot be taught/helped to develop and mature without also teaching/helping and developing the declining community, industry and environment around him. How can the child advance when all around him is in retreat and decline?

The professional can and must identify, develop and extend the most positive strands of family and community life which influence the child. He must be careful not to simply impose his own alien professional values upon the family and the community, no matter how well-intentioned such an approach might be.

How then can the professional's skill really be put at the service of the client? Even the most enlightened teacher/social worker cannot "ask the community into the school/area office" or "take the institution into the community" without appearing to be patronising. The teacher/social worker, the school and the area office are provided and maintained from outside the community. They cannot be affected or changed by the community. They can only offer help, asking the community to participate, to come into the school because the school has something to teach them. Neither the professional nor the institution are conceived by local people to belong to them or to be a part of their community. Only the sick and subservient will respond to an invitation to receive but not to give.

This barrier can only be removed if the professional and his skills are truly put at the disposal of the community in the fullest sense. Healthy productive local people will only accept and trust the teacher/social worker when they feel able to influence and who works in institutional settings which are at least in part their creation, a genuine response to their needs, generated by their own efforts with the aid and guidance of the professional's skill.

If the teacher/social worker is to tap and harness the hidden indigenous reserves of strength and energy in the community, he must be responsive and responsible to local people. He must be seen to be working for the child, family and community. The relationship must be a reciprocal, interdependent one, not one of superior expertise and ignorant need.

Any serious attempt to work socially and educationally with children and adults living under the adverse conditions appertaining in most Inner Ring areas must take into account the stark and depressing nature of the environment. Standards have dropped so far and are so different from those prevailing in thriving suburban communities that the professional cannot act as an ordinary professional. The solution lies not simply in providing more teachers and social workers, but in training a new kind of professional whose ear is closer to the ground through his living in the community as a neighbour and resident, with an equal stake in the redevelopment of the

It may be asking a great deal of the professional to expect him to redefine his relationship with the client so radically that he is employed by the client and not by a statutory agency. But equally, a great deal is asked of the client. For the client is challenged to take part in the social and educational regeneration of his disintegrating community. He is asked to pull the leaver of his own slender resources in response to the leaver of Government policy. His response is vital to the successful reversal of the spirial of decline which afflicts his community, family and child. The professional is asked only to be the skilled catalyst which sparks and guides the process.

THE BALSALL HEATH EXPERIMENT

The Balsall Heath experiment has helped to demonstrate the relevance of the need for this new combined teacher/social worker and the new professional/client relationship.

Starting with a very tentative, practically based definition of the new professional role, and from very small beginnings five years ago, an exciting series of developments have taken place.

In an area where families and children have few local resources to rely on, where there has been no access to pre-school provision or out-of-school play facilities, and where some children fail to attend or benefit from secondary school, it has been possible for teachers/social workers to encourage parents to develop communal, institutional solutions of their own.

At one level, this has involved the staff in the provision of parent-organised entertainments. At a more advanced and ambitious level, it has involved the staff and parents in the creation and management of complex social and educational institutions. The teachers/social workers of the Balsall Heath project do not just teach and offer help. They help people to help themselves. Through living in the community and sharing its problems it has proved possible for the staff to help generate a family and communal confidence which has had beneficial effects on the individual child's social and educational progress and on the community as a whole.

Local residents, parents and other interested parties are now helping staff whom they independently employ in the formation of their own social and educational centre. Since the first part of the project started just over five years ago, parents and staff have by degrees stimulated a variety of integrated self-help activities - evening classes, youth clubs, Bingo, socials, jumble sales, holidays away from home, a community newspaper, a community toy workshop etc.

In particular they now manage and run the following institutions:-

- a) An independant Nursery Centre which combines the functions of a nursery school, day nursery and pre-school playgroup. It is open from 7.15 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. every day except weekends, 48 weeks a year and caters for 60 local children. It is designed to care for and provide pre-school educational facilities for children who vitally need professional pre-school support and training additional to that available in the family.
- b) An independant Adventure Play Centre which is open to all children in the area in out-of-school hours and holidays. It is concerned with both the social and the educational aspects of the children's out-of-school lives. It fills the gap between home and school and helps both home and school by encouraging the children to learn to play and develop skills

- c) A small independent secondary school which is open from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. It is particularly intended for children who are failing to benefit from the large local authority schools, and aims to provide a successful and disciplined independent, local alternative.

This, in four areas where the City-employed professionals are unable to make adequate provision (pre-school, out of school, secondary school and community involvement) local residents, parents and independently employed locally resident professionals have created this provision for themselves in close cooperation with the relevant City Council Departments and to the benefit of statutory institutions.

But does what has been created really work? Are the School, Nursery and Play Centre which staff and parents have fashioned together good, solid institutions beneficial to the child and the community and inspiring local confidence? For brevity's sake, this question is answered only by reference to the School, the most ambitious of the undertakings.

THE VALUE OF THE BALSALL HEATH INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOL

The Balsall Heath Community School functions inconspicuously in two terraced houses. It caters for 25 children, none of whom were attending their previous school regularly, the maximum number in the space available, though parents and staff hope to acquire extra space in order eventually to cater for about 45 children.

Three rooms are given over to general space, where the children gather from 8.30 a.m. onwards to play snooker, darts, read the morning papers, play records, make tea or coffee and chat with teachers. The same space is available after lessons, until 5.30 p.m.

Twelve rooms are used for lessons which run compulsorily from 9.15 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Anchor subjects are English, Maths, History and Art and Craft. These proliferate into Environmental Studies, Home Management, Photography, Woodwork, Needlework, Cookery, Music, P.E., Field Trips etc.

All subjects are compulsory for all children as, of course, is attendance. Lateness must be made up after school. Absence means work must be done at home the same day and involves an immediate home visit. Teaching is formal, indeed visitors are surprised at how traditional the approach of the teachers is. But the setting is relaxed and informal - first names, carpets on the floor, a homely atmosphere, the walls festooned with paintings, posters, plants and flowers. Something like a primary or village school, but for secondary age children who otherwise would receive almost no schooling at all and combining both traditional and progressive methods.

Extra curricula activities include displaying work in local shops, a community newspaper, producing a school magazine, helping with a market stall and helping at the nursery centre.

The school is most definitely not the free school of popular imagination, imposing a mish mash of progressive ideas. Parents, who all sit on the school's management committee, want their children to do well, receive basic training in the three R's, the kind of discipline relevant to the work-a-day world, study for C.S.E.'s and 'O' level exams and expect useful employment, not the dole queue, to be the end result.

A written contract between staff and parents states that in return for such education and effort on the part of the school, parents will do their best to support the school by ensuring attendance, raising money for equipment and showing their children that they care about what happens to them. Closing the gap between home and school is seen as a key to success. There is no escape for the child, who comes to respect firmness and discipline as just. Structure, if friendly and individualised, becomes a lifeline to be grasped and utilized. Results, measured in terms of exams, show several C.S.E. Grade 1's and 'O' levels. All pupils who have left are in useful work, one is an apprentice chef, another a civil servant with the local authority, another a clerk. Children who might otherwise have gone to borstal or finished up swelling the ranks of the unemployed school leaver, vandals and delinquents have become useful, productive citizens because of a new found relationship between teacher and taught in a new kind of independent community school.

The final seal of approval has recently been given by the D.E.S., which, after a full three day inspection, has recognised the school as efficient. The School's General Inspector, Mr. John Slater, and his colleagues, Miss Hegsom and Mr. Vero, are clearly pleased with its development and professional approach. So also is the local authority. A highly placed officer was recently quoted as saying that ".... the school is making excellent provision for the children for whom it caters. The children who go there are happy and well cared for and the school is getting good results" Councillor Neil Scrimshaw, Chairman of the Education Committee, also commented that, "This school is undoubtedly providing a most important opportunity for the young people who are attending. We don't see any difficulty in this school existing alongside local authority schools ... It is a very worthwhile project."

The key to this success is not simply dedicated teaching - you can't teach children who do not attend - but the special relationship between parents and staff as social workers within the community which encourages the parents to make the children benefit from the quite ordinary skills of the staff as teachers.

CONCLUSION

An independent community social and educational experiment is working in Balsall Heath. Provided that the project receives enough financial support continue, there is no doubt that it will go on being a valued asset to the area.

The action research experiment has shown that one way of arresting the decline in an Inner Ring area need not involve an expensive extension of Welfare State and educational provision. On the contrary, by using the more resilient local resources, standards and energy to generate self-help activities, it has been shown that the community itself can play a part in tackling its own problems. The project developed gradually, taking each step only when practical requirements could be seen by local adults to demand it. The solid local institutions which have resulted therefore remain within the grasp of local residents. An ordinary resident thus supports the professional and helps him in his work, because the institutions within which he works embody and uphold the more caring and constructive values of the community, so generating practical, realistic and attainable standards for people to strive towards fulfilling.

Consequently, a new kind of professional role is evolving, which not only combines teacher and social worker and makes them also fulfil the role of neighbour and resident, but in addition subordinates the professional to the community.

- 7 -

Symbolising this fact, the community, not the State, employs the professional through a local association of residents who together run a complex social and educational centre.

More exciting still is the fact that the project has grown slowly, practically from the early beginnings of Playground and Nursery Centre to include an independent secondary school and a community social and educational centre. This centre is planning a further development - in housing, employment and the environment. Only so much, it has been discovered, can be done at the social and educational, child and adult level without also working at other levels - house improvement, environmental improvement, the retention and creation of jobs. Children do not need a good playground, nursery and school. Children also need a good house, secure family, constructive environment, a decent job to go to on leaving school and the prospect of raising a family in a community which is more resilient than it was in his childhood.

Government money on Inner Ring Areas cannot solve the problem alone. An extension of the Welfare State, increased numbers of professionals cannot solve it either. What is needed is Government policy which enable and elicit a response from the Inner Ring Area itself, which harnesses the most productive internal forces and connects them with the forces of Government initiative. This cannot be accomplished with a new kind of professional work force which acts as a catalyst between Government Officer on the one hand and community, child and adult on the other.

This is why staff, parents and a growing number of statutory professionals do not just believe that this experiment in Balsall Heath has something of lasting value to offer to the community which helped to create it, but feel it is also of general significance. The Prime Minister speaks of the need for a new approach to Inner Ring areas. The project may have something to offer to the wider society and policy making generally.

.....
Dr. M.R. Atkinson
DIRECTOR, BALSALL HEATH COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT.

Item 29.

Jones, J. "The Birmingham Story", Where, No. 54. p.41,
February, 1971.

Footnotes:

135, p.98

136, p.99

137, p.99

138, p.99

139, p.99

THE BIRMINGHAM STORY / Joan Jones

As we enter 1971 we feel we have got about a third of the way towards our aim: so far we provide pre-school education for over 300 children annually in 11 playgroups, day nurseries and day care centres.

1 - David Gretton Nursery, 118 Pershore Road, Birmingham 5 This is our headquarters, and the nucleus of our project. This Victorian house on the edge of Balsall Heath for some while lay fouled and vandalised, a recognised doss house for meths drinkers. But with unstinting help from the Housing Department, and with teams of volunteers, it has been transformed into a delightful little nursery school attended by between 40 and 60 children each day. Normally there will be children of five, six or maybe ten countries of origin.

As well as all this, the David Gretton School houses the small headquarters staff of the whole Priority Area Playgroups project, a Resources Centre to service other playgroups, and the central office and workshop of the Action Force Volunteers.

2 - St Paul's Day Care Centre, 3 St Paul's Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham 12 A 1968 survey showed 600 families close at hand who desperately needed help of the kind that could be provided by a day nursery. This centre now accepts 45 children a day, between seven in the morning and six in the evening. If the nursery did not exist many of these children would be left alone, or in the care of an unregistered minder, all day long. Considerable support comes from the Church, Christian Aid, and from the voluntary work of local Quakers.

3 - Mount Pleasant Playgroup, Balsall Heath Road, Birmingham 12 We have been able to use attractive modern premises for this playgroup, which is part of a new complex including a comprehensive school and a community centre. The playgroup, which serves 25 children, has always been run closely in association with the Pakistan

Institute, and has very deep roots in that section of the community. The playgroup is linked with the Balsall Heath Association, and has recently become part of the national EPA research programme.

4 - Wills Street Playgroup, St Francis' Boys Club, Lozells, Birmingham 19 A playgroup for 20 children in a very poor area of Handsworth. At present its physical surroundings need a lot of money spent on them - the toilets for instance are all outside ones, and like several of our playgroups it is sometimes hit by vandals. A destructive raid can easily cost between £100 and £300 - perhaps equal to all the money painfully raised, pound after pound, by the mothers over a couple of years. Many people give their services free in order to build something out of this playgroup - and give these children a better start than the vandals had.

5 - St Thomas' Playgroup, St Thomas' Infant School, Great Colmore Street, Lee Bank, Birmingham 15 A playgroup for 25 children, at the top of a bleak hill in an area depressingly short of communal facilities.

It is built largely on the energies of the pupils and staff of Lea Mason School. Led by their teachers, the boys build and repair equipment, the girls help tend the children.

6 - St Barnabas Playgroup, St Barnabas Church Hall, Ladywood Road, Birmingham 12 Two playgroups for 25 children each, next to the lovely old St Barnabas Church, recently vandalised and set on fire. A pair of hard-working Christian Aid officials spent nearly two years in bringing these about, winning fine support particularly from the Indians and Pakistanis who have the local shops. Nearby school girls played a big part in helping get everything into good trim. After-school English classes are held for the Indian and Pakistani mothers.

7 - Church Road Playgroup, St Martin de Porres Community Centre, Church Road, Moseley, Birmingham 13 Fifty children benefit from this playgroup in a twilight

area. The district is much troubled by prostitution and by gross over-crowding in the old and decaying houses. Again much has depended on individuals, and support from Christian Aid staff, but slowly its position has been won, and higher hopes for the children aroused.

8 - Tysley Jamaican Community Service Group Day Nursery, 2 Havelock Road, Tysley, Birmingham 6 A day nursery for 25 children. It has taken three and a half years to plan, which gives some idea of the difficulties to be overcome. The conditions are not ideal - the small gravel play space doubles as a car park, and if there were more toilets it could take more children. But good supporting links have been built up by members of the Jamaican Community Service Group with a Selly Oak church and the public health department.

9 - Dyson Hall Playgroup, Islamic Culture Centre, Dyson Hall, Park Street, Aston, Birmingham 6 A small playgroup, badly short of resources and fighting an uphill battle. So much depends on its able and persistent English and Indian playgroup leaders, who put so much into it. Nevertheless it is a well placed service.

10 - St Peter's Playgroup, Grove Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham 21 This playgroup, behind the local infants school (which has at times a 96 per cent intake of immigrants), takes 25 children. It owes much to the ground work of the Rev. John Faulds, and represents a quite strong feeling in the local immigrant community.

11 - Villa Road Methodist Church Playgroup, Handsworth, Birmingham 19 The project has been closely associated with the creation of pre-school activities around the remarkable adventure playground at Handsworth, so that it would become an oasis for all children. And despite many difficulties, including the burglary of all the equipment, it has been a success.

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Item 30.

Letter to the author from Mr. A. Bullus, Headmaster,
Park Hill Junior and Infant School, Birmingham,
June 15, 1976.

Footnotes:
140, p.100

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PARK HILL JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

Headmaster:
Mr. A. BULLUS

Telephone:
021-449 3004

ALCESTER ROAD,
MOSELEY,
BIRMINGHAM B13 8BB

15th June, 1976.

Mr.G.Potter,
University of Victoria,
P.O.Box 1700,
Victoria,
British Columbia,
Canada V8W 2Y2.

Dear Mr.Potter,

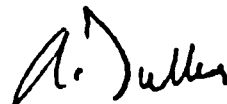
Many thanks for your letter concerning alternative schools. I am sympathetic to your research programme but unfortunately am not able to make a very significant contribution to your enquiries.

We have heard that there is a free school near to Park Hill but we have not received any kind of official information regarding it or its activities. None of our teachers know anything about it except that it exists and appears to cater for children older than the 4 to 11 year old ones who attend this school.

There is not a serious problem of truancy in our particular age range and certainly not a drop out manifestation. Most of our incipient occurrences of anti school behaviour seem to be overcome by the attitude of the teaching staff in encouraging children to exploit their own natural talents in a particular activity and then expand interests and abilities over a wider range. Attempts to achieve this result in the school being such an interesting place that children cannot afford to stay away for fear of missing an exciting event. It seems to work.

So sorry not to be able to help you more, but I do hope your investigations are fruitful.

Yours sincerely,



A.Bullus
Headmaster

Item 31.

Letter to the author from Mrs. B. Harris, Headmistress,
Highgate School, Birmingham, June 7, 1976.

Footnotes:
140, p.100

Your ref: GP/hh

HIGHGATE SCHOOL,
Balsall Heath Road,
Highgate,
BIRMINGHAM. B12 9DS.

7th June, 1976.

Mr. Geoffrey Potter,
Assistant Professor,
University of Victoria,
P.O. Box 1700,
VICTORIA,
British Columbia,
CANADA V8W 2Y2

Dear Mr. Potter,

Thank you very much for your letter enquiring about our nearest "free" school.

I think I should make clear to you that this free school does not consider itself to be a truancy centre. Indeed, it has refused to take any subsidy from the Local Authority which would imply that this was its function. It looks upon itself as a truly alternative school which takes pupils for all their school life. As a truancy centre it would have been expected to prepare children for return to the normal school system.

Within the Local Authority provision we now have various small units which to some extent fulfil this function. These units can be:

- a) Within a normal school - our own is called a Social Adjustment Unit and has some pupils with school phobia as well as some who are mal-adjusted, up to a total of nine.
- b) Guidance Units for disruptive children of primary or lower secondary age. Such pupils are recommended by the Head Teacher to the Head of the unit and are psychologically assessed. They usually stay in the unit one or two terms. Such pupils are not usually long-term truants.
- c) Suspension Centres for secondary pupils who have been suspended from school for a variety of reasons but usually for disruptive or violent behaviour.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

B.G. Hamb
Headmistress.

I hope t is is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

B.G. Hamb
Headmistress.

Item 32.

"Birmingham", Cirkusact, University Collete, London,
1975.

Footnotes:

141, p.100

inflatables...

Apparently, the last day of the scheme ended on a slightly low note: they set up a barbeque and lit a bonfire but one resident complained to the police and it had to be put out. All too few residents had been involved in the playscheme. With no funding available for a full-time playleader, the whole site had to be razed at the very end.

With their determination, they should soon have a better site and a full-time playleader. As Bertha put it: 'First you ask; then you appeal; then you demand. You don't get anything if you don't fight for it.'

Birmingham

Spon Lane

Spon Lane Adventure Playground is sandwiched between the main railway line and the edge of West Smethwick Estate, an area of high-density housing. Most of the houses are tall and thin, 3 storeys high, and ranged in ranks like beach-huts. Carparking areas reach literally up to people's front doors and the shops and other amenities (such as they are) are situated on the other side of a four-lane main road, with just one subway across it.

The playground itself is shaped like an amphitheatre — a curve of grass sloping down to a central tarmacked area, and a small hut. There is a mixture of conventional and 'adventure' play structures. The latter are rarely altered, which would explain why most of the kids favour the slide and the monkey bars.

The site is staffed by three full-time volunteers, two from the Ecumenical Youth Service and one from Community Service Volunteers (CSV). During our stay there was some conflict of aims between them,

but this was not overt enough to seriously affect the running of the playground.

We arrived on a Wednesday evening, looked over the playground and discussed the situation with the leaders and the kids. On the Thursday afternoon we performed 'Prof. Ada' in nearby Kendrick Park, for which it poured with rain but we attracted a small audience of enthusiastic kids.

Friday we had off, partly because of the weather and the lack of undercover facilities, and partly because we were about halfway through the tour and needed the rest. In the evening there was a poorly attended meeting in the church hall. There was only a handful of parents and the local vicar, but a successful games session broke down some barriers and some mildly profitable discussion ensued.

Saturday morning was taken up in frantic preparations for the carnival, during which a head was made for our pantomime horse and the idea of the 'Walloon' (a rare Icelandic bird) was conceived and constructed. Regarding the carnival itself, we felt that Cirkusact was being relied on too heavily, partly due to our pre-tour publicity being inadequate because of most people's unrealistic image of a 'theatre group'.

After the procession, we performed 'Prof. Ada' again, this time around the estate, with rather more success. The sight of parents watching from upstairs windows was encouraging, but there were also children's forlorn faces — their noses pressed to the glass — for their parents would not let them out. A bleak atmosphere, where people did not feel they could let themselves go. In our costumes and make-up we waved up at the windows, but the only reaction in many cases was the hint of a smile. It was as if they realised that our burst of colour, noise and activity could only provide a very temporary alleviation of their misery.

The stalls for the carnival were imaginatively produced by local people, but rapidly demolished by the rain. We put up the smaller inflatables, there being insufficient room for the mattress, and made use of



our PA, which was wrapped in polythene and precariously balanced on the roof of their shed. Over it we played music interspersed with announcements, which managed to create some sort of 'special' atmosphere if not exactly carnival-like. The local people had organised a baby show, which took place in the packed-out hut and was quite successful, although we failed to exploit the presence of so many parents. Because of the size of the hut, most of the older kids had to stay outside in the rain.

Spon Lane highlighted the problems one can have with the weather. For most of the three days it rained hard, so that our shows and the bazaar took place in a drizzle. The estate, of course, had no large hall at its disposal, only the small hut on the playground, and the evening session was held in a small hall three miles away.

When confronted with these massive physical constraints, all one can hope to do is to enliven people's interests so that they demand better facilities, but Spon Lane defeated us even here. It was difficult to see why Spon Lane should be particularly more apathetic than other estates, but the few people there who tried to get things moving had very little success. Perhaps we just saw the estate during bad times — when the rain dampened both us and the community. The lessons are simple enough: estates should have indoor provision for recreation and sport, and Cirkusact should have more to provide in the way of indoor entertainment.

Rocky Lane

From the problems and depression of Spon Lane, Smethwick, we moved to Rocky Lane, Hamstead, in North Brum. Our reaction to Rocky Lane was a mixture of disappointment and involuntary relief, for Rocky Lane was one of the most 'respectable' areas Cirkusact had ever been to. Disappointment because there are so many worse areas in Brum, and involuntary relief because the kids were 'well-behaved' and did not test us and as such we found we could relax. The passive nature of the kids shocked us, but first some background is needed.

The playscheme was centred on a church hall, which was also a youth club, and a large park just behind it. The houses were pre- and post-war semis and detached — most of them privately owned. Public services were relatively good; most houses seemed to have a car, and the majority of the roads were lined with trees. The average of 60 kids paid 7p each per day, brought their own lunches and paid extra for the orange squash in the lunch-hour.

We first performed 'Prof. Ada' in the park. It was a remarkable performance because of the muteness of the kids, e.g. usually the Aliens get some rough treatment, but here the kids queued up to shake hands and to have 'Space Judo' practiced on them. The tables were turned! The kids returned to have lunch, and lol, they were all sitting quietly on the floor munching their sandwiches. It was plain that we were dealing with a very different type of animal, and this is where a bit of Cirkusact flexibility came in handy! We pulled out all the stops: 3 inflatable sessions (both indoors and out); face-painting; drama and song workshops, and a new play thought up on the spot called the 'Walloon Show' (see the Telford Report). As a result we definitely saw a change in the kids. They got far

more excited as the days passed and, by the 'Walloon Show' (which was on the last afternoon), their involvement was ten times that in 'Prof. Ada'.

The two evening sessions were some of the most successful. They were large groups comprising of the playscheme organisers and volunteers, older teenagers who usually go to the Youth Club, and the social workers. The 'Play Revue', games session and simulations all provoked interesting discussions afterwards, continuing in the pub or over coffee. There is now a plan to build their own inflatable.

Now to an important point about our visit. We believe that for all of the kids and most of the adults our visit was successful *except* that we were permanently at odds with the supreme organiser of the scheme. The main point of friction (which sometimes broke into conflict) was when it was realised that our activities cannot be 'organised' or 'consumed' in the usual sense. It was more than anything a culture clash: the organiser was used to providing structured events and activities, while we were giving unstructured activities designed to stimulate a lot of excitement, and events whose structures needed kids' participation and excitement.

As a whole, Rocky Lane was a high point and many questions were raised in our minds, and hopefully we raised some for the people there. Ta to Rich and Nigel for all the help/advice/chats/pints. Finally, I think the Rocky Lane kids had the corniest jokes of the lot.

Telford

Telford doesn't exist — it's just a collection of little centres — a local community worker.

Telford is a New Town, superimposed on several small towns and villages in rural Shropshire. Its projected population is a quarter of a million, spread over a large area, with the services and amenities in various designated centres. Conceived before the energy crisis, the scheme is entirely dependent on high personal mobility — i.e. cars. The plans for building Telford go forward in stages, logical only to the planners. The stage reached today is that many housing estates are completed and occupied ('the little centres'), whilst the infrastructure ('Telford'), with the necessary amenities and services, is only now being constructed.

Woodside

The image of 'golden opportunities' on hoardings up and down the country has attracted many to Telford, particularly young couples just starting a family. Most come from the Midlands, but we also met people from the decaying Inner City areas such as London and Glasgow. About 8,000 people live on Woodside.

The housing provision is the best we saw on tour. Not only is there variety in style and size of units, but within the estate there are smaller groupings of houses linked by expanses of grass dotted with mature trees. The atmosphere is open — the exact opposite of the claustrophobic, soul-less feeling of the Turkey Lane flats. Such local services and amenities as exist are all within walking distance — schools, a few shops, a community

particularly young couples just starting a family. Most come from the Midlands, but we also met people from the decaying Inner City areas such as London and Glasgow. About 8,000 people live on Woodside.

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Item 33.

"Lesson for all at the Do-As-You-Please School",

The Birmingham Post, July 18, 1973.

Footnotes:

142, p.101

A LESSON FOR ALL AT THE 'DO-AS-YOU-PLEASE' SCHOOL?

Education Reports

July 18, 1979.

A Do-as-you-please school has been set up in the middle of Balsall Heath.

It has been started by a group of city teachers aiming for a completely new way of educating children.

The "Balsall Heath Community School" has five pupils and six teachers. It allows its pupils to choose what they want to study.

There are no set hours, no uniforms, and no rigid timetabling. The children are allowed to come and go as they please.

One of the teachers involved is Mr. Dick Atkinson, a former Birmingham University lecturer.

Mr. Terry Tebo, another teacher involved, said today: "We believe that education does not take place between set hours of, say, nine till four, or in any one place.

"We set the school up because local parents asked us to and we discuss everything we teach with the parents and the kids."

Now the teachers, parents and children have applied to the city council for assistance.

Their request will be considered at the next meeting of the Education Schools Sub-Committee on September 11.

SUPPORT

Councillor, Miss Sheila Wright, chairman of the city's Education Committee, said today: "All I can say at this stage is that I know there is a strong support from some of our staff in the area for the school.

"Some very highly-regarded local headteachers have expressed their support."

"If the committee is convinced that the school is helping and educating children in the area, it would not doubt attempt to assist the school."

Mr. Tebo said: "The school was formed at the request of parents in the area after we had set up a Community House-known to the kids as the 'Happy House'.

"The kids used to come to us after school hours, in the holidays, and sometimes during school hours.

Item 34.

The Heathan, No. 2. November, 1973, pp.1-2.

Footnotes:

143, p.101

The Heathman

Published by.....
Balsall Heath Community School

Nº2 2p November 1973.

SHOPPING AROUND

We all know that prices keep going up... and especially FOOD prices. But do we all know which shops in our area are the cheapest? Probably most people don't, because they haven't got the time to go around comparing the prices in different shops. We decided it might help to do a survey of grocery prices ourselves. We visited seven supermarkets in or near Balsall Heath, but we couldn't go to every shop that sells groceries, so if you think we have missed one that is cheaper, please let us know.

What We Did

We went to four local supermarkets, two branches of the Co-op, and Tesco's store in Hoesley. We chose these shops because they are all quite large - the kind of place people often go to because they can get everything they need in one place. In addition, they are all self-service, and prices are marked on the goods. (We think this is important. You should be able to tell how much things are going to cost before deciding to buy them.) We included Tesco, although it is in Hoesley, because we felt that as a large store, part of a big chain, it might be extra cheap. We had a 'shopping list' with 29 items on it. We found out the price of each of these items in each shop. The Table on the next page shows the prices we noted in each of the supermarkets. We chose the items as ones which the average family would be likely to buy in the course of a week. All the shops were visited on the same day at the end of September, to make it all quite fair.

Only two of the stores (one of the Co-op branches, and Tesco's) had all the items on our list in stock. That is something to notice if you really do have to do a lot of shopping in a hurry, and want to go to only one shop.

As well as looking at prices for a lot of nationally-advertised brands, we also looked at prices for many alternative buys. Now we can't, of course, say anything about the QUALITY of goods sold in different shops (we don't know, for example, if a cheaper brand of sausages is 'better' or 'worse' than another. But we do have some information, which you will find later on, from some other studies, which suggests that for most things on our list, cheaper brands are NOT of poorer quality.

What we Found

CHEAPEST STORE & DEAREST STORE.

The cheapest supermarket among those we visited was certainly Maini's. The most expensive were Allen's and the two Co-op branches. Buying the items on our list at Maini's would cost about 7p-8p in the £ LESS than buying them at the Co-op or Allen's. Of course the Co-op gives stamps, but these are worth at the most 2p in the £. A household which spends £5 per week on groceries would save up to £1.60 a month by choosing one supermarket rather than another.

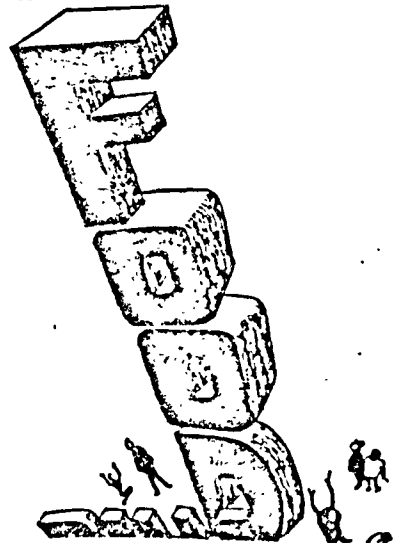
THE OTHER STORES

... the other stores were all cheaper than Allen's

than at Allen's or Co-op. (Tesco give Green Shield stamps worth 2p in the £ if changed for 'gifts' or 1.3p in the £ changed for cash -but even allowing for this, Tesco is a more expensive place to shop than Maini's.)

WHICH GOODS ARE BEST VALUE?

Many of the stores like Tesco and Co-op which are part of big chains stock goods under their own 'brand' name. These are usually cheap compared with nationally-advertised brands. Even supermarkets which are not part of a chain, like Maini's, often have a choice of brands, with the ones which are not widely-advertised being cheapest. The Consumer Association, the national organisation which publishes the magazine 'Which?' has done scientific tests comparing 'own brands' and cheap brands with more expensive, well-known products. They tested goods like cornflakes, instant coffee, baked beans, etc., and found that the quality of the cheaper goods is generally as high as those with 'famous' names. Your family may think they only like the flavour of Heinz baked beans or Kellogg's cornflakes, but try out the cheaper Tesco or Armour beans, and the Co-op cornflakes and so on, to make sure you can't make a saving..... By the way - it sometimes happens that the cheaper varieties of different products get put at the bottom of the shelves. Or right at the top where you can't see them. So don't give in. Have a really good look around, and you may find something a good few pence cheaper.



| SHOPPING LIST. | ALLEN'S | ALL'S | ANNALS | CO-OP | FRANKS | TRICO | WELLS |
|---|---------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 15oz Fairy Liquid | 16p | 16p | 15p | 17p | N.A. | 16p | 16p |
| 1lb P.O.Tips | 5p | 8p | 7p | 8p | 5p | 6p | 8p |
| 1lb tea-cheapest | 7p | 7p | 6p | 6p | 6p | 5p | 7p |
| 1lb Stork margarine | 7p | 6p | 6p | 7p | 7p | 7p | 7p |
| 1lb margarine-cheapest | 6p | 6p | 6p | 5p | 6p | 5p | 6p |
| 1lb Anchor butter | N.A. | 10p | 9p | 10p | N.A. | 11p | 10p |
| 1lb butter-cheapest | 10p | 10p | 9p | 10p | 10p | 9p | 10p |
| 1lb Cheddar-cheapest | 30p | 30p | 30p | 30p | 32p | 33p | N.A. |
| 16oz Kellogg's cornflakes | 12p | 12p | 12p | 14p | 14p | 14p | 12p |
| 16oz cornflakes-cheapest | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 11p | N.A. | 13p | N.A. |
| 15oz Eatin' baked beans | 8p | 7p | 7p | 8p | 8p | 6p | 7p |
| 15oz baked beans-cheapest | N.A. | 6p | 6p | 6p | 6p | 6p | 6p |
| 17oz Surf | 12p | N.A. | 11p | 12p | N.A. | 11p | N.A. |
| 1lb cheapest biscuits (Digestive) | 14p | 9p | 11p | 14p | 14p | 11p | 10p |
| 1lb McVitie's plain chocolate digestive | 23p | 17p | 16p | 19p | 19p | 23p | N.A. |
| Medium sliced loaf | 8p | 8p | 5p | 10p | 10p | 8p | 8p |
| 8oz Nescafe | 62p | 55p | 58p | 58p | 58p | 54p | 60p |
| 2lb sugar | 9p | 9p | 9p | 10p | 10p | 9p | 9p |
| 15oz tin peaches | 12p | 12p | N.A. | 12p | 11p | 11p | 12p |
| 15oz tin peas | 5p | 9p | 8p | 8p | 7p | 6p | 5p |
| 1lb pork sausages | 28p | N.A. | N.A. | 28p | N.A. | 26p | E.A. |
| 1 1/2 pt. Batchelors soup | 6p | 5p | 5p | 6p | 5p | 5p | 5p |
| 1lb cheapest jam | 10p | 10p | 11p | 12p | 10p | 9p | 11p |
| 1lb Robertson's jam | 14p | 13p | 13p | 15p | N.A. | 14p | N.A. |
| 1lb McDougall's Flour | 15p | 14p | 14p | 14p | 14p | 14p | 14p |
| 1lb Flour-cheapest | 15p | 12p | 11p | 12p | 12p | 11p | 12p |
| 2 Toilet rolls-cheapest | 6p | 6p | 7p | 8p | 11p | 6p | 6p |
| 1 dozen standard eggs | 40p | 38p | 35p | 39p | 39p | 35p | N.A. |
| 1lb long grain rice | N.A. | 14p | 11p | 13p | 13p | 11p | 13p |

N.A. = Not available when we visited the shop.

People & Products

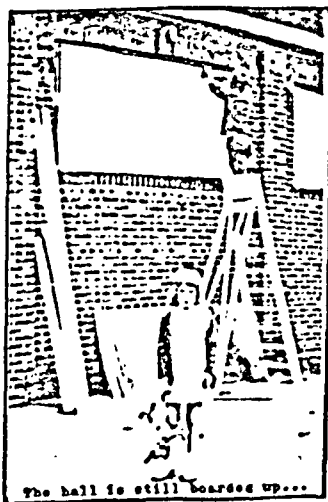
As you can see from the table on the left prices for individual goods vary quite sharply from shop to shop. If you could spend hours walking from one store to another you could make a much bigger saving by buying each product in the place where it is cheapest. But hardly anyone has that much time, of course. So the best thing is probably to pick your supermarket carefully, then look for the best buys when you get inside. Watch the quantities, though. You think you have bought a cheap 1lb jar of jam, then get it home and find it an expensive 12oz jar! This especially applies to things like biscuits, which still come in packets which weigh odd amounts like 5oz and most odd sums like 8p.

By the way, opening hours for the supermarkets in our survey vary quite a bit. Again the Co-op does not seem to be as keen on getting us to go there as some of the other shops. It closes for 1 1/2 hours each lunch hour, and for two half days a week. It is never open after 6 p.m. All the other shops have some late shopping hours—especially on Fridays. All's and Litways also open on Sundays which may be convenient for many people.

In Future

We intend to keep an eye on how much prices are RISING. So we will be repeating the survey in the future. And perhaps will be checking other grocery shops if anyone tells us of other good ones nearby. Meanwhile if YOU would like us to collect information about the prices of other kinds of products please write and tell the Editor.

St Paul's Nursery Carries on



The hall is still boarded up...

The last issue appeared in the midst of the controversy over St. Paul's Nursery. At the end of July the nursery broke up for its summer holiday—with no certainty of ever opening again. But there has been massive public support for the nursery, with the result that it HAS been re-housed, happily, but very temporarily, and is still within reach of our neighbourhood. The staff worked during their holidays to find accommodation in a local school and thanks to the co-operation of the Social Services and Education Depts. the nursery is still functioning from 7.30 a.m.—6.00 p.m. in Tindal Street School.

But that's not the end of it. Everyone still feels very anxious and tense. How long can the nursery stay there? Are the facilities really adequate for a long period? Is the Council seriously doing anything to help these youngsters?

How quickly?

As far as we know, things haven't moved very far since the petition, bearing 600 signatures, went to the Council LAST JUNE. The Council said they would seriously consider purchasing the church hall, thus enabling the nursery to go back there. Since then, no less than 200 letters have been sent to 20 local Councillors individually by parents and supporters of the nursery, urging them to act to save the hall for the nursery. Their replies have been hopeful assurances that everything possible will be done. Heaven knows, there are problems enough in Balsall Heath, without the additional ones that would be caused if the nursery ever had to close down. Those 60 places for under-5's will be needed for the future as badly as they are needed now. (cont..)



...but the kids carry on.

The Heathan, No. 4. June, 1974, p.7.

Footnotes:

145, p.102

147, p.103

152, p.106

The Free Community School!

BALSALL HEATH COMMUNITY SCHOOL HAS BEEN RUNNING FOR JUST OVER A YEAR NOW. MANY PEOPLE IN THE AREA STILL KNOW LITTLE ABOUT IT. IN THIS ARTICLE OUR REPORTER TELLS OF THE HOPES OF THE SCHOOL, SOME OF ITS DIFFICULTIES, AND THE CHANGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE IT BEGAN. WE HOPE THE ARTICLE ANSWERS MANY OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN LETTERS TO THE HEATHIAN.

The Community School was one year old this Easter. For the teachers it has been a long, hard year, even though until recently there were only 6 pupils.

It's one thing teaching in a state school or university with wages, equipment, building and everything else all laid on. It's another thing altogether when you are independent of the state and have to do EVERYTHING yourself. Because the Community School is independent, and was started by the teachers themselves, they have to find every penny which is spent on the school, as well as do all the teaching. It sounds like hard work and it is.

BIG BOOST

The three full-time teachers have just had a big boost. A Managing, or governing, Committee, which is to employ the teachers (when money can be found to pay them) has been formed. The three teachers, two mothers (Mrs. McGee and Mrs. Whitley), a local painter, Sady Sarr, two local community workers (Gill Southwell and Bob McCann), a pupil's representative, and a local Headmaster, Alex Hughes, sit on the Committee. It is hoped that it will help the teachers to run the school.

The new Committee has a big job - one that in state schools is usually done by solicitors, bank managers, Bishops and other V.I.P.'s. But then the views of such people, like those of many teachers in state schools, are often irrelevant to the needs of the kids and committees which the state schools are supposed to serve.

The first Management Committee of the Balsall Heath Community School feels it can do at least as well as any other - they may even do a bit better. After all, they should know what their kids want and need - they are their parents and neighbours. And the teachers live across the road and help out at the playground and the nursery, and run this community newspaper.

The school is beginning to look like the COMMUNITY school which its teachers always said it was. But besides the formation of the Management Committee, other important developments have taken place, in the way the school is run from day to day.

GREAT REFORMS....

When the school started a year ago, it had no rules and no timetable. Everything had to be done from scratch. The teachers have slowly set higher standards. The kids are expected to do school work, turn up on time, and from Christmas the serious teaching of subjects relevant to the kids' needs has been provided. The kids have also had to be taught how to gain self-control, and how to work out and attain their own interests. A difficult task, but clearly a necessary one. The kids have done a lot of good work - the Heathian shows that.

.... SOME PROBLEMS

But not all has been well. The kids had got used to doing as they pleased, before Christmas. Like their friends at state schools they didn't always want to do as they were told, be disciplined or taught, after Christmas. Add to this the fact that the large state secondary schools which serve Balsall Heath (only one of them is local) were having their own problems. The raising of the school leaving age to 16, the attractions of the spring sunshine, teacher strikes and teacher shortages - all these lead to many disciplinary problems and a high rate of truancy. Many teen-

agers who should by law be at school, merely wandered the streets of Balsall Heath this spring. They had nothing to do. Little wonder that they end up causing trouble of one kind or another. The Community School has been asked by many teachers, social workers, probation officers and parents to DO SOMETHING. It can't. It's got its own children to look after. But in time, who knows? First, more teachers, more money and more space would be needed. The demand is there, alright.

WHAT IT ISN'T!

The Community School has in fact just increased its numbers. But not with 'problem' kids. It is NOT a school for drop-outs or trouble-makers. It is NOT a 'Do-as-You-Please' school either - even if the Evening Mail did choose to use that headline in one 'story' about it. It is the job of the new Management Committee to see that it is a good school, that its pupils do good work, and that it serves Balsall Heath well - as well, or better than other secondary schools.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

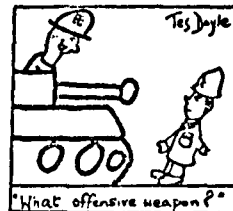
So the teachers have a difficult and challenging job, as have their new Committee. They have to do their teaching and help out in the community generally. Can they do as good a job as, say, St. Paul's nursery or Malvern St. Playground? (These too are independent locally-run projects.) But making a playground is one thing - running a secondary school is another. After all, how DO you educate a 14 or 15 year-old in a school when he really wants to be at work earning a wage, and when harsh reality tells the child that he or she will sooner or later get to know the dele queueer when he knows someone, a bit like himself, who gets into trouble and then slides downhill fast?

MORE HANDS NEEDED

Will the Community School continue and develop further, or will it fizzle out? It's up to the pupils, the teachers, and the Management Committee. But they could do with some help from anyone who is interested. The timetable shows that Friday afternoon is an open afternoon. Friends and visitors may call - why not drop in for a chat and a cup of tea? You will be very welcome. And, if your child is keen to join and is between 11 and 15 years old, why not take the step? The Heathian gathers that there is space for 3 more children of that age.....

Straws in the Wind

The vandals have been.
The windows are smashed,
The schools are burnt.
Train seats are ripped and bottles are thrown.
Cars are smashed and people are hurt.
The vandals have been
And gone like the night.
But their mark is left and who knows
When they'll return? T. Doyle.



The Heathan, No. 4, June, 1974, p.6.

Footnotes:

146, p.102

148, p.104

from the COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ALL THE ARTICLES, POEMS & CARTOONS ON THIS PAGE HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY PUPILS AT THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

Prejudice

Prejudice in Britain is amazing. White people really think that black people are dumb. It's mainly the English-the Irish don't like us but you can trust an Irish person, but hardly ever an English person.

The three main clubs around here are the Locarno Top Rank and Rebecca's. Now 9 out of every 10 white boys get into all three of these clubs, but out of every ten black boys only two or three get in. Why? Because the people who own these clubs think that they are trouble-makers, so they treat them like savages.

What are our kids going to grow up to live like? I pass signs every day saying, 'Make Britain a better place, Kill wogs.' Do you think that Britain would be a better place?

Black boys are quite rough, I think, but it's not only them to blame. When our fathers came to this country you put them in dirty rotten factories, and when they married and had children, the kids hung around with white boys. The white boys would have good gear on and the blacks had cheap clothes. They would feel left out - who wouldn't? So they might go and steal some good clothes, just because of the nice clothes the other boys had, - it's the same meaning in a lot of ways.

G.Amoos.

SUMMER

The pavements are hot and reek of dirt
As an ice lolly paper rolls by.
The dust is choking and the air foul.
My hands sweat and my collar itches
And the sun beats down upon my back.
The gentle breeze sticks my sweaty shirt
To my back and makes me shiver all over.
My hair is straggly and dry, my long thin arms
Sting with sunburns.
How I long for the winter.

T.Doyle.

Scouting

I belong to the 1st Midlands Baden Powell Scouts: These are the tests - everybody has to do them: Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class.

These are not very hard to do. The sort of things we have to do in the Tenderfoot are: know the salute sign and motto; Union Jack (this means that we have to learn the design of it); Activity (this is when you do a jumble sale or a piece of work for Scouts); and the last test is the most essential test - the Law and the Promise. Then you have passed all these you are a scout.

And another thing: we don't spend all our time doing tests! We play a game of British Bulldog, and do wrestling (not rough). The first thing we do is break flag, then inspection (of uniform), we collect subs. - 10p a week or 2l before the 1st May, which saves you some money.

Second Class is a bit harder. First you have to do some First Aid. Then you have to learn six common trees. Then there is an observation test. (If there are 24 objects you have to get 10 or 15 of them). Then there is firelighting; we have

to light a fire with 2 matches and cook potatoes and sausages. We also learn knots and whipping, learn about a hand-axe (when it is sharp and how to use it), learn lashing (that is, how to lash pieces of wood together). In this test, too, we have to learn how to use a telephone and how to send telegrams; learn about personal camping equipment and do an 8-mile hike. When you have passed all these tests you do the First Class which is harder still. I will write about this next time....

K.Teeco.

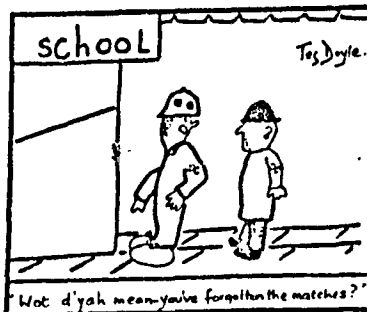
Various Views on Vandalism

Every Saturday afternoon a copper comes round Brunwick Road checking it. It may be robbed, it may be bust up by vandals. The reason why he comes round every Saturday is because vandals used to bust it up. I think it is very stupid, and the people who do it must think they're very clever to smash up telephone boxes. I don't see the kicks they're getting out of it. Its terrible because I can't go into the phone box without someone giving me a dirty look. Its just because I'm young - they think I'm a vandal. I know I'm not an angel, but I wouldn't go around doing stupid things like that.

A.McGee.

Old people are scared of vandals, because they will go to old people's houses and break in. They might knock them down and the old people might get hurt. If they phone for the coppers, the coppers can't do anything about it. Vandals throw bottles outside people's doors and break into shops.

D.Brown.



Vandals are kids who throw stones and light fires. Maybe its because they have nothing else to do, and nowhere to go. They roam around the streets and when they have nothing to do they put bottles on walls and throw stones at them. Or perhaps they beat up other boys.

So why not build more disco's and playgrounds, and give the kids somewhere to go? There are parks around, but some kids don't like going to the park, because there's never anything in the park.

Some kids vandalise places just to make themselves look big, and some do it just for a laugh. I think the Council should put up more disco's and youth clubs.

V.Doyle.

Item 37.

The Heathan, No. 2, November, 1973, p.9.

Footnotes:

149, p.104

150, p.104

from the COMMUNITY SCHOOL

FINE

The flames jumped high and low
Dancing to and fro
Leaping about from chair to chair
While the flames bellowed into the air.

Our matches having done the trick
Made us stand back a bit,
Then the wood began to catch fire
The flames rose higher and higher.

Then the flames began to die
Coody, Noel and I began to sigh.
Then gone were the flames,
All that was left was the furniture frames.

A. McGee.

A MATTER OF RACK AND RUIN

Before:
Care arriving, doors opening, and out step little
children. Happy, carefree, smiling little children.
Roe's red cheeks and beams of happiness as they
scrunch up the path to St. Paul's Nursery. Inside,
the shouts and laughter of happy children at play;
building with bricks, playing with model cars, jig-
saws. The little girls with dolls and aprons,
playing mother. An atmosphere one can't help lov-
ing. Who would want to spoil all this?

After:
See the building old, looking faceless. No laughter,
no happiness, just gloom. Desolate, deserted, not
worth bothering about. No more.
Once an atmosphere of happiness, now prison-like
walls and boarded-up windows.
I could pass it by without a second look.
As I walk round to the backyard where children used
to play in the sun, I see scattered papers blowing
in a cold, hard wind.
No echo of children's voices. Just the gloom and
worthlessness of an old has-been building.

S. Doyle.

Holiday break

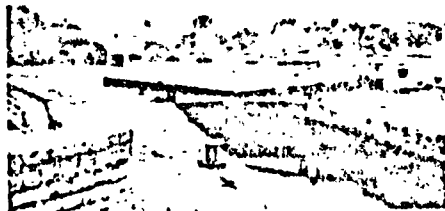
The Community School and the Adventure playground
have organised many holidays and day trips for our
neighbourhood children. But the coach trip to Black-
pool was the adults' turn!

We had a tremendous response to the idea. Three weeks
before we went, we had two raffles and a Bingo flyer
which went towards buying a drink, crisps and cigs.
We brought some old age pensioners with us. We board-
ed the coach at the Community School at 5 p.m. on
Saturday October 6th. We played Bingo on the coach
journey, and stopped about half-way before we got to
Blackpool at a pub for a drink.
When we arrived at Blackpool friends left in groups
to enjoy themselves in their own way, as everyone has
different ways of enjoying themselves. Some went to
amusement arcades, others to pubs, and another group
went to the fun fair. We had arranged to meet in the
coach park at 11.45 p.m. When we arrived back every-
one was tired but happy. We had all enjoyed ourselves
very much, and I'm sure I speak for everyone pen-
sioners included, when I say we had a lovely time.
On the way back we had a sing-song and a lovely
end to a lovely day. Mrs. Johanna O'Brien.

PEACEFUL

It was quite a cold day when we got to the place
where we set off on our boat trip, which was call-
ed Wooten Haven.

We saw our boats moored up against the bank, and
out of all the boys' boat looked the best. It was
called Samantha and was orange and white in colour.
The girls' boat looked the worst—it was just like
a tent on top of a boat. It was called Gina. The
bitches' boat was called Tilli Lhu. In this boat
there were two cockers and a sink. The skipper's
boat was the best of all and it also had a sink
and a cocker. The skipper had the boat all to
himself. It was called Tally Ho, and it was the
easiest boat to steer I think, because the steering
was as sharp as a car's. The most difficult boats
to steer were Gina and Samantha because it took at



least 15 seconds for them to react after you had
turned the wheel. And in Gina you had to turn the
wheel the opposite way to the way you wanted to go
— as well as not being able to see, for the tent
blocking your way.

The skipper's name was Alan. He didn't like him very
much. He seemed to keep himself to himself and
would not even eat with us. And he was always tell-
ing us to do work which he said was important—but
he never seemed to do it himself.

The first canal we went up was the Stratford on Avon
stretch. We had to open and close 19 locks before
we finished for that night. Just imagine—we had to
open 19 twelve foot high oak and metal gates all
through the day. I can assure you it's pretty hard
work.

But at the end of a fantastically hard working day
as usual there was a PUB. In fact, everywhere we
stopped there was a PUB. And the adults hurried
off...

The best laugh was at night, when everyone was so-
called 'settled down'. Well, the adults settled down
but we weren't—not for a few hours yet, anyway!
We were merely telling ghost stories and jokes.
Well, back to the plot, as a professional writer
would say. (All authors are sad, so they say, and
I'm not surprised. Here's me, slaving away on this
typewriter and all you have to do is sit back and
read this great piece of work by me.) Oh well, back
to the plot for the second time. In the end we slept
on the towpath, which we did for the rest of the trip
except for the last night, when they got so fed up
with us shouting at 4.0 a.m. that they gave us a
tent each and stuck us out about a mile from where
they were moored up and sleeping.

Typed, gags and brainwork by Thomas Whiteley. Punc-
tuation by, wait for it, yes folks, our heroine,
Anita. The characters appearing in this story
were Ossie O'Gunter, Brian Johnson, Terry Tebo,
Marie Glenholmes, Mary Donnelly, Janet Doyle, Bar-
bara Chamberlayne and of course, the ever-faithful
Thomas Whiteley.



off to
BLACK-
POOL



Item 38.

The Heathan, No. 9, March, 1976, p.4.

Footnotes:

154, p.108

from the COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Report

It's easy to start an independent school. All you need is five or more pupils and a couple of teachers. The Department of Education and Science then gives you two or three years to get going. Then they take a very thorough look at you. Are you doing well for the pupils or are you falling down on the job? In order to find this out, the Community School has been inspected. Three inspectors (H.M.I.'s) spent three days in the school and looked at every aspect of its work. One inspector came to Bingo while another came to a Management Committee meeting to talk to parents. Most of all, of course, they looked at the children's work, progress, attendance, etc. Has the school passed? We won't know for a few weeks yet. But if it has it will do it a power of good in the local community, with the Council, and with the trusts which support it.

KIDS' BAD BEHAVIOUR AND HOW TO STOP IT

Too many children round here behave badly. Too many teenagers steal. A lot of people are getting fed-up with it. It is lowering the self-confidence of the area. But it's no use just having a man and doing nothing. Children behave badly because we adults let them get away with it. We, the adults must stop them. We know how to stop them - means asking a bit more about why some children do behave badly.

DONT GIVE AN INCH-OR ELSE

There's a lot in the old saying, "Give them an inch and they'll take a mile." So, dont give an inch. It sounds hard, but that's what we do in our school, and it works wonders. Up until their mid-teens children need secure but firm surroundings. They need to be told what's right and wrong. They need to know that something unpleasant will happen if they do wrong, and that they will be praised if they do right. They need to know that someone is looking after them and that they are cared for. They need a parent or parent-figure to look up to. That's all very well, you might say, but life is difficult. Mum may have to go out to work, cook, clean, and make sure she knows where all the kids are. If things go wrong she may not have the strength to say "No". When Dad comes in, all he wants to do may be to put his feet up. If Mum tells him the kid has been naughty he may just deal with it by a clout. Its tempting then for Mum not to let Dad know. "Dont bother him, he'll only go mad and give the kid a belting." Mum conspires with the child to keep things away from Dad. Things begin to go wrong then, when one parent says one thing and the other says another. The child can, and does, exploit any differences between the two. Remember, "Dont tell Dad, he'll belt me" is just another way of saying, "Let me off so that I can do it again." Things can get further out of hand when home and school lose touch. If

these two parts of a child's life never meet and compare notes then the child will play them off against each other. "Dont tell teacher, he'll keep me in." "Dont tell my parents. I promise not to do it again." Further, problems are caused if parent or teacher says one thing and does another "Dont do that again", whether it's lying, swearing, or stealing, and the child does it again and nothing happens. Children can learn that they can get away with anything. If Mum is being harassed by her other children, has a meal to prepare or has simply given up trying for the day, it's easy to get what you want by simply demanding loud and long enough. Children need stopping, for their own good, as well as everyone else's, and they know they need stopping. They dont respect adults who let them get away with things just because its hard to stop them. And they may end up despising themselves as well as those who failed to stop them. They may go from bad to worse, with no real standards to guide them, and they may finish up in Court.

TRYING IT ON

The police and the courts arent always much help. A policeman with a lot of cases to solve, a magistrate with lots of young thieves to deal with, delays in time, soft solutions - seeing a young probation officer once in a while for two years - none of it is any deterrent. The same message comes over: you can get away with anything if you kick up enough fuss, or if, on the other hand, you keep quiet and look innocent. "No Sir, I wont do it again", has got many a young villain off the hook. It brings the law and the police into disrepute.

PASSING THE BUCK

Its a vicious circle which starts because of the difficulties Mum and Dad can face at home. It can get worse in school, and is not necessarily solved in Court. The net result is a rising crime rate, more kids aimlessly wandering the streets and an area which is not getting any better. Its tempting to give up the battle. Some people just leave the area, to solve the problem. The area takes one more step back. A common saying now is that the kids are ruining the area. But no-one accepts that its THEIR problem... Everyone passes the buck. Parents blame it on school, teachers on parents, old people on young people.

DONT COP OUT

How do you stop it? Part of the answer lies in the home. Be consistent with your child. Dont let him get his own way. If you say "No", make sure he understands that you mean no. Its tough but it pays off in the end. Part of the answer lies in school. Dont let the child exploit the gap between home and school. Parents and teachers alike must do more to close the gap. Teachers wont like that - it means longer hours and more work - but there are no short-cuts. Even so, it may be too late. Police and Courts may get involved because the child is acting so anti-socially that they HAVE to be. Dont get squeamish. The best thing for him may be a spell in-

4

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4

The Heathan, No. 10, July, 1976, p.4.

Footnotes:

155, p.108

156, p.109

If you're stuck for a bit of entertainment or want to see a religious service every night at St. Paul's. Lots of adults use these facilities, but there are still plenty of places. So here's what's on:

Women's social night. (Husbands and boy friends are allowed, too!) This is in the Nursery hall at the top of St. Paul's. There's basketball, darts, cards, chat and refreshments. Not to mention table-tennis.

Bingo night, of course. Eyes down at 7.30 p.m., also in the Nursery. The Playground has also started a Junior drama club, and the Community School a session for older kids earlier in the evening.

Keep Fit classes continue in the Nursery, while at the Community School in 112, St. Paul's Rd. There are cooking, sewing, art, craft and woodwork sessions. Only a few children are allowed to go to these - mostly with their parents. But a growing number of older kids, who have left school are taking the opportunity of working for their G - Levels in one of the rooms.

The 'Thursday Evening Group' is now well-established in the Nursery. It contains a group of 12 younger children plus three older ones. The older ones help Bob, Dick and two social workers to run the Club. (See fuller report elsewhere in this issue.)

This evening is still blank. But we are starting Family socials soon. We can't decide between Friday and Saturday evenings - any ideas?

The Junior Gym Club is now going on Saturday mornings in the Nursery, and the kids benefitting from the horse, buck, trampoline and other gym equipment we've got from a variety of sources. We have also started a market stall in the fore-court of St. Barnabas' Church on Ladypool Rd. on Saturday mornings. Things the children have made, nearly-new clothes, toys, etc. are sold. Its going very well.

At the moment Sunday is blank, and there are still rooms and facilities available at the Nursery, Playground or School for any evening or weekend activity you would like to see go on. For example, Gobby, Paul, Clifton and some of their friends want to book a room to practice and learn karate. Some adults want to start a baby-sitting service. So - just keep watching for new events, etc., and of course do come to any of these already happening.

They are in contact with many of the people who are involved in the work of the Nursery. The teachers are very busy at the moment and the children are very busy at the moment. They are very busy at the moment. They are very busy at the moment. They are very busy at the moment. They are very busy at the moment.

Frank Trippas has just started working with us. He is a toy and educational aids designer and builder. He's an artist, but a very practical, useful one. You name it, he can build it. He is going to spend part of his time with the School children. They will work with him in the same way that he will do, picking up skills from the crafts and building useful things in the process. Some of Frank's time will be spent at the Nursery and the Play-ground - its obvious how useful he will be to the projects. But he is also generally available at the School Nursery and Playground. He can help all his time. He's there to help you, and you could use or learn from his skills. He's got children, adults or even other local people. He's got that Clifton Rd. School have their own, so don't delay too long if there's a problem you'd like him to do. Frank has drawn up a program of his work - from which you can also see what he looks like, as well as a few of the kinds of things he does.

SECRETARY NEEDED

There is now so much happening - in the Nursery in the daytime, and with the Play room and lots of adult and community activities in the evening, that the full-time community workers are rushed off their feet. They need lots of help. In particular, they need a part-time secretary. We haven't any cash left over to pay, so whoever felt like helping out would have to do it for love, not money! ANY OFFERS?

By Dick Atkinson.

Song of a Shop Assistant

She stays behind that dirty old counter, nearly every day,

But the only day she likes to stay
Is Friday,
And that's when she gets her pay.

She only has weekends to spend her pay,
When she goes to bed at night she will often pray,
That she doesn't have to go behind
That dirty old counter again.

Behind that dirty old counter, it almost drives her insane,

She thinks again and again,
What would happen if she did go insane,
She would only have that dirty old counter to blame.

By René Jan.

Thorpe, F. "St. Paul's School", Working Our Way, No. 3.

St. Paul's School Magazine.

Footnotes:

162, p.111

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

In this school you are more at home and it is a smaller community so you get to know the teachers better, You don't want to play truant from this school because when you get here in the mornings, it's different. You don't have to rush into lessons straight away and when it is time to start work, the school has a lot of interesting things to offer. It's got everything an ordinary school has, but better. In St. Paul's School you are a somebody and not just a number on the register.

Fenton Thorpe.

Item 41.

Letter to the author from Bridget Robson, Leeds

Free School, July 10, 1974.

Footnotes:

163, p.112

181, p.123

Appendix 1, p.3.

LEEDS FREE SCHOOL & COMMUNITY TRUST

23, Harkley Ave.,
Leeds 6,
Yorks.

10th July 1974.

Dear Geoff,

It was a pleasant surprise to get your friendly letter all the way from Canada. We'd be very pleased for you to visit our school during October or November and to learn from your experience. We can offer you accommodation of a kind, but no money I'm afraid. Our situation at the moment is very painful. We have been running for 18 months on rent to no money and consequently have exhausted ourselves physically and mentally, and haven't really progressed as well as we should have done because poverty is such a limiting factor, i.e. you can't give kids freedom to develop when their environment limits and shuts them in at every turn.

I shouldn't really sound too pessimistic; the last 18 months has been a time of development in many ways. We have all learnt to trust one another to a certain extent, we have developed confidence in our ideas and in our ability to communicate them. At the moment however we are going through a time of reassessment. We will be leaving the building we have inhabited up till now, a draughty, unhygienic old church, because it's too much of a drain on our limited resources. In the autumn term (September til Christmas) we expect to be operating tutor groups in our own houses, prior to establishing ourselves as a school in new premises (for which we're raising money over the summer) in January.

We're also trying to tighten up our organisation; working to more of a time-table so that both adults and children feel more secure. Many of these problems will doubtless be familiar to you if you've worked in these kinds of situation before. I do hope you'll come and work with us for a while. I'll

try and enclose some information re the school for you in this letter.
Looking forward to hearing from you again.

Yours,

Bridget Robson.

23 Hottley Ave
Ice O. G.

x

Item 42.

"Leeds Free School and Community Trust", unsigned, undated pamphlet, printed by the Leeds Free School.

Footnotes:

166, p.115

167, p.115

170, p.116

The answer is YES ...

What is a free School?

a) Self-government

This means that the School is controlled and run by its members on an equal basis. Children, teaching staff and those who in general cater for the welfare of the children have an equal say, all decisions being taken at a General Assembly. This principle virtually abolishes the concept of 'pupils' and 'staff' as two separate entities, with separate aims and interests.

b) Lack of coercion

This relates to the principle of self-government. However, it is possible under extenuating circumstances that the General Assembly will impose disciplinary measures on any person in the School, who is constantly interfering with the freedom of others there.

c) Education as self-fulfilment

It is fairly obvious that, in the type of School which we have outlined, there will be no rigid curriculum. The relationship of academic learning to practical activity (by which the children may learn a great deal, incidentally) will not be compulsory, but the idea, practice and feeling of genuine democracy will, we feel, encourage members of the School to participate in such meetings.

Attendance at lessons will not be compulsory, but the attendance at the School is compulsory by law. This is really the only basic compulsion at a Free School: attendance by the children between the hours of 9 and 4.

Does a Free School work?

The answer is YES ...

Since the beginning of the twentieth century Free Schools have appeared and proved successful in various parts of the world. One of the first schools to appear in England was founded in Dorset by a man called Homer Lane. His school was an open farm for so-called juvenile delinquents and was controlled and run by them. Few, if any, of the delinquents returned to petty crime.

A. S. Neil's Summerhill:

Homer Lane's work inspired the foundation of A. S. Neil's famous school in Suffolk. Self-government of the school by the children and adults and a lack of coercion works. The school has been successfully in operation for 50 years.

Scotland Road Free School:

In September 1971 a Free School was set up in the Vauxhall (predominantly working class) area of Liverpool (Scotland Road). The School is community based and involves itself with the needs and problems of the area.

Free Schools have also successfully been in operation for a long time, and on a large scale, in Denmark, America and several other countries.

So far we have given a brief outline of Free Schools, and the principles upon which they are organised. The application of these general principles differs in each Free School, otherwise it would not be free.

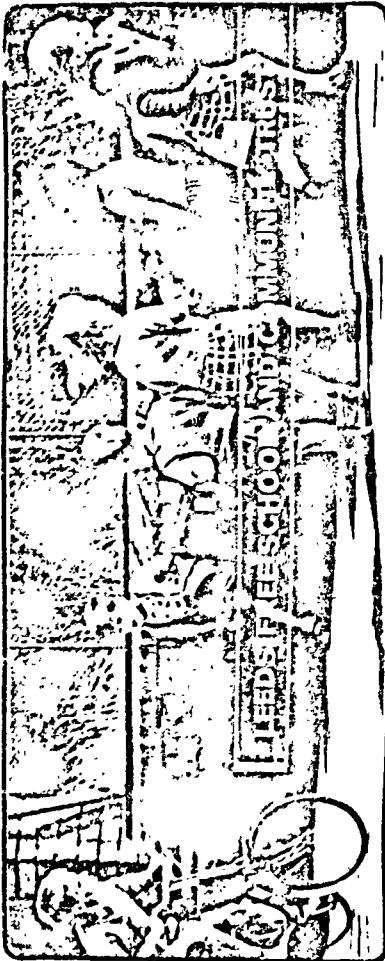
An Appeal

40 schoolchildren will eat £7-worth of food during a lunchtime. That's a weekly expenditure of nearly £45. Money is also required for equipment, books and materials and for the cost and maintenance of a building to give the Free School a permanent home.

It is only by donations and assistance that a free school can exist. We appeal to you to give or collect all you can for the project. Please send all donations and enquiries to the address below:



of Free Schools, and the principles upon which they are organised. The application of these general principles differs in each Free School, otherwise it would not be free.



LEEDS FREE SCHOOL

AND COMMUNITY TRUST

'One does not have to subscribe to outlandish doctrines to see the Free School scheme as a contemporary example of a responsible and well-established tradition of educational experiment.'

Times Educational Supplement

The Free School and the Educational Situation

Underlying all our ideas about a Free School is the concept that children are not objects whose only need is to be rationalised into society, nor should they be treated as such; rather they are all human beings, each with differing needs and abilities. Yet this tendency to reification is inherent in the nature of a State School, with its large classes, fixed syllabuses, compulsory attendance, etc., and even the best will in the world cannot overcome it.

In a school, however, which is run directly by the children, parents and teachers - where they themselves decide what is relevant; in a school which is small, has a high adult to child ratio, a school which is, in its essence, decentralised to allow maximum flexibility for each person's needs, this tendency may be overcome. Such is the nature of a Free School. It is a school where the children tailor their education to their own needs.

We firmly believe that only in such a school can each child's creativity and capabilities be developed to a maximum. In a State School there is so much 'wastage', so much talent ignored, so many 'products' (and in many cases this is the correct word to use) lacking in confidence and ability to stand on their own two feet. The adults coming out of a Free School, however, would, we hope, be confident, aware, and capable of building a better world.

The Situation in Leeds

The majority of Leeds children are victims rather than beneficiaries of the State education system (Leeds is the second-worst borough in the country for expenditure on books per pupil). This system produces exceptionally high absentee rates in the secondary modern schools and a bored elite in the high schools suffering from a cramming of useless information bearing little relation to the problems of modern life.

A Free School in one of the communities of Leeds will provide a working practical alternative to the centralised system, an alternative that will allow the community to work with and for its children in a framework that is under community control. It is the organisational structure of a Free School that provides this framework.



...the nature of a Free School. It is a school where the children tailor their education to their own needs.

...the nature of a Free School. It is a school where the children tailor their education to their own needs.

Audition in Leeds

...the nature of a Free School. It is a school where the children tailor their education to their own needs.

...the nature of a Free School. It is a school where the children tailor their education to their own needs.

Item 43.

Letter from Robin Gutteridge of Leeds Free School to
Gwen Lambert, Huddersfield, undated.

Footnotes:

171, p.116

175, p.118

1 Dear Gwen,

At Leeds Free School there are 39 kids on the register. 25 are 11 or over. 20 are 13 or over. 14 are under 11. The kids/young people can be described in three groups.

1. Teenage troublets or "problems" from state schools. Those who never settled or got unsettled, who fell out or never fell in. Some who just plumped for the Free School as a fair bet. Mainly working class.
2. Younger brothers and sisters of 1. The same in their own right.
3. Usually younger (under 11) children of Free School workers and thinkers.

The Leeds Free School suits a lot of teenagers, caught in that age of not being a kid and not being a grown up, especially those who have fallen out or just got fed-up with the state system. It makes little in the way of demands. Attendance registers can mean a lot or otherwise. There's no institutionalized competition to fail at, no need to produce finished pieces of work or even start them, no reason to be dictated to by teacher.

The school system has of course decided some years before the teenage on its successes and failures, particularly at the extremes. The failures, so called, might as well leave school at 13 at the latest. Free School is thus a way of taking the pressure off. The teenager can nearly deschool him or herself should they wish. Alternatively they can avail themselves of the facilities and involve themselves in the relationships (and inter-relationships) the Free School tries to offer.

If as humanist psychology has said, much is decided by the age of 5, such must be doubly decided by 13. If a young person has been brought up in an intolerant, unfree household- shut up, I can't hear the telly- and then sent to school where much the same unfreedom occurs if in a more subtle, insidious way, then by the age of 13 there is a reservoir of hate, fear and frustration. This is released in the Free School. What's more, when the kid goes home at night, depending on his home situation, he might refill the reservoir. Not that it's ever likely to be truly or even half-drained.

To compound matters, whereas our money situation is a continual fight to keep open, teenagers, following the example and persuasion of parents, school, and media, are consumers. Their interests, activities, outings, are likely to involve far more cost than those of younger kids. Their destructive power is also far greater.

This perhaps gives a clue to what this is all leading up to.

I believe in what Leeds does and tries to do. But there seems to be a need for a Free School far more oriented to younger kids. Your child minding idea sounded interesting.

Free Schools have further evidenced the damage done to some (most?) kids by

the age of 13. Freedom does work in a matter of fact, bits and pieces way. One of our most destructive kids aged 15, did a splendid frieze with gloss paint the other day. I feel there's a good case though for a school for younger kids who haven't been so messed up/ messed around/ alienated from their natural rhythm, meta-motivation. Andros (3) and Richard (5) spent hours last week, finding worms on the bomb-site, asking questions, making the soil moist.

I've mentioned the cost. Another point is that if you're confined to one and the same building with younger children, teenagers, unable to get involved in anything for much of the time, will tend to make extreme noise, become destructive, or just obstruct another kids activity for the fun of it.

The point about younger kids needing older kids (and the other way round) is of course true but needs qualifying. Firstly it depends on what the older kids are like (they act as people to be copied). Linked with this it depends on how many young kids there are to teenagers. Thirdly, does the money, equipment, skill-models, exist for the teenagers that come to the school.

Hope this is of some use. What I have said of course are my own ideas and not necessarily representative of the Leeds Free School.

Best wishes. Rob

Robin Gutteridge
6 Hesse Mount
Leeds G.

Item 44.

Letter to the author from D.M. Jepson, Leeds City

Council, August 23, 1977.

Footnotes:

172, p.116

173, p.117

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

R.S. Johnson, B.Sc.,
Director of Education

Advisory Division
Selectapost 14
Dudley House, Albion Street
LEEDS LS2 8PT

Your ref.

In reply please quote

Tel. (0532) 446231 Ext: 323

A/S/8/BW

As from 5th September
(0532) 463823

23rd August, 1977

Dear Professor Potter,

Thank you for your letter of 25th July which the Director of Education has passed on to me. I am sorry that attendance at a Conference followed by a short holiday have prevented my replying earlier.

I have been the Local Authority Officer supervising the Leeds Free School since April, 1975 and, therefore, probably know more about its personnel and activities than anyone outside the organisation itself. With regard to your first sentence, by the way, it does still function and is now operated as three house groups containing about four pupils each although there is a fair movement around of both adults and children so no one is likely to be on one set of premises for more than a part of any one week.

The criticisms which bodies such as Free Schools make to the Press or in publications of their own or in articles printed in various local or national journals of a specifically subjective slant appear to me, and I have come across quite a lot of them, to make wild generalisations from isolated events or, at best, injustices. League table comparisons with other Local Education Authorities not only vary from year to year, but fail to take into account priorities and non-priorities according to local circumstances e.g. the number of well-established schools in a district of stable population as compared with a growth area, perhaps in the Home Counties, where there are a large number of developing new schools. We in Leeds, for instance, have various ways of helping schools on top of their basic capitation ranging from weighting allowances for small schools to the distribution of special funds to places where both Subject and General Advisers consider there to be an immediate need.

To provide truancy figures for the 57 High/Secondary and 59 Middle Schools which the Leeds Authority controlled for all or part of 1972-76 (the 1974 Local Government Reorganisation amended our figures considerably) would be impossible as there can be no reliable breakdown of absence statistics into acceptable (illness, medical appointments, parents' holidays etc.) and unacceptable (truancy) without a tremendous amount of research.

What I can tell you is that in January, 1974, the Association of Education Committees, now, alas, no more, undertook an enquiry to ascertain how serious truancy was in the country as a whole and the average figures were as follows. In the week selected, 9.9% of pupils failed to put in 10 half-day attendances and of that 9.9% only 2.2% were not deemed by Headteachers to be justified. In Leeds 11.3% were absent and of those 2.06% were unacceptable absences so both nationally and locally the actual number of truants was a fraction of one per cent.

Dear Prof
Thank you
has passed
by a short
I have been
since April
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and unacceptable (truancy) without a tremendous amount of research.


What I can tell you is that in January, 1974, the Association of Education Committees, now, alas, no more, undertook an enquiry to ascertain how serious truancy was in the country as a whole and the average figures were as follows. In the week selected, 9.9% of pupils failed to put in 10 half-day attendances and of that 9.9% only 2.2% were not deemed by Headteachers to be justified. In Leeds 11.3% were absent and of those 2.06% were unacceptable absences so both nationally and locally the actual number of truants was a fraction of one per cent.

Currently we have 140,000 pupils on roll in our schools and a figure of 360 has been estimated as the likely figure for truants so although as a group it is serious, it must be judged against the total school population.

I am not sure one can or should say anything very definite about alleged "bored elites in the High Schools". I myself have taught boys and girls who would yawn when I considered I was giving a good lesson, but it seems to me that one can always select young people who are dissatisfied with any system, no matter how it is organised. Changing sociological patterns, pressures of external examinations, varying parental motivation towards education, hours of sleep of the pupils themselves, the sophistication of the media, especially television, compared with some less glamorous approaches in school, the disappearance in many big schools of numbers of teachers really well known to any particular pupil, could be but a small number of reasons advanced to suggest that certain boys and girls were dissatisfied with the scholastic programme of a specific 11-18 or 13-18 institution. But there is a more favourable side to the coin, as you know, and being so well aware of what the Free School can offer in terms of teaching skills, equipment, facilities and sense of purpose compared with the many High Schools I know well, I must say that I take phrases such as "the plight of the state system" (they mean, "the local authority system") with a very big pinch of salt.

You may be interested in a recent bit of publicity about the whole problem of truancy which has involved Leeds and I enclose one or two newspaper cuttings I think you may like to see.

Yours sincerely,

 D. M. JEPSON

Senior Schools Adviser

Professor Geoffrey Potter,
Division of Communications and Social Foundations
Faculty of Education
The University of Victoria
British Columbia
CANADA

Senior

Professor
Division
Faculty
The Univ
British C
CANADA

Item 45.

Letter to the author from E.A. Rockliffe, Headmaster,
City of Leeds School, June 7, 1976.

Footnotes:

174, p.117

177, p.119

CITY OF LEEDS METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CITY OF LEEDS SCHOOL
(Central and Thoresby High Schools)

TELEPHONE
Leeds 454825
453033

Headmaster
E A ROCKLIFF BA

WOODHOUSE LANE
LEEDS LS2 8BP

EAR/XB

7th June 1976

Dear Mr. Potter,

I am sorry to say that I can give you little help with your free school enquiries. What I do say should be taken as personal impressions which could be mistaken. In no sense am I expressing any official view.

There was a free school about a mile from here opposite the main Leeds University buildings. The premises were a disused chapel. Since the building was vandalised (by whom was not clear) and the doors were daubed with garish, painted slogans like "Co-op", the general appearance was not impressive. Several of our pupils ceased to attend here and became members of the free school. Some returned, sadly disillusioned and much retarded educationally. My contacts with what for lack of a better term could be called "the staff" were depressing in the extreme. There seemed to be little continuity of policy or procedure; on the other hand there seemed to be some sincerity and an abundance of good intentions. There was, however, quite clearly an undertone of extreme political motivation which I could not but deplore in a supposedly educational establishment. The "staff" gave a bad impression by looking more like hippy drop-outs than teachers. Some were students.

There seemed, from what I could gather, to be little attention to health and safety precautions. It all seemed haphazard and slipshod. Superficially it appealed to many pupils, particularly because the pressures to attend were less than in a traditional school. It did have the virtue - if you could call it that - of removing a few of our more difficult pupils from us but I saw no evidence that they benefited more than they would have done by staying here.

Eventually the building was knocked down and then, I believe, the school continued in students' homes or flats. The possible abuses of such a system scarcely need emphasis.

I believe that there could be a place in our system for a properly-run free-school alternative. If we believe that there are some pupils who do not, cannot or will not profit from a normal school, it ought to be possible to deal with some of them in the relaxed atmosphere of a free school. Such a system could benefit not only the pupils who took part in it but also pupils in other schools who would be freed from the distractions and disruptions of difficult fellow-pupils. From what I know, I do not think that the Leeds Free School did fulfil such a role.

I hope you will note the correct name of our school. It does seem surprising that the D.E.S. does not know the names of its schools.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your work.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Rockliff

run who be... I do not think that the Leeds Free School did fulfil such a role.

I hope you will note the correct name of our school. It does seem surprising that the D.E.S. does not know the names of its schools.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your work.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Rockliff

Item 46.

Letter to the author from Mrs. M. Morris, Headmistress,
Westfield Primary School, Leeds, June 21, 1976.

Footnotes: 176, p.118
179, p.119

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Headmistress:
Mrs. M. Morris
Telephone: Leeds 33497

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL,
Burley Road,
Leeds, LS3 1JP.

June 21st

Dear Mr Potter,

Re your letter of May 27th
regarding "free schools".

As such the local free school
made no impact at all on my
school. I only have children up to
the age of 9 yrs who seem quite
happy with our regime.

The attitude of the staff at the
time the Leeds Free School was set
up was negative. However, on
one occasion whilst attending a
day course at Leeds University
I visited the Free school (it being

quite near the University) There had been much publicity about the inception of the school and members of the public had been invited to visit. I was made reasonably welcome until they found I was a teacher when I was treated as a "spy". The school was in a disused and condemned ex-church in appalling condition. The staff were not at all pre-possessing and safety and health precautions were non-existent.

I know the administrative and advisory staffs were put to much trouble checking on students attending the school and re-admitting them when they changed their minds.

I have just checked - the school is still in existence but simply looking over - making no real

impact and the majority of pupils
have returned to their original
school.

Middle & High School age children
are more likely to have been
involved with the Free School and
if you have not been given
the names of such schools by
Mrs Buggs and it is not too
late for your work I will gladly
let you have their names.

If I can be of more help
(not that I have been much help
anyway) do not hesitate to
contact me again.

Yours sincerely
H. Tomis

Item 47.

Statement about Leeds Free School sent to Gwen Lambert
of Huddersfield, by Robin Gutteridge of the Leeds
Free School.

Footnotes:
180, p.121

ALTERNATIVES

There seems to be three possibilities open to us, plus two outside ones.

1. Stay in the present building and undergo the inspection. They can complain under four headings; suitability of premises, adequacy of premises, efficiency and suitability of the instruction, properness of the staff; and have done so in the first three.

2. Move to another building. In this case it seems that although the sections in the Notice of Complaint about the premises become inapplicable, the section about "efficiency and suitability of the instruction" still pertains.

3. Set up tutorial groups. Section 36 and 37.

"It shall be the duty of the parents of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." The definition of parent given in the Act is important; "in relation to any child or young person, includes a guardian and every person who has the actual custody of the child or young person".

The onus is on the LEA to detect kids being educated otherwise. As records exist about our kids from their state schools and the Free School itself, they would soon trace them. Once they have been located, any proceedings take place through the parents. The parents are first of all summoned to explain themselves, so it's largely a question of whether parents are willing or able to do so. Any attendance orders or prosecutions are also served on the parents, in fact, in law, the LEA or whatever, can ignore a tutor who isn't also the parent concerned. A lot depends on the friendliness of the authorities.

You could of course get the parents to sign their children over to you.

Tutor groups must not have a central building.

A. Section 56. Under this section you try and persuade the LEA and DES that your kids need "special education" and they ought to allow you to provide it. Ideologically fraught (truancy centre, maladjusted kids, possibly psychological tests, etc.) Dependent on LEA and DES co-operation.

B. It's also theoretically possible to split the school into two part-time, unconnected institutions as the quality of education provided by such independent establishments is no concern of anyone! Unprecedented. Would need parents' co-operation under Section 36 and probably end up in more legal tangles than usual. One thing is certain. We should have started negotiating with the DES and LEA months ago. Because the 44 Act is so nebulous and lacking in adequate definitions their co-operation (active, passive, indifferent) is essential.

*The kids would attend two or more such establishments.

... of young person".
... with the state schools and the free school family...
... have done so in the first three.
... in relation to any child or young person, includes a guardian and every person who has the actual custody of the child or young person.
... the onus is on the LEA to detect kids being educated otherwise.
... soon trace them. Once they have been located, any proceedings take place through the parents.
... it's largely a question of whether parents are willing or able to do so.
... in fact, in law, the LEA or whatever, can ignore a tutor who isn't also the parent concerned.
... A lot depends on the friendliness of the authorities.
... You could of course get the parents to sign their children over to you.
... Tutor groups must not have a central building.
... A. Section 56. Under this section you try and persuade the LEA and DES that your kids need "special education" and they ought to allow you to provide it.
... B. It's also theoretically possible to split the school into two part-time, unconnected institutions as the quality of education provided by such independent establishments is no concern of anyone!
... One thing is certain. We should have started negotiating with the DES and LEA months ago.
... *The kids would attend two or more such establishments.

Handwritten signature
11

... of the ... and ... the person ...
... of the ... of the ...

... of the ... to ... children over to you.
... and ... a ... building.

... of this section you try and persuade the ... and ...

... "operational education" and they ... to allow you to provide ...

... (some of course, related ... things, possibly ...)

...) ... on ... and ... co-operation.

... to ... to split the school into two ...

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... (active, passive, ...) is ...

... and ... or ...

Item 48.

Statement on the Leeds Free School sent to Gwen Lambert
of Huddersfield, by Robin Gutteridge of Leeds. Undated.

Footnotes:
180a, p.122

you

STRUCTURE

... is at which a building or organism or other complete whole is con-
 sidered as a whole of two essential parts of no other...
 ... of the Schools "Grand Freedom" and Dominator in the "Lives of"
 ... out, all things are structured and freedom or unfreedom can only
 ... of such structures. There is no such thing as an absence of

... is structured at the moment- in such a way that provides little
 ... kids. Jordan Rules OK.
 ... kids to themselves is the right one when appropriate; but when
 ... out to make/learn/experience/excell, other than with themselves,

... point of all things, in this case growth, occurring within specific
 ... possible to surmount structures whereby this can happen.
 ... of course free from compulsion, being offered to the kids for
 .../leave well alone/or change as they see fit. Most of the activities
 ... because of a lack of internal organisation they don't happen often
 ... and suddenly.

- "Form into an organic whole; give orderly structure to frame and put
 ... over".

... thing needs to be to coordinate and pull together what goes on already
 ... introduce new things in order to offer kids a full week.

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| / | 'ELAINE'S' - ART GENERAL STUDIES - SCIENCE. | ART - COOKING - MAKING SKILLS - MOTOR MECHANICS |
| / | . | VISIT - OUTING MAKING SKILLS. |
| / | . | ART - COOKING - SWIMMING - MUSIC - DRIVING |
| / | . | ART - COOKING - MUSIC - VISIT - OUTING / FILM |
| / | . | ART - MUSIC - DRIVING - MAKING SKILLS. |
| 10:00 | | 12:00. |

... things start on time it doesn't matter when they finish unless the adult is
 ... where. *A modification would be to allocate so many kids to each adult as
 ... ability. The kids are encouraged to spend two hourly sessions a day with
 ... the rest of the time in other activities. *General Studies includes,
 ... education, photography, drama, typing, tape recording, judo, etc.
 ... *making skills, for example, woodwork, metalwork, plumbing, electrical,
 ... etc. One group of about six kids away at Laureston, White Lion, etc. for a
 ... weeks (minimum). *There has been no mention of money in all this. ...
 ... be considerable, but we need something concrete in order to approach such
 ... of success.

Elaine's ... mainly for the younger

Item 49.

Letter to the author from J. Rawsley, Director of
Administration, Leeds City Council. August 2, 1977.

Footnotes:
182, p.122



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

DIRECTOR: J. RAWNSLEY

Leeds City Council, Selectapost 2,

Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR.

Direct Line: (0532) 462330

Switchboard (0532) 463000

Telex 556237

Professor G. Potter,
Faculty of Education,
University of Victoria,
Victoria,
British Columbia,
CANADA

Your ref:

Our ref: A6/AGB

Date: 2nd August, 1977

Dear Sir,

ELDON HALL, 182, WOODHOUSE LANE, LEEDS 2

The former Church Hall at 182, Woodhouse Lane was used by the University for computer storage purposes until October, 1972.

I understand Leeds Free School was opened in early 1973. The only report on my files which describes the building is attached with this letter.

I am afraid I do not have the date of demolition of the property.

Yours faithfully,

J. Rawnsley

Director of Administration.

10/10/73

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ong with
e. All

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL

Leeds Free School,
Eldon Hall,
182 Woodhouse Lane,
Leeds 2

: 15
The
inter
patched

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PROPRIETOR

Miss Bridget M. Robson,
23 Hartley Avenue,
Leeds 6

ous
apel doors.

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

Late 19th Century Chapel Building.
15 metres wide by 24 metres long with
associated adjoining buildings. All
buildings single storey.

s have been
a computer
them some
and
permeant
the
re-third

The main hall, which is about 15
metres high, has a gallery. The
buildings have stone walls, timber
floors, stone staircases and pitched
slated roofs.

The main building has a generous
number of typically large chapel doors.

In recent years the buildings have been
used by Leeds University as a computer
centre, but were vacated by them some
18 months ago. The main hall and
gallery is sub-divided by lightweight
partitions into small rooms, the
ceilings of which are about one-third
the height of the main hall.

Attached al
prove useft

.73 which may

Attached also is an extract from the Yorkshire Evening Post of 22.9.73 which may
prove useful to you.

Item 50.

"Leeds Free School and Community Trust", A.S. Neill
Trust Newsletter, March, 1977.

Footnotes:

183, p.124

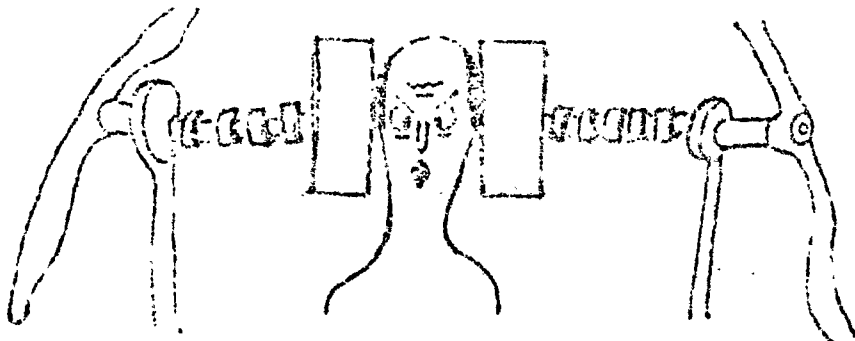
LEEDS FREE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

After passing through three very distinct phases in the last four years, a large centralised building, non-terrace tutorial groups, a small centralised building, we have this term begun a new initiative which we hope continues the features of the past while removing some of its contradictions. For the last eighteen months we have been running out of a small terraced house, 7 Marlborough Grove, and have been encouraging all activities except outdoor ones to go on in this building. The feeling that came across strongly from this set-up was one of spontaneity, often in a particular & creative way, times when the school erupted into liveliness, convinced of the propriety of the many mistakes we might be making, we were basically heading in the right direction.

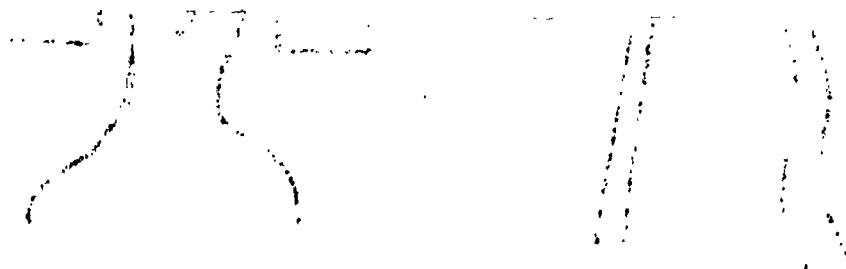
Among the most positive aspects of this period were the increasing realisation that doing new things could be exciting for both adults and kids and the degree of socialization that developed from everyone being involved closely together in a small community, both these were reinforced as the school gradually spread out into the street. What was lacking was a sense of continuity so that, with a few exceptions, activities that had looked as though they would lead a long way were not followed up sufficiently. This was probably a result of the conflict due to trying to force spontaneity and concentration to run side by side in a cramped space. Although on the surface it was the latter that lost out, the lack of balance between the two resulted eventually, just before Christmas, in the school losing most of its energy and there was little enthusiasm from either adults or kids for it.

Now we have changed and are generating new strength - 7 Marlborough Grove is more clearly defined as a social resource centre where people do not have to worry too much about keeping quiet, whilst regular activities (which outwardly appear more subdued) that have been built up upon relationships between adults and kids take place in private houses. Also, for young persons to stop us getting isolated from the neighbouring community, we have applied to the Manpower Services Commission for a grant to build an adventure playground under the Job Creation Scheme. We have recently obtained planning permission, without which MSC said they could not consider our application, so we are hoping for a decision soon - perhaps by the time this article goes into print the playground will be under way, moneywise.

If anyone is interested in getting involved with either the school or the adventure playground or both, please get in touch with us at 7, Marlborough Grove. If anyone is interested in visiting, they are welcome to come to this address at any time although we can't guarantee that we will be open. If they don't mind hanging around though, in order to give a service or loan!



"THE WAY I SEE IT - WHAT I LOSE IN FREEDOM I GAIN IN SECURITY"



Item 51.

The detailed description of Sundance, made available
by the school to prospective parents.

Footnotes:

195, p.135

SUNDANCE - A COMMUNITY FOR CHILDREN

SUNDANCE, a Community for Children, is a registered charity, started some two years ago, and then known as The New School, WII. The name has been changed for several reasons ; to avoid confusion as there are several other New Schools ; because the group has very naturally evolved, and now sees itself very much as a learning community ; and also, quite simply, because the children and adults involved liked and preferred the name SUNDANCE!

"Power does not belong to anyone. Some of us may gather it and then it could be given directly to someone else. You see the key to stored power is that it can be used only to help someone else to store power". (Don Juan)

Learning:

There are many views on the relationships between learning and teaching, and about how learning occurs.

The SUNDANCE Community for Children bases its interpretations of these matters upon the teachings of several eminent writers, primarily Froebel and Piaget. The Community offers to those children who require it, an environment designed specifically for children, whose daily operation centres around the feelings and needs of children, and whose direction is decided as far as possible by children.

The Community has a maximum of 25 students, aged between five and twelve years. It has two full-time and five part-time staff. In the Community, decisions concerning what is relevant for children to learn are made by the children, and are based upon practical day-to-day experiences rather than abstract concepts. Children are assumed to possess a natural curiosity about the world, and a natural desire to learn. It is also assumed that they possess inherently the ability to learn. The role of the staff is, therefore, primarily to help each child along whatever path he/she chooses, to observe that child's behaviour, interests and activities, and to help the child to explore as fully as possible whatever he/she has selected.

Language:

The Community recognizes the significance of the work of Jean Piaget, particularly concerning a child's processes of symbolic thought, and their relationship to language. Briefly, this refers to the development, in the very young child, of what Piaget calls "sensorimotor thinking" which is the recognition of objects in relation to the action the child performs on them. Stemming from this recognition is what Piaget calls "internalized action" i.e. thoughts a child has, and develops, about the properties of various objects in his environment.

By the age of four and five (is school age) these symbolic thoughts manifest themselves in many children in the form of language - which is itself a series of symbols. Words, therefore, begin to evoke action. Language at this stage in a child's life is quite limited and is linked with, very closely, the child's daily experiences. Thus many children experience the natural difficulty of conceptualising the relationships (actual and verbal) between their daily, personal experiences, and the more generalised forms within the 'out-side' world. The efficiency and fluency with which a child understands these things depends, therefore, to a great extent upon his desire to master and to use what are called 'communication skills'

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i.e. talking, listening, reading and writing. These skills enhance a child's early development ; he/she uses them in practical, daily experiences ; and by doing so develops and extends those experiences.

Thus, if a child is to learn and communicate efficiently, certain conditions should exist, freedom to select whatever appeals ; freedom to explore ; guidance so that the exploration is as exciting and stimulating as possible, and an environment sufficiently practical that he may feel secure in it, and able therefore, in his own time to relate his experiences in it, to the greater environment out of home and school.

The key to the free and efficient growth of practical involvement and language lies on the acceptance of a child's natural interest and enthusiasm, as expressed through play. The practical success of Froebel's kindergarten lay in the importance he attached to using play as an educational instrument. Play is not only the primary way in which children learn 'things' ; it is also the primary way in which they learn relationships and roles.

It is not enough for a school to provide an environment in which the learning of 'things' occurs in a vacuum. It is essential that the child be enabled to grow in an environment that integrates fact, process, personality and responsibility. It is very important that children realise their individuality, and their responsibilities towards each other. Human nature is extremely varied. Rousseau once observed ;

"One nature needs wings, another shackles...
one man is made to carry human knowledge to
its furthest point ; another may find the
ability to read a dangerous power".

(New Heliose)

A major problem in western culture is our inability - or refusal to define a cultural role for our young people, and our insistence as expressed in laws, regulations about school attendance, age of consent and adulthood, that the first eighteen years in a child's life are preparatory to the all-significant, and highly competitive world of adulthood ; while this may be convenient for adults, it causes, in children, great confusion about the reasons for their existence, and the controls that are placed upon their instinctive behaviour. More important though, is the fact that they frequently pass through their youth with a strong sense of insignificance about their enthusiasm, energy and sexuality. Herbert Marcuse and R D Laing have written extensively about the adverse personal and social effects of society's refusal to acknowledge the importance of that which is natural and spontaneous about human beings.

It is important therefore, that children have a sufficiently flexible and interesting environment, that they may learn not only the sanctity of their natural, instinctive selves, and respect this quality in others, but that they will learn to expand their self-knowledge beyond themselves. "Freedom" is dependent for its existence within the individual upon his awareness of the group of which he is a part. At SUNDANCE, children's roles in relation to the Community are fundamental to its social operation. While there are certain obvious administrative and organisational tasks which can only be handled by adults, questions concerning social behaviour are decided by

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all participants in the regular, general meetings. Obviously, it is of great help to a child who is learning to take responsibility for his own behaviour to talk about his personal relationships with his parents ; therefore, as far as is possible, children are encouraged to discuss matters scheduled for general meetings with their parents, prior to those meetings.

Similarly, the staff of the school, as they monitor the growth of each child, discuss with the child their observations about his/her abilities and interests. By understanding and utilizing the information he receives about himself from parents, peers and staff, each child will learn to identify his role in the Community - what he can give to others, and what he needs from them.

Concerning the social growth and behaviour of children, it is important that the Community's attitude towards discipline and creativity be explained . As has already been stated, the Community functions primarily upon respect for the child's natural curiosity. The traditional role of the adult in relation to this curiosity is that of facilitator. The capacity of an adult as an 'instructor' as someone who knows how things work, inevitably places him, in a child's mind (particularly a four/six year old), in an authority role which may easily produce unwanted conflicts. The child possesses what Thomas Harris refers to as "want-to", while the adult provides the "how-to". But the child does not necessarily like the limitations, or time consuming effort implied by the adult's explanation of "how-to" ; thus conflict arises. Authority, which was previously assumed and accepted by the child, is now rejected and the role of the adult is challenged and frequently rejected also. This happens many times a day in an ordinary school classroom. Harris has pointed out that in situations such as this which occur continually in many adult-child relationships, the end product is frequently unpleasant ; the adult becomes increasingly uncertain, and the child, who had expected to feel a growing sense of personal power and independence, finds himself instead feeling what Harris terms as "not O.K."

It is essential for a child's well-being that questions relating to his creativity and relationships with authority figures, who may be able to help him realise that creativity, be simplified to avoid conflict. The Community has designed several mechanisms which create a stable environment by minimising areas of conflict. It is natural for children to 'look-up' to adults, this is a modelling technique employed by all children, but it is important that by doing so, the child does not view himself as less than the adult, because this would hamper both his social growth and creativity.

Everyone associated with SUNDANCE is called by first names ; everyone is expected to help in clearing up at the end of the day ; anyone leaving the premises must tell an adult where he/she is going ; any child taking a young child off the premises must tell the adult ; children must wear reasonably protective clothing during field trips and activities outdoors in inclement weather ; anyone who agrees to work with a visiting specialist must be present at the agreed time, and be prepared to spend a reasonable amount of time with him.

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Item 52.

Letter to the author from Mrs. Sue Israel,
April 29, 1975.

Footnotes:
197, p.137

Received April 24 '75

Geoff dear,

Got the questionnaires this morning and thought I'd better drop you a line and say that it will take a couple of weeks before I can get them back to you. Many of the questions will mean a bit of looking up in the records (such as exist) and getting Carolyn and Stu to remember. Sorry about the delay, but I assume you want accurate answers - and for the next few days I'm up to my eyes in too many things.

The school is going really well - very relaxed and just no hassles on any fronts. We've got new kids and the staff really work well both with the kids and ~~the~~ each other. Our vegetable garden is actually growing which I reckon to be nothing short of miraculous - all the kids are really into gardening.

The Violet Melchett fund have promised me some more money next month, most of which will have to be used to meet the Fire regulation people's demands.

Hope all is well with you,

Kids send their love,

Sue

Item 53.

Letter to the A.S. Neill Trust newsletter, from
John McBeath of Barrowfield Community School,
September, 1975.

Footnotes:

200, p.139

202, p.141

207, p.143

Barrowfield Community School

Barrowfield Community School was set up in May 1973 when Brian Addison registered the school with the Scottish Education Dept. and enlisted five pupils who lived in the Barrowfield housing scheme.

The setting up followed twelve months of meetings, preparations and negotiations between Brian, John MacBeath of Jordanhill College Education Dept. and a group of Barrowfield parents, most of whom were enthusiastic members of the local tenants' association, and all of whom shared a concern for their children's education.

The school's constitution states the general aims of those working in the group at the school but the educational philosophy of the school and the teachers needs some elaboration.

The school's running is based on three straight forward principles.

The first is our belief that education is a natural process and is intrinsically interesting. We feel the focus should be on the teachers to present in such a way as to be interesting and directly relevant to each child's experience, interests and prospects.

Secondly, responsibility for the pupils' general welfare, rather than strictly educational needs, is assumed by the school.

The third educational principle involves the school's relationship to the community and specifically to an inner-city deprived area such as Barrowfield.

We believe that if we can reach a situation where these three principles are followed successfully then the school will produce people who, on one hand, can reach a level of self-fulfilment whilst in a different environment and, on the other hand, have the confidence and knowledge to do something about those conditions.

(cont')

16

INNER-CITY DEPRIVED AREA SUCH AS BARROWFIELD.

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(cont')

Barrowfield Community School contt

These aims lead us to a model which is outlined as follows:

- 1/ We require a building as a base for our activities
- 2/ To have a staff-pupil ratio that will allow us to function in the way we plan. (E-I)
- 3/ To provide for these 24 children of different ages it is essential to have outside contacts which can add to the experience, education and development of the children.
- 4/ The school should provide for the attainment of basic skills.
- 5/ Central to the whole scheme is the need for an efficient transport system.
- 6/ The school should be financed in a manner sufficient for three teaching staff, a building as a base, adequate transport and adequate material resources to meet our stated aims.
- 7/ The organization of the school should involve parents teachers and pupils.
- 8/ The contact with families should be stretched to contact with the whole area and its inhabitants.
- 9/ The model stated above should be extended and made available to as many people as desire it.

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CURRICULUM.

The essence of our approach to the curriculum is that it should be relevant to the pupils experiences and expectations. In this way we see our curriculum as being positive as opposed to arbitrary or irrelevant.

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- 1/ The demands of Society (for literacy, numeracy, general coping skills, credentials)
- 2/ The demands of the immediate environment (for coping with overcrowding, lack of money, lack of amenities)
- 3/ The need to express oneself through activities and experiences.

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(This was compiled from their ' Progress Report ' - a most comprehensive publication of which we can only reprint a small part, and that in abbreviated form. John did not say whether other copies were available, but you could try sending a donation plus postage etc.)

John MacBeath,
Jordanhill College of Education,
Southbrae Drive,
Glasgow, G13 1PP.

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John MacBeath,
Jordanhill College of Education,
Southbrae Drive,
Glasgow, G13 1PP.

Item 54.

The Monthly Bananza. Newsletter of Barrowfield
Community School No. 1, September, 1974. p.1.

Footnotes:

203, p.141

204, p.142

205, p.142

REPAIRING THE ROOMS

Since the school started new year started, we have been repairing the big room because that's the room we use most of all. Pat has already painted the toilet. We will start on the small room when we get more paint and paper. So if you have any paint or paper to spare could you please spare some.

George.

FATTIES: READ THESE KEEP FIT TIPS.

- 1) Have a good balanced diet.
- 2) Walk as often as you can.
- 3) Exercise yourself.
- 4) Stand properly and sit properly.
- 5) Breathe properly.

BY M. SMITH

IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE SCHOOL...
...at St. Vincent St.
Glasgow C.10.

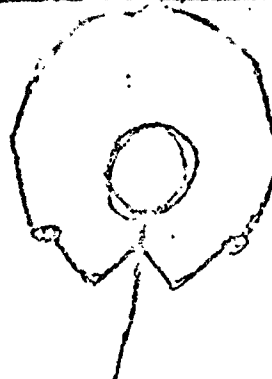
STORY OF THE SCHOOL

This school is the best school in Glasgow. My school is not the best stuff. It has the best teachers and the best pupils. Brian and Pat are the only full time teachers. Brian is the head teacher. We have a meeting twice a week. Anybody wanting to visit the school is welcome. They will be able to ask the teachers and the pupils questions about the school. We have visits from other schools every week and also helpers from outside.

RAB SPEAKS

MY NAME

is Robert Miller. I am 14 years of age. I was born in Glasgow on 29/10/59. The things I like doing best is taking things apart and putting them together again like old televisions. I like doing it most in the house when it is raining but I could do it in school if the teacher would let me. In school I like drawing and projects like the one I did in my old school on Transport. School should let me take things apart only in my spare time, but the schools I've gone to don't. The rest of the time in school I have always got Geography and Maths and English. That's alright But I should get to take things apart. I started here at the free school on 17th September.



Item 55.

Letter to the author from J.T. Bain, Director of
Education, Glasgow Corporation, April 28, 1975.

Footnotes:
206, p.142

All replies should state our reference

Tel 041 271 9400 Ext 3005

If telephoning or calling ask for



CORPORATION OF GLASGOW
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

EDUCATION OFFICES

129 BATH STREET
GLASGOW, G2 2SY

J T BAIN M.A. B.Sc. B.Ed.
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

your ref

our ref

JTB/EDH

date

28 April 1975

Professor G D Potter
c/o Faculty of Educational Studies
Arts Tower
University of Sheffield
Western Bank
SHEFFIELD

Dear Professor Potter

Thank you for your letter of 14 April.

Normally this office would be very happy to complete your questionnaire but due to the advent of local government reorganisation on 16 May we simply do not have the time to spare; my staff is so far depleted and carrying increased burdens as a result.

One free school catering for less than a dozen children operates in Glasgow. It is not supported by me or by the Committee because:-

1. We do not consider the premises satisfactory
2. We do not consider the staff to be sufficiently wide in experience
3. Our own secondary schools feel that they could offer a satisfactory curriculum.

Yours sincerely,

Director of Education

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Item 56.

Application to Urban Aid for funding, from the
Bermondsey Lamp-post Free School, September, 1974.

Footnotes:

208, p.145

209, p.145

1. Project Title. The Bermondsey Lamp Post. A project involving parents and children in a small area and aiming to provide an increased range of opportunities for all participants.
2. The area served. The part of the Abbey ward, North Southwark, bounded by Tower Bridge Road, the Long Lane Estates, St. Thomas Street and Borough High Street.
3. Numbers involved. The number included in the project at the moment is approximately 40 families with a total of over a hundred children. The potential development of the project would depend upon the number of workers and the degree of self help reached by individual families. There are over 1,000 families in this area.
4. Organizing Body. The Bermondsey Lamp Post Trust, (Registration at present in the hands of the Charity Commission), to be housed in one/several houses in the area as a focus for community development in the neighbourhood and to involve children, parents and others with special skills. Education facilities for children and adults would be incorporated as a part of the project.
5. Background to and objectives of the project. The project has at its centre a small group of workers who are members of the local community and have been discovered to have certain skills and are prepared to act with other residents in the solution of their problems. As residents, they are able to appreciate the problems of the immediate area and as they are in a small geographical area these problems can be dealt with almost as quickly as they arise. In the same way the group has become known to the local statutory and voluntary services and is, therefore, able to liaise with those in these services and the local people whom they are trying to serve.

The group, by being on the spot, can deal with many problems before they become desperate. In this way they aim to be preventative in many spheres rather than waiting for a final solution that will need a long and costly cure.

The group grew from a consciousness of need in local families and their awareness of the lack of provision for their children in an overcrowded, dirty and still essentially industrial area. People were concerned with three major problems:

- i) Lack of play facilities and space for all ages of children.
- ii) Lack of real educational opportunity.
- iii) Lack of educational/play/baby minding facilities for pre-school age children.

Arising out of this need, Schools, Education Welfare Officers, Probation Officers, Social Workers, Police and Clinics, etc., were contacted and the areas of need were crystallized. As a result of these beginnings:

- i) Some land has been lent for a free play and construction area.
- ii) Outings were arranged for children and parents to places of interest and pleasure.
- iii) Two summer camps were held in Devon in 1972 and over 40 children have been away to the country on a fortnight's arranged holiday; a small group went to Paris on a four day visit. All these activities were sponsored privately.
- iv) A holiday programme has been run with grants from the T.I.E.A. and Southwark Council in 1972 (Glasgow), 1974 (London), 1975 (London).
- v) Free tutorial help has been given in the evenings on an individual basis for reading and writing for children and for those who have 11+ results.

After a while a small nucleus was set up (and this is provisionally reported to be the nucleus for the children and for those who have 11+ results).

has had to be made and the children has been striking. The Health Council is in the process of acquiring a building for the project to house all its various parts. This has meant that the following extensions could be made if the group was no longer voluntary and had proper facilities:

- a) Participants can use the resources of the school to further their own education on their own or by involvement with the children already attending.
- b) An extension of play facilities could be made.
- c) Provision of pre-school facilities on a proper basis as part of the school.
- d) Visits and use of the existing community resources can be encouraged. Many people are unaware of existing resources available for their use.
- e) Visitors can call in to discuss their own problems and local issues.
- f) The local voluntary and professional agencies could also use the centre, thus improving the communications with the people that they are trying to serve.
- g) Involvement with Guy's Hospital via two doctors who live locally in helping with both preventative medicine and dentistry. It is planned that considerable help via the centre could be given. Essentially many difficulties and lack of attendance at clinics stem from fear, mistrust and lack of information. We have found that by personal involvement some of these difficulties can be overcome.
- h) Establishment of a Toy Library in association with Charterhouse-in-Southwark.

These further needs have become apparent and the contacts that have been established have opened the way to some of these needs being fulfilled. It is therefore planned that the project should continue and expand along the present lines of personal contact within a community. There is no long-term objective other than to discover and increase the awareness of needs within the community and to work with local statutory and voluntary authorities and agencies, establishing means of meeting these needs more quickly and effectively than is at present possible. Through this process a basis of trust and self-sufficiency should be established within the area.

The Council have offered the group a building at 124, Long Lane which could develop into a resource centre for the local people so that they can not only use the facilities of the building for their own education, but also use the building for purposes such as tenants association meetings and other group activities.

6. Background to the area. This is a depressed area, overcrowded and dirty. The smells of Lambsey are revolting. In the wake of the closure of the docks, the present stagnation on the riverside and the closure of several local industries there is unemployment and few interesting job opportunities. There are few local shops and some of these are now being forced to close. Until the recent slump in the economic situation the area was fast being taken over by office developments, with the result that the local population (housed in council properties) was losing all services (housed in private property). This situation is being halted, but this has meant that there are many derelict properties in the area awaiting re-development. The local Council and C.I.C. have set all in a process of renovation and this process is being started. There is a disproportionate amount of heavy traffic through the area. In these stressful conditions many facilities are in need of help, and many children are neglected and mistreated.

Cases of prostitution and youth are also increasing and eleven out of twelve children in need of attention had been here. It is known that...

a) Parents and Under-Five's.

The percentage of unfulfilled wishes is high and the number of children in one parent families is growing. There are, according to the 1971 census figures, 1,400 children under five in the enumeration district bounded by Tower Bridge Road, Borough High Street and St. Thomas Street and the New Kent Road.

The provision made for these children in the area that the project covers is as follows:

- a) No Day Nurseries. The nearest is a 'bus ride away.
- b) No One O'Clock Clubs.
- c) One Pre-School Play Group (Save the Children Fund), open 9.30-12.00 and 1.30-3.00. This Nursery is due to close soon for a period of up to two years as there is to be a re-organisation of the Charterhouse-in-Southwark buildings.**
- d) Three half-day session Nursery Schools (I.L.E.A.)**

** These are of little value for many mothers as children have to return home for lunch. Therefore many places are not taken and mothers are forced to find other means of coping with pre-school age children during the day.

Thus, it is known that there are a very large number of unofficial and unregistered baby and child minders. We are awaiting the results of a survey based on the Saloman Centre to establish the whereabouts and the needs of the under-five's in this particular area.

The Social Services are under-manned and only able to deal with the most pressing cases. In the area of the project there are few provisions made for school-age children either.

b) School-Age Children.

There are two tiny play parks for under-thirteen's with no trained play leaders. The only Adventure Playground is in the process of being started by the Lamp Post. Few of the children in the area attend the clubs that exist on the perimeter.

Clubs Attended.

No.'s attending from immediate area.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Bermondsey Parish Youth Group | None known. |
| Central Hall South London Mission | None known. |
| Blackfriars Settlement | 5 |
| Charterhouse-in-Southwark | 4 |
| Snowfields after school play centre | 10 |

Crime and Truancy.

Juvenile Crime Rate 1.1.74 - 30.6.74. Tower Bridge Section.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Burglary | 59 |
| Taking motor vehicles | 39 |
| Thefts, assaults, etc. | 61 |
| | --- |
| Total juvenile arrests | 159 |
| | --- |

Christopher Andrew, Assistant General Secretary of the British Association of Social Workers has said on the prevention of children reaching a stage of delinquency:

"Many (local authorities) cannot, or will not, provide the funds, staff and homes that are needed. Much more help is needed for problem families before one of their children reaches the stage of delinquency."

Division Commander John Bodecombe has said in "The Job", July 1974:

"Juvenile crime arrests show an increase of 25%"

"We have seen this increase in the number of children who are being taken into care from their homes."

"The lack of stumbling feature is the small, but significant, increase in the number of primary school children who are coming to the notice of the bureau as offenders as well as truants."

He summed up by saying that:

"Social Services have been given all authority over juveniles without having sufficient means or resources to be effective. The Education Department has lost manpower in respect of truants and cannot act without the sanction of the Social Services."

Here there is a clear area of need both during the day and in the evenings, when for many young people the traditional and accepted ways of filling their time are not being utilised.

c) Adult Provision.

There are a number of well-used Pubs, but there are no other near-by entertainments centres. There is one Bingo Hall in Tower Bridge Road. In several of the Estates there are no Tenants' Associations, partly because there are no available halls or meeting places. Colleges of Further Education exist, but these centres are formal and many people lack the confidence to register. Others have come for help with learning to read; there are no facilities in the area.

As a result of the decreasing sense of community in an area once noted for it, there is a great deal of tenseness and insecurity involving suspicion of people outside the immediate family, and particularly of officials. There is a strong justification for the project; its relevance to the needs of the area being that it is essentially of the area.

7. There is no similar provision made in the area at all, nor in any of the areas bounding on to the Lamp Post area.
8. As a result of an approach to the Council by the Lamp Post group a building has been promised, but no other assistance has been available yet.
9. Finance. Grant Aid has not previously been sought for the project under the Urban Programme. Some Charities are being approached. There have been small donations made from private individuals, but so far the project has been kept alive by donations from those taking part and material support from local people and industries and much good will. The Youth Service have funded three holiday playhouses. The Harmondsey Lamp Post Trust application is at present in the hands of the Charity Commission.
10. As the project grew out of the local community, local people have been involved from the very beginning. It is clear that there is full support in the area and a very real need.

11. The building.

- a) The building to be provided by the Council is at 184, Long Lane.
- b) It is an old bakery with a maisonette above the shop. It is part of a terrace and was rebuilt in 1954. Behind there is a two-storey bakehouse and this it is hoped to convert into a workshop and a drama studio.
- c) The building should be handed over for redecoration in August 1974.
- d) It should be ready for use in September 1974.
- e) The building needs some attention so as to conform to Fire and Health Regulations.
- f) It is hoped that the physically disabled would have access to the ground floor.

12. Staff.

The minimum number of full-time staff to be employed is six. All should be paid at a minimum of \$1,700 per annum gross.

It is intended that the administration, teaching, social work, maintenance, driving and cleaning should be a shared responsibility. The qualifications of those involved with the project are varied and those with special skills and abilities have the opportunity to use them.

13. The project will start as soon as there is the necessary finance to support the workers involved.

X

12 employees given, for Urban Aid
on a project about to start

Name of the Party: _____

Expected Date of Commencement: September, 1971.

A. CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

- a) Land
- b) Building Costs
- c) Professional Fees
- d) Furniture, Equipment, etc.
- e) Other Capital Expenditure:
 - i) Minibus (second-hand)
 - ii)

Total:

| Financed by Loan £ | Financed by Revenue £ |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | - |
| | 500 |
| | - |
| | 1,800 |
| | 1,000 |
| | 3,300 |
| Financial Year of Commencement £ | Full Financial Year £ |
| 5,100 | 10,200 |
| 85 | 170 |
| 210 | 420 |
| 140 | 280 |
| 400 | 800 |
| 310 | 620 |
| 400 | 800 |
| 500 | 1,000 |
| 7,145 | 14,290 |

B. NON-CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS: RECURRENT.

- a) Employer (including salary, N.E.)
- b) Administrative Expenses
- c) Rents (not yet specified - estimated)
- d) Rates, heating, lighting etc.
- e) Equipment and materials (other than capital expenditure as in Ad.)
- f) Transport (petrol, bus, train)
- g) Other running expenses:
 - i) Food (over that provided by the I.L.C.A.)
 - ii) Travel/visits/holidays in country, etc.

Total:

Item 57.

List of people and agencies supporting The
Bermondsey Lamp-post Free School, 1972-73.

Footnotes:
212, p.147

1970-71
Department of Health

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr. Martin Box | Guy's Hospital |
| M. Bowman | Hay's Wharf Company |
| Geoffrey S. Caston | Registrar, The University, Oxford |
| Lt. Commander Michael Clover | The Paddocks Households and Housing Association |
| N. Dark, B.A. Dip. Ed. | Principal, Southwark College of Further Education |
| Miss Elphick | Area Team Leader, Southwark Social Services |
| Frank Foster, O.B.E. | Ex. H.M. Borstals, Home Office |
| Group Relations Training Association | |
| Rt. Hon. Robert Mellish | M.P. for Bermondsey |
| Dr. Ronald MacKeith | late of the Newcomen Clinic, Guy's Hospital |
| Peter McNeil | Chief Probation Officer, based at Tower Bridge Courts, Southwark |
| Ray Phillips | Community Action Organiser, National Union of Students |
| Robin Webster | School of Environmental Studies |
| Rev. Michael Winney | Dean, Southwark Cathedral |

Many Heads of local schools have shown interest and given support to the idea behind the scheme.

Item 58.

Questionnaire (completed) sent by the author
to The Bermondsey Lamp-post Free School, 1975.

Footnotes:

213, p.148

The first few questions are a bit statistical. I'm not going to write any big statistical thing, but answers here would help me to give an accurate view of free and community schools.

1. a. When did planning for the school begin? 1.6 1972
 b. When did the school open? Sept 1973
 c. On the following dates how many kids and adults were involved with the school (is working in it)?
 (October 1st)

| People | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------|
| Kids under 5 yrs. | | | / | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Kids 5-12 | | | / | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Kids over 12 yrs. | | | / | 5 | 110 | 110 |
| Adults working full-time in the school | | | / | 3 | 5 | 5 full time 3 at present |
| Adults working part-time in the school | | | / | 3 | 4 | 3 |

- d. How many of the children who were at the school when it first started are still in the school now?

yes
in
Sept 73

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Aged up to 5 yrs. | 2 |
| Aged 5 - 12 yrs. | 5 |
| Aged 12 - plus yrs. | 1 |

- e. How many kids left the school for the following reasons during the past three years:

| Reason | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| to attend state school | | 1 | |
| to go to another local free school | / | / | |
| to live elsewhere | / | | |
| to work | / | 5 | |
| no reason given | | 1 | 2 |

- f. Of the ORIGINAL adults who started the school, how many are still with it? (no pun intended!)

Men Women

All original adults are still involved except one woman, a myself working

g. Of the total number of adults who have worked in the school since it began, how many had the following academic certificates:

Doctorate Masters Bachelor's degree
Teacher Certification

h. Are the state schools in your locality Catholic Protestant or Mixed or mainly associated with some other religion (please specify)?

i. How many of the kids in the school live in homes where there are a lot of problems (ie poverty, overcrowding, generally unpleasant environment)?

j. How many of the kids in the school during 1973 and 1974 lived in bad homes?

k. How many of the kids in the school live in homes which though poor are nevertheless pleasant, caring places?

l. How many of the kids in the school live in comfortable, middle-class homes?

m. How many of the kids in the school live in broken or uncomfortable or unhappy middle-class homes?

n. According to recently published statistics, half (or almost) of all the people in the top income group in Britain, (ie earning, after taxes, in excess of £59. per week) are skilled manual workers. Have you had in the school, since it began, any children from the families of what is being called the "middle-class proletariat"? I know it may be difficult to specify this, but I'd like to know if there's any link between economic security or insecurity and the kind of school kids are sent to. If there have been any, could you indicate the numbers for the past three years?

1973 1974 1975

o. Have you had, during the past three years, any children withdrawn from the school because their parents' financial status improved? Please say how many for each year.

1973 1974 1975

p. During the following years, how many kids in the school (ie who attended regularly) have been involved in illegal activities such as larceny, arson, housebreaking, etc.?

1973 1974 1975

apparently this is about 4 or 5 now (housebreaking in estates) since people have moved out for (removals)

q. During the past few years, how many kids have been referred to your school by the LEA?

1973 1974 1975

r. Do you consider your place to be adequately described by the word "school"?

c. Have you travelled in any of the following countries:

Britain Western Europe Russia Canada
 Eastern Europe North Africa Central Africa
 Eastern USA South Africa Western USA
 Scandinavia Australia China

d. Have you visited alternative schools in any of the countries listed above? Yes in Britain

e. Have you read extensively about the alternative schools in any of the countries listed above? _____

f. How old are you? Under 30 30-40 40-50
 50-60 Over 60

g. Have you ever taught in a state school? Yes No *part time*
 Primary? Secondary? Infants?
 Large? Small? Open-plan?
 Traditional? College? University?

h. Was it your teaching experience which motivated you to become involved with free schools? Yes No

i. Are you a member or supporter of any political party? *partly*
 If so, which one? LC

j. Was your motivation for becoming involved with free schools a reaction to political educational
 religious home
 experiences; or was it a natural extension of your childhood?

k. In what ways, if any, have the writings of Paul Goodman influenced your thinking? none

l. Of the people listed below, please indicate which have strongly influenced you.

| People | Strong influence | Read | Never heard of |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Castorina | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Pestalozzi | | | |
| Rafferty | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Kozol | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Leonard | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Montessori | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Isaacs | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Anna Freud | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Winnicott | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Melanie Klein | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Fromm | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Marouse | | | |
| Rousseau | | | |
| Dennison | | | |
| Illich | | | |
| Trope | | | |
| Neill | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Lister | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Duane | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| McLuhan | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------|--|---|--|
| Froebel | | | |
| Friere | | | |
| Cleuz | | | |
| Reimer | | | |
| Hubermann | | | |
| Herbart | | | |
| Roszak | | | |
| Plazet | | | |
| Dewey | | | |
| Lilly | | | |
| Krishnamurti | | | |
| Holt | | | |
| Tolstoy | | ✓ | |

Concerning the school:

a. Are the physical premises the school occupies.....

| | |
|---|-----|
| owned by the people who run the school; | NO |
| leased or rented from a local council; | YES |
| squatted; | |
| rented from a church; | |
| rented from a private individual; | |
| loaned free of charge by a council; | |
| loaned free of charge by a church; | |
| loaned free of charge by an individual; | |
| a private house; | |
| part of a school or community centre? | |

b. Roughly what percentage of your day do you spend in organizational matters?

c. How many of the kids in the school live in..... houses

highrises

flats?

d. Where do the majority of the kids in trouble with the law live: in...

houses

highrises

flats?

e. Of the kids attending the school, how many have been sent by parents wanting a more flexible learning environment for their children, than is available at state school?

f. How many of the kids at the school have been recommended to the school by the LEA?

g. How many of the kids in the school have been sent there - or allowed to attend - by parents who don't really care which school they go to as long as they're being supervised?

14/11/72

- h. What percentage of the kids' parents play an active role in the school?
- i. What percentage of the kids' parents are antagonistic towards the school?
- j. What percentage of the kids come from homes which are..... Catholic Protestant Immigrant
- k. How many of the children in the school are from your own family?
- l. What percentage of the children in the following age-groups could not read when they came to the school in September 1974 (or whenever the school opened)?
- 2 - 4 yrs 4 - 6 yrs 6 - 10 yrs 10 - 12 yrs over 12 yrs.
- m. What percentage of the children listed above as unable to read, have learned to read -or are learning fast - since coming to the school?
- 2 - 4 yrs 4 - 6 yrs 6 - 10 yrs 10 - 12 yrs over 12 yrs.
- n. Do you use a reading scheme, or specific method to help the kids learn to read? Yes No If so, which one is it? *all are learning, some not so fast in system*
- o. Have you used and subsequently rejected any particular methods and/or reading schemes? If so, which ones? _____
- p. If you don't have a reading scheme, and would like one, which would it be? _____
- q. Could you -or would you - when asked, prepare your kids for examinations such as GSE and GCE? *yes, will take college* Yes No

NOTE: With these questions about reading, I'm not trying to find out how you teach reading, but I've got an idea that a lot of children learn to read very well when they're in a situation that respects their natural ability to communicate. If I can indicate that the free-school approach, which usually considers literacy an integral part of total development, works well, this might provide an interesting alternative to the Bullock proposals.

4. **Finances:**
a. Please explain the sources of your financial support, in approximate percentages, against the following list.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| LEA support | 3 |
| Voluntary donations | 6 |
| Grant-making trusts | 10 50 |
| Fees paid by parents | / |
| Fund-raising activities | 14 |
| Local council support | / |
| Personal savings and outside earnings | 27 |

(approx)

b. Do you rate your chances of survival as a school over the next two years as excellent good or poor?

c. Have you ever been threatened with court action by the LEA?
 Yes No

d. What in your opinion is the attitude towards the school of the following agencies:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LEA | helpful - but not very much |
| Press | helpful - but not very much |
| Church | helpful - but not very much |
| Local state schools | helpful - but not very much |
| Local College of Education | helpful - but not very much |
| Univ. Party | helpful - but not very much |
| Polytechnic | helpful - but not very much |

e. To what extent are you in contact with other free schools?
 little

In the USA, Canada and Australia, free schools are backed up by fairly large, well-organized agencies such as the American Summerhill Society, Communities Exchange and the New Schools Exchange. Do you regard the development, on a nation-wide basis of similar organizations in Britain to be.....

Undesirable

Unnecessary

Already sufficient

Desirable

Essential?

p. Have you had any direct contact with the Children's Rights Workshop?

q. Have you had any direct contact with the A.S. Neill Trust?

h. Throughout history various political, religious and social alternatives have evolved. The ones which seem to have survived best have been (with the notable and overworked example of Summerhill) those which have compromised their ideals. An example of this would be Dartington Hall. Have you had to compromise in any ways in order to survive? If so, I would appreciate any observations you may have about this, because I think it is particularly significant in terms of establishing just what free schools have been able to achieve alone, and in what areas they have had to work within a hostile, or undesirable environment.

*we haven't compromised with any outside agencies
 get money. therefore we have no money.
 compromise ideals of free schooling (as by Summerhill)
 some kids live at home if we can't change
 then live subconsciously*

1. Dr. Eric Midwinter, in a widely publicised article which encouraged educational innovators to stay within "the system", suggests that free schools are short-lived, and have had less effect than some commentators have indicated. Furthermore he wrote: "The right wing of independent education has had more impact than free schools." To me this reflects a symptom of a common academic malaise which renders the victim incapable of accepting anything unless it can be measured. If you would like to respond to this, I'll include your thoughts in the book.

Item 59.

"The School", unpublished statement from
The Bermondsey Lamp-post Free School, 1973.

Footnotes:
216, p.150

It is a school where the children are not just "put down" (I.L.E.A. motto) but are given a chance to show their own personality and to take part in the school's activities.

"In our schools, in inner urban areas, there are children whose intellectual development is poor and who show personality and behaviour disorders to varying degrees. They fail to progress and leave school ill fitted to play a constructive part in society and are frequently hostile to its aims. The strain on their teachers is considerable and the incidence of illness, absence and change of staff is high. The trend is cumulative and may well become irreversible, with serious social implications for the future."

In the inner urban areas, with the associated problems of overcrowding and poor housing, lack of play and nursery facilities, and the upheaval and destruction of old communities, the school must respond to the new demands of the children.

In setting up a school, we have hoped to provide an atmosphere attuned to the needs of these children, where they will feel able to relax and find an outlet for their own desires and abilities. The I.L.E.A. itself has financed experiments for problem children, such as the Islington Intermediate Treatment Centre, and the "Children with Difficulties" projects in Brixton, Islington, Netting Hill, and Peckham. These projects are mainly concerned with containing truancy, and by their nature are able to do little more.

An attempt must be made for education to become an integral and natural part of local life. Access to education must be possible for all ages. It is realised by many that the concept of the school must change, and some guide lines for the future could be provided by a model working outside the existing structure.

The founder member of the school, Miss Lois Acton, is a qualified teacher and has been living in Bermondsey and teaching in a girls comprehensive school for three years, being Head of the Geography Department for the last eighteen months. In that time, she came into contact with children and parents where she lives and became aware of their dissatisfaction with their children's education. During this time, a group came together and the children were taken out after school, at the weekend,

the school. The school is a community school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities. The school is a day school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities. The school is a day school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities.

The school is a day school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities. The school is a day school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities. The school is a day school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities. The school is a day school, and the children are encouraged to take part in the school's activities.

The school is based in the local community, and there are continual offers of help of various kinds. (These include donations of materials from factories as well as close co-operation from the Young Vic and the Globe Theatre Trust, local museums, etc.)

The school is staffed by qualified teachers, and happily, there is a plethora of voluntary helpers with specialist skills of various sorts. At present, most of the teachers have to work part time with the school until there are sufficient funds to enable them to be paid. We have seven graduates involved in the project, and these include people with both primary and secondary school teacher training. We also have a qualified nursery teacher and a doctor interested in the scheme. The voluntary helpers come from local industry, the Probation Service, Guy's Hospital, the South Bank Polytechnic, and Goldsmiths College. Factories, garages, and local shops have all helped by allowing for work experience where possible. We also receive help from students who are sent on a placement basis from Departments of Education.

The children are of both primary and secondary school age, and many mothers would like a nursery group to be incorporated into the school. At present, ten children have officially transferred to the school but there are at least thirty more whose parents would like them to start attending immediately, and many more outside our geographical limits who would like to come. We aim to keep the school small and very much a neighbourhood school; this also means that there is a very high adult/child ratio. This, we feel, is important, as it allows for a much greater respect and sensitivity to each child's interests, needs, and problems, thus creating a better environment for the children. This ratio is also necessary as all tasks such as cleaning, cooking, etc. are shared by teachers, children, and parents. Between them, someone from the group is available at the school throughout

... ..
... ..
... ..

Problems for the three sessions are given on a separate sheet, and evaluated now in the school. Children seem to enjoy it, and in Deptford the Education Authority have agreed to allow the children to attend all three sessions whenever they are free from the responsibilities that many of them have in the home.

At present, the school is run from a small flat in Bermondsey. It is hoped that a building will soon be available, although the area is awaiting redevelopment, and consequently much property is either in advanced deterioration or in the hands of large companies. It is hoped that the building will serve as a resource base from which at any time a proportion of children will be out on visits to places of interest and to other sources of learning both in and out of the city. Learning which requires the greater use of specialised materials will be undertaken in the building. Skills such as reading and writing are more easily acquired in a sympathetic atmosphere, and there will be specialised guidance available at all times in the building for both parents and children. The children will also be able to go, on a part time basis, to the local technical college to prepare for G.C.E. and Secretarial examinations where desired.

We believe that the absence of compulsion, punishment, and competition, will free each child to learn faster when and where he chooses, thus becoming a more competent and constructive member of our society. We have already found that as the children become more involved with society, they are therefore less destructive towards it.

Our main needs at the moment, besides a more suitable building as a base for the school, are (a) adequate financial provisions to allow the adults, who at present hold other jobs to support themselves, to work full time for the school, (b) some means of transport to enable the children to travel as widely as possible, and thus allow us to make increasing use of the various rural facilities that we have been offered. (c) equipment, books, and furniture for the school, and (d) general running expenses and costs (see attached notes on expenditure).

We are registering as an educational charity, and will be a company limited by guarantee.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Building (a) | 1,200 |
| Transport (b) | 1,600 |
| Materials (c) | 1,000 |
| Transport Cost (d) | 800 |
| Meals (e) | 1,000 |
| Wages (e) | 800 |
| Food (e) | 1,200 |
| Teaching staff full-time (6 @ £1,700) (f) | 10,200 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £16,480 |
| | <hr/> |

Notes

(a) This is based on an estimate of £25 per month offered to us by the G.L.C. for what proved to be an inadequate building. We therefore judge that at least £35 per month is necessary. A building obtained from other sources would probably be more expensive.

(b) This figure has necessarily been kept low as we feel that, as this is a community project, many local people would be prepared to lend a hand. We have had several offers already.

(c) This is necessarily an initial figure accounting for certain items of non-consumable stock such as audio-visual aids which need not be bought again for some time. However, as the number of children in the school increases, the amount needed to be spent on consumable stock (paper, pens, etc.) will probably increase.

(d) This figure is to cover taking children out by other means than minibus, i.e. public transport, and also to cover entrance fees and projects such as the summer camp we have held this summer in Devonshire, and the trip to Spain this year.

(e) If we take 12p. to be the average subsidized cost of a school dinner at present, this figure would cover two school meals per weekday including holidays. This is because some of the children we are providing for are not properly fed at all. The money saved on those children who do get a proper evening meal would go towards providing the more deprived children with meals at weekends. Nearly all the children we are dealing with qualify for free school meals.

... of the school in order to ensure that the school is run on a system of democratic responsibility, so that each is equally involved in decision making.

- (i) there will be working for longer hours than the average, as the school will be open seven days a week, including holidays.
- (ii) the school is run on a system of democratically shared responsibility, so the teachers, like the other people in the school, will be engaged in duties such as cleaning and cooking.
- (iii) although some of the teachers could qualify for a higher salary in a state school, money should be distributed equally, so that each is equally involved in decision making.
- (iv) adequate provision must be made for finding accommodation in our area which is very difficult, due to the proximity of our area to the Hay's Wharf Development and to the Surrey docks scheme.

Item 60.

Section of a letter to the author from
F. Butlin of the Bermondsey Lamp-post
Free School, outlining budget proposals
for 1975.

Footnotes:
219, p.151

(5) Copy of Estimated ~~Proposed~~ Expenditure

as sent to Social Services at the beginning of '75.
(basically same as an Urban Aid application)

A. Capital Expenditure

| | £ |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| (a) Building + alteration costs | 500 |
| (b) furniture, equipment etc | 1800 |
| (c) menus (secondhand) | <u>1000</u> |
| <u>total</u> | <u>£3,300</u> |

B Non-Capital exp. recurrent

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| (a) staff [6 @ £1700 p/a gross] | 10,200 |
| (b) admin. expenses | 5000 170 |
| (c) rent (estimated) | 500 |
| (d) rates, heating, lighting | 280 |
| (e) equipment + materials (other than in A (b)) | 800 |
| (f) running of menus (insurance, tax, petrol, repairs) | 1000 |
| (g) public transport/travels /Londays in county etc | 1000 |
| (h) food (above ILEA provision) | 800 |
| <u>total</u> | <u>£14,770</u> |
| <u>total of A. & B.</u> | <u>£18,070</u> |

Item 61.

Letter to the author from Mr. F. Butlin of
The Bermondsey Lamp-post Free School, April 10,
1975.

Footnotes:

220, p.153

221, p.153

44 Fentiman Rd

London SW8

10th April.

Dear Geoff. I enclose our only 2 'printed' documents about the Bernadsky Lamp Post. The first written 2 years ago - gives an idea of how it started & the ideas behind it.

The 2nd written last summer is an application for Urban Aid - puts the emphasis on it as a wide social project.

I'll try & fill in the rest of it.

We were given our building in October 1974 by Southwark Council, on a 'license' which means they could ask us to leave at any time, we have no lease or anything yet (tho if it came to court it's not so clear whether we would in actual fact have to leave straight away) [The Council haven't actually bought the building yet!]

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| full time staff | 2 trained teachers (1 male female) |
| | 3 graduates (2 m. 1 f.) |
| | 2 non graduates. |

in fact only 5 are full time at the moment - I'm working to get money, Lois (trained teacher) has just had a child

②

I can't be more specific about actual amounts - we've started keeping accounts this last term - prior to that I could find out ^{how} ~~where~~ the money was spent from cheque book stubs - if you need more details.

LEA pay for school meals for those kids who would be eligible for free meals at state school - + free milk for under 7's $\frac{1}{3}$ pint/day.

We have applied to Social Services of Southwark for money for our preventive social work with children - due to the 'economic crisis' thus come bottom of the list as priority for money is no response as yet.

LEA give us no money - we don't come within the requirements for a financial project.

• Money is given to us at Easter + summer school holidays to run play projects for the kids - run from the

③ Activities etc.

We have no formal curriculum

- activities arise (a) thro' the kids own desires / interests
eg Mustafa is interested in animals - he has built
cages for 2 pet rabbits (previously he had rats)
& looks after these.

Pinky writes plays - ^{we all} spend a lot of time
'rehearsing' these plays, one or 2 have been
shown before audiences of 1 at a local hall,
& a couple at Goldsmiths teacher training college.

(b) adults bring in ideas / equipment for
activities. eg candle-making equipment
if the kids are interested, they join in.

Adults follow kids interests, try to
encourage them, bring in relevant books, equipment etc.

A lot of individual attention & help is
given.

Kids spend a lot of time doing things
themselves eg top room is 'teenagers room'
they have decorated it themselves, spend a lot of

Kids spend a lot of time doing things

eg top room is teenagers room

(4)

As for aims & policy - this is very difficult. Some of this is in the first document ("The School").

Obviously the main stimuli ^{to the B.L.} are the over city living conditions - deprivation, lack of opportunity etc & specifically for the kids, poor educational provision - old schools, large classes, irrelevant curriculum etc leads to dissatisfaction - our aim is to provide a more relevant education, based on the ideas of Mill's Summerhill, though the theory proves very difficult to put into practice. We would hope to have the kids becoming more self-sufficient, free of learning difficulties, more able to choose what they want to do in life. With the older kids, who are only with us a year or so before leaving, this is difficult - we help with finding jobs, & sometimes with extra reading & so on

we are also to choose what they want

With the older kids, who

are only with us a year or so before leaving

this is difficult - we help with finding jobs

things are much easier with the younger
kids. Important is the sense of
community - particularly in the school
(tho' it has been hoped that the B.L.
could provide a focus for the wider community
- very difficult with so many people living in
big estates of flats all around)

Kids learn to get on with one another, &
with adults as friends, not as bosses
- learn to take responsibility for what goes
on in school, activities, clearing up (point of
discussion, tho' things have been improving) kids
have meetings about important issues
(staff have meetings every Wed. eve - 1 or 2 kids
come so they know what we talk about -
mostly money & day to day matters)

Difficult to put forward consistent aims
of the school - 'staff' members come together
for different reasons, have different ideas about what
it should be going on.
- day to day matters)

Difficult to put forward consistent aims
of the school - 'staff' members come together

for different reasons, have different ideas about what

time in there - play records talk etc.

Young teenagers have made half a room on the middle floor then own - divided it with a curtain.

Some boys have helped with work on building - painting, building shelves, repair work etc.

Activities outside building - visits to parks, swimming pools, museums - out of London to country for day trips

(plus holidays eg in Devon, or Sussex in summer)

Older girls - visits to family planning clinics, help with jobs etc

Some individual reading tuition with teenagers - evenings.

Nursery for under 5's - 2 rooms downstairs - water play, sand play, painting, drawing, reading, dressing up, building with bricks, puzzles etc etc.

water play sand play, painting, drawing, reading, dressing up, building with bricks, puzzles etc etc

adventure playground site on Bermondsey St.

A lot of stuff we have asked for or just been given, free - paint, wood, furniture, clothes etc.

A lot of work is needed to be done on the building:

(1) alterations to comply with the fire regulations, + to make the main staircase a fire-proof means of escape
ie need to cover the walls with plaster-board, etc.

(2) heating needed - no hot water system either.

(3) alterations to plumbing needed:

adequate washing facilities in nursery

" toilet " for "

(4) insulation needed

(5) bakehouse + storeroom, behind main building - scheme to completely overhaul + renovate this as drama studio + arts + crafts workshops. + insulation, heating, fire escape etc.

scheme put forward by ^{students from} Architectural Association in consultation with us

MONEY NEEDED

insulation, heating, fire escape etc.
students from

scheme put forward by Architectural Association

Charities already contacted

(1) Sir Edward Robinsons, Blandford Forum Dorset
sent £100 in March 1975.

(2) Noel Buxton Trust, London
letter sent 1974 early - no good

(3) Thomas Wall Trust, London.
Went to see them last Easter 1974
- told us to come back when we were more
established, had charitable status, or could
show accounts etc.

(4) City Parochial Foundation
much correspondence between Sue &
Brian Woods (clerk to the trustees)
said we needed charitable registration etc.
Already funding White Lion - didn't see it
as their position to fund free school
movement. Grant would depend on
bulk of money coming from elsewhere.

(5) Ancestral Berran Memorial Foundation

letter sent early 1974
no application ^{fell} outside

their terms of reference (? not so sure)

(6) Sydney Black Charitable Trust London

written to 1974 - said they would get in touch.
- didn't.

(7) Ambrose + Ann Appelbe Trust.

written to early 1974. Said we would hear
- didn't.

(8) Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust.

- refusal dated 4/2/74

(9) Barrow + Geraldine S. Cadbury Trust

written to 10/12/73

replied 30/1/74 general policy not
to support projects outside W. Midlands.

(10) C.L. Cadbury.

reply - said no.

(11) Hayward Foundation

written to

no reply.

C.L. Cadbury.

reply - said no.

Hayward Foundation

no reply.

(12) Leche Trust

written to - no good

(13) Lloyds Charities Trust

written to Dec 73

replied 13/2/73

said decision would be made at next meeting - nothing further heard.

(14) Marble Arch Charitable Trust.

written to no reply

(15) Clark Foundation

written to - funds fully committed
(as at 6/12/73)

(16) Worsley Foundation

Ray - said no

(17) Butlin's 19/2/74 no donation

but terms of reference of charity fund being
reversed by trustees of Rank Charitable Foundation
a "hope we shall not be touched."

reversed by trustees of Rank Charitable Foundation.
a "hope we shall not be touched."

Looking at this now, in the light of estimates
for expenditure on the building etc, this
looks a conservative figure - (based on 25
to 30 kids)

I hope you can read all this,
or make something of it. Any more info
needed, or left out by me, please let
me know.

Item 62.

A.S. Neill Trust newsletter, March, 1976,
notes from The Bermondsey Lamp-post.

Footnotes:
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... ..

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The ... in

Car life is made no easier by lack of money - so thanks A.S.N. for the help so far.

Delta Free School NEEDS WORKERS
 Anyone interested please apply to Pat
 43 Mount Pleasant Road,
 Southampton
 (Phone 559122 Ext. 2591)

Educational Community (15 Highbury Grove, London, N.5 359 1272)
 - is an organization that conducts regular self-help courses for
 people who work in the education and caring professions. The purpose of the courses
 is to help participants, however skilled, to become more valuable to those with whom
 they work, and at the same time to find deeper fulfilment in their own lives.

Forthcoming courses : Wed 7th - Fri. 9th April. Easter vac. £14 . 75
 Mon. 12 - Wed(244) April 12 - 14th " " " "

N.B. Timetable for weekend courses
 Fri 7.30 - 10.00p.m. Sat. 10a.m. - 9p.m. Sun. 10a.m. - 5p.m.
 Timetable for 3 - day courses - 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily.

Send deposit of £3 . 00 to Educational Community to secure a place.
 Groups are limited to 14 people. There are forthcoming courses for April 1976 at
 the Educational Community.

Item 63.

"In Bermondsey", a contribution to the A.S. Neill
Newsletter of September, 1976. p.1.

Footnotes:

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Introduction

The project is based on the idea that people who are being
helped are not passive recipients of help but active participants. In the past, many
have been treated as passive recipients of help, but now we are trying to help them
become active participants. In the past, many years of work in different areas have shown
that the social pattern of the community must be built up and built upon,
rather than trying to cure any other type of life; that only real change
can come through the interaction and support of each other, and not through
looking and waiting for help. It is not only the social pattern (the
structure) but also the quality of young teachers who, in an area of high child abuse, learn
the value and enjoyment of playing with their children, through observing and
joining in with other mothers in the nursery group; that many people who
do not have high social and academic failures at school, but do assert their
desire and ability to learn through informal groups, where education is joyful
and shared, rather than being an instrument of stigma; that talent is not the
prerogative of the educationally qualified, and that many can discover their
true abilities through a practical situation, which can then lead on to
qualifications, if the need arises; that an ability to use local resources is
an increasingly necessary attribute, particularly in an under-served area.

To these ends, we provide a variety of situations into which the community
fits as an exercise. We may, for instance, be a parent who becomes involved in
the "parent" group because his son is attending, and becomes a part of the
atmosphere there; but his own learning priority may be anything from how to
deal with a housing problem, to how to cope with the death of a close relative,
because of the network of relationships involved, his problem can be solved
immediately by his working on it with the person most appropriate to deal with
it at that time. A family, or individual, may be wholly supported for a while,
then, with increased confidence and experience, become more resilient, and take
on some of the care of others in the group.

The basis of our work is that we are neighbours, no more nor less a part of
the community than anyone else. Because of this we are able to tackle the
problems of the immediate area, and are not hampered by the rigidity of
professional distinctions, or the arbitrary routines and time limits of the
statutory services. For the same reasons, these services have got to know us,
and to call on us for information and help, and act as a link between the services
they offer and their clients. Our closest links are with the Social Services
(who, due to under-manning, are unable to deal with anything but emergencies),
the Education Welfare Service, the Welfare Clinics at Guy's Hospital, the School
of Dentistry and the Probation Service.

The project is never closed. No neighbour would shut the door to another
when a problem arises. Much of the work is indistinguishable from everyday life
to the outside observer; consisting of chatting in the street, the clinic, or
other people's homes. Indeed the whole project started in this way, when the
participants of it, then in full-time employment as everything from teachers to
nurses, but living in Brompton, met each other, and the families concerned,
decided to take measures to improve some features of the community.

Item 64.

North Kensington Community School Report,

1976. p.1.

Footnotes:

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The Area.

North Kensington is one of those colourful, lively but deprived patches of inner London where every type of social problem is conspicuous. Composed partly of decaying terraced houses awaiting redevelopment, and partly of high and low rise blocks of flats, there is little open space in the form of parks, playgrounds or gardens. The street is the main social centre and meeting place, especially, of course, for the children and teenagers. Although much of North Kensington is now in the process of being redeveloped, until recently the houses were privately owned and let out cheaply as bedsitters and small flats to the poor, the unsuccessful and various waves of immigrants. The population of North Kensington is at present made up of West Indians, Africans, Spanish, Portuguese, Pakistanis, Moroccans, Irish and English. Mostly families, and mostly at the lower end of the income scale. The cultural mixture and the high turnover of residents, have combined to make North Kensington a place where anyone can quickly be accepted as a "local", and be treated with a superficial and undifferentiating friendliness; but there is little underlying sense of community, and few people have any real roots or stable links with the area or with each other.

In this situation, the children form a community apart from the rest. Teenagers spend much of their time roaming the streets, in little groups, in search of adventure - which all too often, of course, brings them into conflict with the law. Sometimes these little groups contain really close, warm friendships, which are very important to the children; the other side of the coin, however, is the conflict a child can experience in breaking away from the delinquent way of life when he is so dependent on the friends whose main group activities are stealing, joyriding on mopeds, and other small delinquencies.

If I was sent by the government to report on the most important problems of my district I would see what was wrong and what had to be put right. Where I live, next door there was workmen decorating and they found seven rats in one day, and when they pulled down the wallpaper bugs went everywhere. In my street they leave their rubbish outside and it stinks so much that people walk on the other side of the road. All the houses are damp, we have got leaks from all our ceilings. The dustmen come and leave all the rubbish on the skips. So I would have a lot to tell the government.

By Rosie.

In the holidays I had a fight with three boys and they started to start on my brother. So we jumped them and we slated them. Then we went down the flats, hanging around for a couple of hours. Then we went home and we all had our dinner and watch the film.

By Tony.

All the houses are damp, we have got leaks from all our ceilings. The dustmen come and leave all the rubbish on the skips. So I would have a lot to tell the government.

By Rosie.

In the holidays I had a fight with three boys and they started to start on my brother. So we jumped them and we slated them. Then we went down the flats, hanging around for a couple of hours. Then we went home and we all had our dinner and watch the film.

Item 65.

North Kensington Community School Report, 1976.

pp.5-7.

Footnotes:

230, p.162

bowling or the cinema, and on Tuesdays everyone goes to the Harrow Club, a local youth club where the children can play table-tennis and snooker, and use the large gymnasium with its trampoline. On Wednesdays and Thursdays the children choose between different craft activities such as woodwork, pottery, leatherwork, cooking or anything else we can arrange. We also have occasional "music afternoons" when the children bring records, sing and dance, and regular end-of-term parties, to which families and friends are invited.

On Friday afternoons the children go home, and the staff use this time for administrative work, planning and discussion, visits to homes and schools and talks with social workers and visitors to the school.

Our School.

Our school has 10 pupils and 3 teachers but only 2 teachers are full-time. Our school is set up as a charity. All the children here like it and are learning more than they would in other schools because we can make our own timetable. We make candles and do other things like pottery in the afternoons, last term we went on holiday to a camping site and we had a great time. We hope to go again this year if we can get enough money. We organise our school much different than other schools because we work in the morning from 10 to 11, then we have a break until quarter past, then we work until 12 o'clock. Then we go for lunch until 1 o'clock and play games or do cooking and things like that and then we go home. I think this school is very nice.

By Rosie.

Academic Work.

Of the 10 children now at the school, 3 were almost completely illiterate when they first came, and 5 others have needed a lot of help with basic reading and writing. We find that once these children have settled into the school, and have overcome their shyness and fear of ridicule at not being able to read and write adequately, they can make very quick progress, especially in reading. We use mainly a phonic method of teaching, so that the child can immediately start making some kind of sense of the written words around him; with frequent phonic and spelling practice, and various word games, the hardly literate child can soon begin reading our easiest books, which always gives a boost to the confidence. We now have quite a variety of easy remedial readers, but finding suitable material which is interesting, varied, and simple enough but not too childish, is an ever-present problem.

All the children, even those who are perfectly able, technically, to read and write adequately, begin at the school disliking doing any original writing, and find it very difficult for quite a while. The reason for this seems to be their general lack of self-confidence, which makes it difficult for them to commit themselves to anything so final as the written word. We are now able to use a tape-recorder occasionally, and we hope that recording their speech could be a useful intermediate stage between oral conversation and actual original

ever-present problem.

All the children, even those who are perfectly able, technically, to read and write adequately, begin at the school disliking doing any original writing, and find it very difficult for quite a while. The reason for this seems to be their general lack of self-confidence, which makes it difficult for them to commit

writing. When a child arrives at the school unable or reluctant to write, we use any means we can to get writing started - puzzles, questions, word games, dictations, letters-and for a long while we concentrate on helping the child to enjoy writing, without worrying about neatness, spelling or punctuation. As writing becomes easier, they become able to write more extended stories and accounts of things they have done, books they have read and films they have seen, and thus move gradually into project work and more organised subject work. Maths is less of a problem for the children than reading and writing, although many of them are as behind in maths as in literacy, and all of them are confused in some areas. For those who need to start from the beginning, we have made a set of short, graded work-cards which cover addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. At the same time, we work on individual confusions, over number values, number sequence, etc., and on simple measurement and shape recognition. We are in the process of acquiring and making various kinds of maths. equipment, which we are finding increasingly necessary as the children progress to more complicated and abstract number concepts. Our main difficulty, in teaching elementary maths, is the unwillingness of any of the children to use maths. textbooks, both because they are intimidated by them, and because they find reading the instructions difficult. The work cards have the advantages of having a minimum of written instructions, and showing conspicuous progress as they move through the different cards.

Many of the children are also highly confused over very basic geography, history and science. We try, first, to correct basic misunderstandings and give them an elementary framework of knowledge of the map of the world, the structure of the solar system, historical evolution and the structure of matter, rather than start immediately on a long organised course in these subjects, which the children are just not ready for, we try at the same time to stimulate their interest in these areas by frequent visits to museums, exhibitions etc.; the visits are also valuable as a starting point for project work (which may, at first, be no more than a drawing, and an account of a visit). We are also hampered in these subjects by the lack of interesting, not too childish remedial material available.

When reading and writing cease to be such a problem, and they have a reasonable mental framework of the world around them, project work becomes the next stage. The children usually chose topics for projects, and these have included animals, early history, families and other ways of living, weapons of war, crime and car mechanics. One of the most successful, and about the only group project so far, has been the girls' community studies project, in which they interviewed local people and are preparing articles from the interviews on housing, youth projects and other local issues. They are also planning to organise a school newspaper, with stories, poems, recipes, jokes, etc., written by the children. At this stage, it also becomes possible to start teaching subjects such as history, geography and social studies in a more organised way, particularly

early history, families and other ways of living, weapons of war, crime and car mechanics. One of the most successful, and about the only group project so far, has been the girls' community studies project, in which they interview local people and are preparing articles from the interviews on housing, youth projects and other local issues. They are also planning to organise a school newspaper, with stories, poems, recipes, jokes, etc., written by the

to the more academically-inclined children. In maths, it eventually becomes possible to start the children on a CSE text book, and in English they work on more ordinary English exercises, comprehension work, poetry and essay writing and so on.

We also anticipate a stage which none of the children have yet reached, for those who were not far behind academically when they started with us, and those who are not successfully reintegrated into normal schools by their final school year. Project work should obviously be continued, but it will probably also be possible for some children to prepare for CSE's. For those for whom this would not be a feasible prospect, we would spend a lot of time in their final year looking into job possibilities, making visits to factories and workshops, and generally preparing them for the work situation.

A gust of wind came around the door
it made a misty circle on the floor.
I stood there in amazement
and thought what it might be.
It wrapped around me like a glove
I struggled to get free.
It wound itself up to my face
I thought that I would die.
It started squeezing harder so
I let out a big cry.
At last it slid on to the floor
and started floating out the door.
I was so scared I had to scream.
Surprised I was that it was only a dream.

By Rosie.

I am just a little black boy, nobody wants me.
I don't like the white boys - they make fun of me.
I wish I was back where I belong.
Back to Jamaica where I live.
No more white man. Just all black man.
No names to call me. Just my colour
Under the bright yellow sun.
Picking coconuts just for me.

By Rita.

My Teacher..

My teacher's name is Marie,
She is very nice you see
She's the best I've ever known
And I don't think I'm alone.
She learns me lots of stuff,

By Rita.

My teacher.

My teacher's name is Marie,
She is very nice you see

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North Kensington Community School report, 1976.

p.10.

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All the children we have accepted have been keen to come to the school; we do not accept children who do not want to come, or whose parents or social worker do not want them to come.

11 out of the 18 children have been in trouble with the police; some already had a string of previous court appearances by the age of 13 or 14. All the court appearances have been for the everyday delinquencies of inner-city children - stealing, moped-riding, break-ins, and so on. Most also come from abnormal or difficult home situations. Only 7 of the 18 children we have worked with lived at home with both parents. 7 others lived with one parent, one had been moved about between each parent, 2 lived with grandparents, and one had never known her parents. One child was also taken into care while at the school.

Whatever their circumstances, almost all the children have had to cope with obvious stress at home - often through nobody's fault, least of all their parents' - and as a result, their first main need is an opportunity to relax at school. This often appears as apathy or difficult behaviour, but it always changes eventually into a more active and constructive participation in the school activities.

When children start at the school, they almost all have in common with each other a poor opinion of themselves, a general feeling of demoralisation and distrust of others, especially adults in 'authority' positions, and a blank feeling about their future, or at most, pessimism about it. This is not surprising, in view of their long-continued failure in most or all areas of school life, both academic and social. This failure often started, as we find from their previous school reports, in their very first year at primary school. Therefore, our main tasks are to give them as tangible a sense of achievement as we can, as soon as possible, in their academic work; and to help them in all ways we can to relate, preferably positively, to at least a few of the children and one of the teachers at the school. This means we sometimes need to give new children work that is too easy for their real capabilities, at first, so that they have a chance to experience success even before they are sufficiently relaxed with us to concentrate properly, or to try very hard.

It also means that a lot of patience, tact and care is needed by the teachers as they try to find ways of establishing a clear, honest and positive relationship with new children. This is often discouraging at first, as after a short 'honeymoon' period, it often happens that all our efforts appear to be rejected by the child, or worse, seem merely to aggravate the irritation or depressed apathy that is often apparent at this stage. However, it always happens, often quite suddenly, that this period passes and the child begins to make friends with us and, more importantly, with the other children too. As this happens we find we sometimes have to be more than usually accessible to the child, who may seek us out at home in the evenings or holidays for a while, and who often needs continual reassurance as to our and the other children's liking and regard for him. Eventually, usually after a term or two terms, the child is able to relax in the school group, and we find that, with few exceptions, little academic progress is made until the child reaches this point, and a situation

of apathy and depression is often apparent at this stage. However, it always happens, often quite suddenly, that this period passes and the child begins to make friends with us and, more importantly, with the other children too. As this happens we find we sometimes have to be more than usually accessible to the child, who may seek us out at home in the evenings or holidays for a while, and who often

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North Kensington Community School report, 1976.

p.12.

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new car and he did not want to know the little girl. So the little girl run away after a few days because she was being unnoticed by her mum and dad, because they was always playing with him. So she run away and they could not find her nowhere. She did not run far, she was in her camp in the garden but no-one knew about it. They was looking everywhere for her, they was getting worried about her. By now she was getting hungry so she went inside to get something to eat. She got caught by her mum so she told her mum why she did it so her mum and dad never did that again.

By Diane.

Going to Court.

When you go to court you have to sit on a bench and they call your name and you go in and they say "Court Stand", and 'Parents sit'. Now "Tony stands up. 'You are charged with possession of a Vesper motor-bike. Did you steal it?' 'No.' 'You were in possession of a Vesper Bike.' So then a woman is talking to you and she says, 'Have you learnt your lesson?' 'Yes.' 'How much pocket money do you get?' '£1.00 a week.' 'You are fined £10.00, how long would you like to pay it, 2 months? All right I'll give you 10 weeks and I do not want to see you in this court any more, right?' 'Yes sir'. 'O.K., you may go.' We go out the door and sign a slip for £10.00 fine. And we go out of the court and home.

By Tony.

Last night we went in a building site. We went in the hut and we went on the roof of the hut. Then we saw a security guard. He said 'Get out'. So we got off the roof. The man called to his dog, 'Kill the boys.' The dog run and John kick the dog.

By Eddie.

Evaluation.

Our overall aim for the children at the school is that those who would benefit from it should be able eventually to return to a normal school situation, This is not feasible in every case; some have too little time left before they reach the school-leaving age, and some have to cope with such continuous stress that they continue to need the school, and any attempt at reintegration would obviously fail and leave them worse off than before. The children start at the school refusing even to consider the possibility of their eventual return to a normal school; they have to change and develop considerably before they can view ordinary schools in a more positive way.

To a considerable extent with some of the children, and to some extent with all of them, there are pressures in their lives which neither we nor anyone else can do anything about. Instead of working on the causes of stress, we have rather to help the children to become strong enough and self-reliant enough to cope with

Last night
roof of
got off
John kick
Evaluation
one over
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is not
the school
they continue

and
up
you
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rt and
in the
o we
run an
benefit
This
they reach
see that
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obviously fail and leave them worse off than before. The children start at the school refusing even to consider the possibility of their eventual return to a normal school; they have to change and develop considerably before they can view ordinary schools in a more positive way.

To a considerable extent with some of the children, and to some extent with all

Item 68.

Richmond, K. "The Free Schools of Denmark",
Scottish Educational Journal, August 25, 1972.
pp.600-602

Footnotes:
234, p.166

THE FREE SCHOOLS OF DENMARK

IN the history of educational thought, the name of N F S Grundtvig is as illustrious as that of Soren Kierkegaard is in existentialist philosophy. Poet, priest, scientist and cultural revivalist, Grundtvig is chiefly remembered as the *fonns et origo* of the Folk High School movement which has spread far beyond his homeland and which indirectly helped to inspire and influence the planning of the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges. As the instigator of a protest movement on behalf of "free" schools, he is rather less well known.

Grundtvig hated the arid formalism of the traditional secondary (Latin) schools of his time, which he castigated as "schools for death" and "houses of correction". Like Rousseau, he affirmed the need for a developmental approach and regarded the practice of "stretching" the young learner's intellect as premature and damaging. He was bitterly opposed to compulsion in any shape or form, not least to compulsory denominational religious instruction. As Rousseau found a worthy disciple in Pestalozzi, so Grundtvig found his in Kristen Kold, who founded the first Free School (*Frikole*) in 1852.

For administrative purposes, the term "*Frikole*" covers a wide variety of private schools in Denmark. According to the official publication, "Schools and Education in Denmark" (*Det Danske Selskab* 1964), there are more than 270 of them, but it appears that the numbers are actually declining, for the latest information from the Ministry of Education indicates that only 162 were recognised for state and municipal subsidy in 1969-70.

In 1964, it was estimated that they accounted for some seven per cent of the total school-age population, whereas at present they account for slightly less than five per cent—30,773 pupils against 558,179 enrolled in publicly maintained schools.

Most of them are in rural or suburban areas. By no means all of them are of the Grundtvig-Kold type and since the 1930s a new kind of "protest" school, usually referred to as the Little School (*Lilleskole*), has shown signs of becoming increasingly popular. For all practical purposes, the names Free School and Little School are interchangeable. Broadly speaking, the reasons for wanting to opt out of the state-controlled system are much the same in Denmark as they are in other countries, but, having said that, any resemblance between these Free

Few books have caused such a stir as Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. *School is Dead* is the title of Everett Reimer's polemic; *Schools are bad places for kids*, declares John Holt, another influential American critic. With the deschoolers in full cry, recent months have seen the emergence of breakaway movements like the "free school" and the so-called "school without walls". At the same time, public opinion in Britain appears to be well satisfied with the education system, though increasingly uneasy about the apathy, unrest and unruliness displayed by many teenagers in and outside the classroom. What is happening to the school as an institution?

In a series of three articles KENNETH RICHMOND, of the Department of Education, Glasgow University, considers some of the implications of current developments at home and abroad. Taking as his examples the Little Schools of Denmark, the Scotland Road Free School, Liverpool, and the Parkway Program, Philadelphia, he outlines a plan for an alternative approach to secondary schooling which he considers may be timely in view of the raising of the school leaving age.

and Little Schools and the independent sector in Britain may be thought to end. Their ethos is entirely different. Some inkling of the difference may be gathered from a poem which appeared in the August 1966 issue of "*Den Frie Laerer-Skole*":

Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of
life's longing for itself.
They come through but not from you.
And though they are with you, yet
they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not
your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not
their souls.
For their souls dwell in the house of
tomorrow, which you cannot visit.
Not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries
with yesterday.

Although education is compulsory in Denmark, parents are not obliged to send their children to a publicly maintained school, or to any sort of school for that matter. Under Section 76 of the Constitution they may opt for home tuition provided that the standard and type of instruction is "comparable" with that which is normally required in the state system. In that event, all they need to do is to notify the local School Board (in Copenhagen, the School Directorate), stating the names and ages of the children concerned, the address at which they are to be found, and who is to be responsible for teaching them.

Parents whose qualifications and experience are deemed to be adequate may even be exempted from inspection and supervision by the authorities. As might be expected, however, very few avail themselves of this constitutional right and only one out of every 3,000 Danish children receives his education at home. On the other hand, the right which enables common-interest groups of parents to organise and manage their own schools and to have them recognised for grant-aid purposes is widely exercised.

Supervision

Legally, Free Schools are defined as "private schools which give instruction to their pupils throughout the whole period of compulsory education and which provide instruction comparable with that which is normally required in the *Falkecole*". Apart from this, there are no pre-conditions for establishing them: beyond notifying the authorities of their existence, no prior permission or official approval is necessary.

If it wishes, a Free School may place itself under the supervision of the local authorities, but if it is owned and controlled by a board of managers or has an influential parents' committee —

...schools for death
... Like Rousseau
... need for a develop
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... es, Free School and Little School
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... reasons for wanting to opt out of
... state-controlled system are much
... ame in Denmark as they are in
... r countries, but, having said that,
... resemblance between these Free

... school leaving age.
... and Little Schools and the independent
... sector in Britain may be thought to
... end. Their ethos is entirely different.
... Some inkling of the difference may be
... gathered from a poem which appeared
... in the August 1966 issue of "*Den Frie
... Laerer-Skole*":

... are no pre-conditions for establishing
... them: beyond notifying the authorities
... of their existence, no prior permission
... or official approval is necessary.
... If it wishes, a Free School may place
... itself under the supervision of the local
... authorities, but if it is owned and con
... trolled by a board of managers or has
... an influential parents' committee --

influential in the sense that the committee is representative and has an effective say in the school's affairs — it is entitled to nominate its own local supervisor.

In any case, supervision is only concerned to ensure that reasonable standards of attainment in the three Rs are maintained, that attendance is regular, and that the accommodation is hygienic. No requirements are laid down regarding the number of days or weeks in the year in which the school is to be kept open, the methods used, or the scope and content of the curriculum. Normally, a Free School does not prepare its pupils for any state-controlled examination.

Provided that these minimal conditions are satisfied, a Free School is eligible to receive state aid in the form of an 85 per cent subsidy for the following expenditures: (1) teachers' salaries, (2) upkeep of premises, (3) heating, lighting, power supply and cleaning, (4) taxation and insurance, (5) rent of premises, playground and open-air areas, (6) interest on loan mortgages on school property and (7) other incidental expenses. In addition, it receives a 50 per cent *per capita* grant for its pupils.

Before it can be recognised, the school must have enrolled 15 pupils for the past three years, but if it has been in receipt of state subsidies for a period of several years this number may be reduced to as low as 10! Not for nothing are they called Little Schools.

Some Free Schools seek to perpetuate the Grundtvig-Kold tradition. Others cater for sectarian interests — Roman Catholic, Jewish, Seventh Day Adventist and ecumenical — or, as in South Jutland, for German-speaking minorities. There are also private *Real-skoler*, which prepare pupils for university entrance and Free Youth Continuation Schools, mainly residential, for school-leavers between the ages of 14 and 18, but in general it may be said that the Free and Little Schools with which we are here concerned cover the primary and middle school stages and that their outlook is markedly progressive.

While the law does not require any particular religious or political affiliation, it seems that in the nature of things the Free/Little School must have its own ideological *raison d'être* and that in most cases this reflects a genuine concern for the quality of education. Invariably, the criticism that they pander to upper middle-class sectional interests is stoutly resisted by the claim that they represent groups of parents who care intensely about the upbringing of their children and

A GENUINE CONCERN FOR THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

who are entitled to think that they can establish schools which are superior in many respects to those provided for them by the authorities.

A more humane atmosphere, closer links between school and home, greater involvement on the part of parents, mutual give and take between parents and teachers, a more informal extended family type of organisation, more opportunities for old and young to engage in shared experience — these are some of the reasons adduced to justify their existence.

Other arguments urged in their favour are that these schools pay more attention to creative, aesthetic and group activities, that the emphasis on the acquisition of cognitive skills is relaxed, and that the spirit of competition is replaced by healthy co-operation. In the judgment of Dr J Munch-Peterson, deputy head of the International Relations Division of the Danish Ministry of Education, "Advanced methods of teaching are tried out, and most teachers interested in and engaged in teaching in the Little Schools are young teachers who also try out new forms of personal and close association with their pupils, pupil participation in laying down disciplinary regulations, and in types of educational activities to be taken up. Most of the new schools of this type are situated in new suburban areas inhabited by young parents."

Fairly informal

An American observer with no axe to grind notes that "the educational milieu tends to be fairly permissive and informal, with a heavy emphasis on creativity in the arts and a stress on the development of co-operation and humanitarianism. These schools are based on the principles that pupils must be allowed a great deal of democratic freedom, that the students ought to play as active a rôle in the educational process and the running of the school as the teacher, that creativity be emphasised, and that parents play an active part in the daily workings of the school".²

Some idea of the philosophy underlying the Little School movement and

of how it translates itself into everyday practice may be ascertained from an interview with Rasmus Hansen, headmaster of *Gladstøkke Lilleskole*:

Q—Is it not undemocratic that privileged parents' children should have their own schools and enjoy special privileges instead of mixing with other children?

RH—That's a question which has worried us for many years, but I don't think that it should cause us too much concern.

Q—How big ought a Little School to be?

RH—Here in Gladstøkke we believe the limit to be around 100. As teachers, it is vital to have a democratic foundation for our work, to show that we can talk about our problems freely, and co-operate with other people, paying due regard to different points of view.

Q—Isn't it true that the children you have here are from upper-class backgrounds?

RH—Our children belong mainly to the middle classes. We have none with very high incomes, but on the other hand there are none from the lower income groups.

Q—What is the cost of sending a child to your school?

RH—113 kr per month for the first child; 81 kr for the second and 54 kr for the third. (Roughly £8.45 and £3 respectively.)

Q—Would you like to say something more about the parents?

RH—Yes, in particular as regards their co-operation with the school. Parents come here very frequently. We hold joint meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest and to make plans. We hold classes in which parents work alongside their children. Parents are active in committees, in publishing the school newspaper, in taking children on excursions, etc. They join in camps, nature trails, Christmas parties, that sort of thing. Sometimes they serve as teachers, occasionally they may even take over for a whole day while the staff goes off to discuss their work in peace and quiet.

Q—Anything else?

RH We think it most important that parents and teachers together should set an example. This is essential if we are to preserve a democratic outlook. In other words, we must be able to talk to each other, work together, resolve our problems between ourselves and show that we respect

in peace and quiet.

Q—Anything else?

RH We think it most important that parents and teachers together should set an example. This is essential if we are to preserve a democratic outlook. In other words, we must be able to talk to each other, work together, resolve our problems between our-

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and understand other people's needs.

Q—What about the curriculum?

RH—The children learn Danish by writing stories and poetry, by telling stories, by acting plays and running their own newspaper. They learn to write by writing. In this way we aim to make reading, writing and other subjects genuinely creative. To create entirely on one's own not only gives pleasure but provides a means of contact with others.

Q—Do your children's parents all share the same outlook on life?

RH—As regards religion and politics, no, but they have all near enough the same attitude towards the upbringing of children. Among other things, they believe that a secure and harmonious development offers the child the best chance of discovering himself as a person in later life.

The well-to-do

Further comment would be impertinent: any evaluation of the effectiveness, desirability and quality of the education provided in these Little Schools is better left to the Danes. Even in a small agricultural country their contribution to the national life may be accounted relatively insignificant. Fairly clearly, they are more popular among professional, managerial and well-to-do parents than they are among those of working-class origins who do not care to avail themselves of their constitutional rights or are prevented from doing so for reasons which are the same the world over.

For the comparative educationist, however, the Danish arrangements for facilitating the ownership and control of schools are not without interest. Since 1870, both the central and local authorities in Britain have shown themselves to be extremely reluctant to grant recognition, let alone subsidise, private-venture establishments: indeed, the effect of national policy has consistently discouraged them, stressing parents' duties at the expense of parents' rights.

Increasingly, these "duties" have come to be interpreted as an obligation to send children to state-provided schools, while "rights" have been whittled down to a Hobson's choice against which there is little or no appeal. As schools have grown bigger, and as the costs of building, equipping and maintaining them have escalated, any effective rights have been reserved, with few exceptions, for the wealthier classes.

As a result, the social distance between school and home, between parents and teachers, has steadily widened, and any possibility of free enterprise has been reduced almost to vanishing point. While recognising that administrative arrangements which meet with approval in one national system may not be applicable in another, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the British system is more concerned to place obstacles in the path of free enterprise than it is to go out of its way to remove them.

Certainly, it appears that it is a good deal easier to start a school of one's own in Denmark than it is in this country, if only because the financial assistance offered is vastly more generous. As a model, the Free/Little School may not be for export: all the same, as a democratic and humane alternative to state-provided schooling, its attractions and its possibilities are not to be denied.

REFERENCES:

- 1 J Munch-Peterson, in lit.
- 2 Estelle Fuchs, "The Free School of Denmark", *Saturday Review*, August 1969.
- 3 Den lille skole—en produktiv skole, *Den Frie Laere-Skole*, August 1966.

STUDY PROBLEMS IN REMOTE AREAS

A RESEARCH assistant to investigate the problems and progress of Open University students living in remote areas is to be appointed. The successful candidate, who will be based in the university's Edinburgh office, will be the first full-time research worker in a regional office and the project will centre on remote students within the Scottish region.

Scotland, which has almost 3,000 Open University students, has about 300 in remote areas with varying degrees of disadvantages in study facilities. Many cannot receive BBC 2, are unable to visit a study centre easily and lack regular tuition. They include a good cross-section of occupational groups and cover all five foundation courses, although the majority—like students over the rest of the country—opt for those in arts and social sciences.

Most of the region's remote students live in the north and west of Scotland. Some are in the Borders. About 12 students live in the Western Isles and the islands of Orkney and Shetland each have almost 20.

WIDE-RANGING CHANGES IN SYLLABUSES AND EXAMS

CHANGES to be made in and after 1974 in SCE Ordinary and Higher grade syllabuses in art, business studies and economics, and anatomy, physiology and health and in Sixth Year Studies syllabuses and examinations in modern languages have been announced by the SCE Examination Board. Changes are also to be made in 1975 in SCE (Ordinary grade) and Sixth Year Studies examinations in Latin and, in 1973, in CSYS examinations in physics.

The changes, which have been made following consultation with interested bodies on draft proposals last session (1971-72), are set out in circular letters which the Board has issued with revised syllabuses and specimen question papers to education authorities, schools and nominated interested bodies.

The circulars include résumés of the main points made in observations received on draft proposals for revision of SCE syllabuses and question papers in art, business studies and economics and CSYS French and German last session along with the replies of the Board's panels for these subjects.

The Board has also revived proposals shelved in 1970 to introduce CSYS examinations in Italian, Russian and Spanish, possibly in 1974, and has asked nominated interested bodies for comments on these proposals and the suitability of the revised CSYS examinations in French and German as models for these other languages. The Board has also asked for suggestions for prescribed topics and books in Italian, Russian and French. The observations and suggestions have to be submitted to the Board for December 22.

In the case of home economics, the Board has decided to issue extracts from simple food tables for use during the examination in Higher Home Economics (Food and Nutrition) and the Board has circularised two copies of these extracts for the information of homecraft teachers. The tables are of the kind referred to in the Board's booklet, "Home Economics: Ordinary and Higher Grades", issued in 1970.

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Item 69.

Dodd, Geoffrey. "Left-wingers follow in the footsteps
of the religious", Times Educational Supplement, Nov. 19,
1971, p.16.

Footnotes:
235, p.167

Denmark Left-wingers follow in footsteps of the religious

from Geoffrey Dodd

In modern Danish usage, a small school is not just a school of limited size, but rather one of the growing number of free schools founded by parents who are dissatisfied with the methods and objectives of public schools.

In this sense they are a new development of a Danish tradition which has existed for more than a century. Since the 1850s, when a general reform created the foundation for the Danish educational system, legislation has carefully stated that children must have schooling, but has left the way open for tuition by parents, or in private schools.

Denmark's first free school was started by Kristen Kold who also realized the educational ideas of the more famous Ni S Grundtvig in the Folk High School movement. Kold's school was intended to realize similar objectives, and it started a movement that is still powerful. Other free schools have been founded by the Evangelical wing of the Danish Lutheran Church, the Jewish community, and the Roman Catholic Church.

The first small school in the modern sense was set up in 1949 in the Copenhagen suburb of Gladsaxe. It was new in several ways. It was not particularly religious and it was not in a rural setting. It was a protest by parents against what they felt to be the poor standard of general education in Danish public schools.

These parents wanted to apply

modern educational principles, learnt mainly from literature published in other countries, in teaching their own children but found that the state school system did not give them much influence on school affairs. Most of the original group were involved in educational work in some way, and possibly their awareness of what education could be gave them more confidence than a group of average parents would have. Legislation originally drafted mainly to meet the needs of the Grundtvig Kold schools provided them with an excellent instrument.

This legislation allows public subsidies amounting to 85 per cent of the cost of operating a school (wages, maintenance of buildings, heating, light, cleaning, water, taxes, insurance and fees, rentals, interest on loans in school property and other expenses).

Loans can be obtained for up to 50 per cent of erection costs of approved projects, and while one-sixth of the construction cost must be found by the school, this can be in the form of a bank loan, so that parents do not face an impossible task in finding the necessary starting funds.

These generous financial conditions are accompanied by similarly generous supervision. Parents appoint a supervisor who is expected to see that the education is of a standard comparable to that set for public schools. The free schools can also send their pupils to special classes at another free school, or even to the local municipal school,

which then provides the required training and the assistance of school psychologists free of charge.

Parents are making increased use of these conditions. For a decade Stengard School in Gladsaxe was unique, but in the last 10 years 26 other small schools have been started, most of them in Copenhagen suburbs, and more are on the way. But they remain a relatively small group within the total of about 250 free schools now roving subsidies.

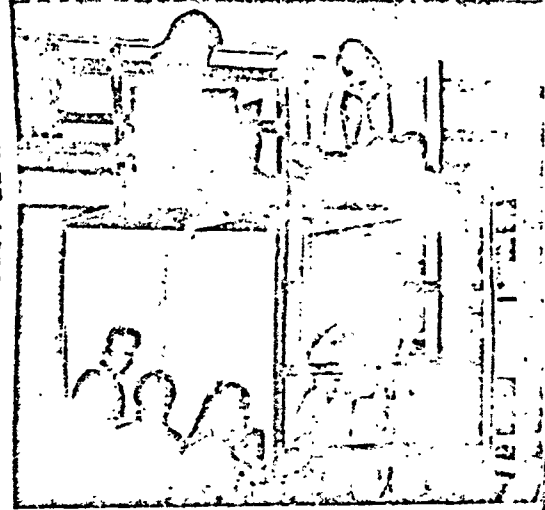
Disenchantment with the municipal school system is the main motive and the objections raised are both educational and ideological. Parents want to see modern educational principles used, they want to see the creative talents of their children stimulated and not choked by the system, to see them become more eager, free and not repressed by public school discipline.

These arguments obviously have an appeal, and many of the schools have waiting lists. Yet in almost every case the small schools are deliberately kept small. Few have more than 100 pupils and most have about 80. The Free Schools Act requires a minimum of 20 pupils for a subsidized free school, and 10 pupils a class. Fees paid by the parents range from £8 to £12 a month.

As yet no secondary schools modelled on this pattern have been formed, although several groups are trying to make a start, and the small schools generally terminate in the seventh class.

Their atmosphere is quite different from that of municipal schools. Discipline is at a minimum, and based on obvious common sense. Pupils use the intimate "du" rather than the more formal "de", and the christian names of their teachers

COPENHAGEN



Classroom scenes at Stengard school (above and below).

because the allotted 50 minute period is over.

Mr Kaj Himmelstrup, of Stengard School, says his pupils suffer severely for about six months before they adapt to the changed system of a municipal school. After this they do not seem to lag in any way.

It is not clear whether a larger than average proportion of the small school children go to university because of their kind of education since the parents are not at all a representative section of the population.

Almost by definition, the small schools are to the left of the Danish political centre, and the viewpoints of the teachers cover a spectrum ranging from somewhere in the Social Democratic Party to Maoist communism. The views of parents undoubtedly move more to the right.

While Stengard School has achieved a degree of stability and accepts that its pupils may not make

protracted, often highly emotional and bitter discussions and in fighting that the system breeds.

There is a similarity here between the small schools and the many collectives that have sprung up in Denmark in recent years. The one often feeds the other, and they have an almost exactly parallel course of development.

During the pioneer period when the main demand of parents or members is an ability to use a spade, hammer or saw, work cheerfully together. When the active work is completed and the school or collective framework ready for use, the course must be for the future. This invariably proves more difficult, and can shatter the parent group completely.

If this phase can be overcome, the project can usually rely on relatively smooth sailing for a period of years. In fact, no small school started in the past decade has been forced to close (many collectives have).

Trouble can arise for years in



generous supervision. Parents appoint a supervisor who is expected to see that the education is of a standard comparable to that set for public schools. The free schools can also send their pupils to special classes at another free school, or even to the local municipal school,

which then provides the required training and the assistance of school psychologists free of charge. Parents are making increased use of these conditions. For a decade Stengard School in Gladsaxe was unique, but in the last 10 years 26 other small schools have been started, most of them in Copenhagen suburbs, and more are on the way. But they remain a relatively small group within the total of about 250 free schools now roving subsidies.

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Write for brochure and any further information.

In 1969 the YHA ran a successful 'Project Initiative' competition, to encourage small groups of pupils (generally school-leavers) to explore the countryside on their own. In 1972 the competition will be repeated, this time with additional prizes for the schools sponsoring the winners. The competition involves planning an expedition with an objective, spending not less than three nights at youth hostels and writing a report. Full details are given in a free leaflet available from

Prizes FOR Projects

YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION
(ENGLAND & WALES)
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Trevelyan House, St. Albans, Herts.

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1970.
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Economic Service by The Times, it is
now available, price 75p (+10p postage
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Times Newspapers Ltd., Printing House
Square, London EC4P 4DE.

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first class Austrian-trained instructors);
guided hill walking; exciting entertain-
ment. Fully inclusive terms £14-18 weekly
or £2-12.50 daily. Equipment hire and
transport also available.

from that of municipal schools. Discipline is at a minimum, and based on obvious common sense. Pupils use the intimate "du" rather than the more formal "de", and the christian names of their teachers. Classes look disorganized, even messy, and are clearly geared to the needs of children rather than the ideals of adults.

What can a child do after seven years of what superficially would seem to be unlimited playing with clay, paper cutting and paint, but little formal classroom work? The teachers I spoke to admit that their pupils cannot reel off the list of Danish kings, with appropriate dates. They are generally not as good at maths, grammar or other more formal subjects as children in municipal schools. There are many gaps in their knowledge, but in return the material they have learned sits longer.

To balance this municipal teachers who receive them find that they are on the whole more able to work for themselves, to cooperate with others, and to think out their own solutions to problems. They are also more interested in their work, and sometimes cannot see any point in changing what they are doing to stoppage to another subject merely

to a less attractive subject. The views of parents undoubtedly move more to the right.

While Steengaard School has achieved a degree of stability and accepts that its pupils may not make a very good showing on changing to a municipal school, parents are warned when they approach another small school, at Humlebaek School, north of Copenhagen, that their children may not reach the standards of schools outside. "One of the main tasks of this school is to develop a democratic approach and social awareness in the pupil . . . an engaged but critical attitude to everything they meet . . ." parents are told in an introductory leaflet.

The Humlebaek School was founded in 1967 and has expanded steadily ever since. Parents here, as in the other small schools, are very deeply engaged in the day-to-day affairs of the school, and while this engagement is of the essence of the movement, it certainly puts a strain on the nerves and patience of teachers, so much so that they admit it would be completely intolerable if they were not in favour of the system.

In fact some teachers do return quickly to the municipal school system. Those that stay accept the

If this process is to be a smooth sailing for a period of years. In fact, no small school started the past decade has been forced close (many collectives have).

Trouble can develop again at later stage. Two years ago at Steengaard School, a bitter dispute flared up, and after six weeks during which parents argued until well into the small hours almost every night, two main groups emerged. One stayed in the school building, while the other broke away to form its own school to its own ideas. A sarcastic observer remarks later that the first group, after break, brought an innovation to the small school movement, it was that the children learn something.

Although the legislation governs free schools sets wages and conditions for teachers at the level of municipal schools, in fact they normally earn much less, for there is no extra payments for attend meetings with parents, nor the overtime payments that can double the wage of a municipal school teacher. Yet the teachers are satisfied with their work, greater freedom is considered fair compensation, and enthusiasm that they show is undoubtedly one of the great assets of the movement.



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ment. Fully inclusive terms £14-18 weekly
or £2-12.50 daily. Equipment hire and
transport also available.

Item 70.

Letter to the author from D. Grayson, Director,
Wolverhampton Education Department, November 3, 1976.

Footnotes:
237, p.168

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOLVERHAMPTON EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



EDUCATION OFFICES
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE WOLVERHAMPTON WV1 4DB
Telephone Wolverhampton 27811 extension
D. Grayson, B.A., Director of Education

Your reference

My reference

WEL/8/AHW/JMJ

3 November 1976

Dear Mr. Potter,

I have your letter of 26 October in which you ask about a Wolverhampton Free School.

There was an attempt to establish an Independent "Free" School, and it was hinted to the Authority that finance was available for this purpose. So far as my information goes, a school was never established because the number of pupils of compulsory school age never reached a total of five, a requirement under the Education Act. For about a term the "Teacher/Organiser" of the school had one pupil, who was not a truant but was a child who had presented problems leading to his suspension. The organisation ceased to exist after about a term and the boy concerned is now a pupil at a Secondary School.

There is thus no point in replying to the three questions you ask, but I offer you my comments on the questions as follows:-

1. No formal approach was made for finance, but hints were received that help in the provision of equipment would be appreciated!
2. The "Free School" would not have been adequate for it was located in a very small private house, built over 60 years ago. The standards would not have been acceptable to the Authority and I am quite certain that, if sufficient pupils had registered, the Department of Education and Science would not have granted it full recognition.
3. There were at least five Primary Schools within about half a mile, and they could not have been affected by the establishment of this "School".

Yours truly

Director of Education.

G. Potter Esq.,
Assistant Professor,
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University of Victoria,
P.O. Box 1700,
Victoria,
British Columbia,
Canada V8W 2Y2.

Director of Education.

G. Potter Esq.,
Assistant Professor,
Faculty of Education,
University of Victoria.

Item 71.

Questionnaire (completed), sent to Mrs. Gwen

Lambert of Huddersfield, Taylor Hill Centre, 1975.

Footnotes:

238, p.169

239, p.170

QUESTIONS

The first few questions are a bit statistical. I'm not going to write any big statistical thing, but answers here would help me to give an accurate view of free and community schools.

1. a. When did planning for the school begin?
- b. When did the school open?
- c. On the following dates how many kids and adults were involved with the school (ie working in it)?
(October 1st)

| People | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Kids under 5 yrs. | | | | | | 30 |
| Kids 5-12 | | | | | | 7 |
| Kids over 12 yrs. | | | | | | 9 |
| Adults working full-time in the school | | | | | | 1 |
| Adults working part-time in the school | | | | | | 7 |

- d. How many of the children who were at the school when it first started are still in the school now?

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Aged up to 5 yrs. | <input type="text"/> |
| Aged 5 - 12 yrs. | <input type="text"/> |
| Aged 12 - plus yrs. | <input type="text"/> |

- e. How many kids left the school for the following reasons during the past three years:

| Reason | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| to attend state school | | | |
| to go to another local free school | | | |
| to live elsewhere | | | |
| to work | | | |
| no reason given | | | |

- f. Of the ORIGINAL adults who started the school, how many are still with it? (no pun intended!)

| | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-------|----------------------|
| Men | <input type="text"/> | Women | <input type="text"/> |
|-----|----------------------|-------|----------------------|

2. Concerning yourself and the other people in this country who have started free schools, I require, if it is reasonable to do so, some information about your personal background and experiences. Collected, this may enable me to indicate more specifically than is normally possible, the kind of people who operate free schools and community schools. My own impression is that free schoolers both here and in North America tend to have had more schooling and to be more widely-travelled than are their counterparts in the state schools. Information such as this, when published in Australia and North America, had a considerable effect upon levels of public and official understanding of free schools.

So.....

a. About your home life; Was it.....(tick any that apply)

Happy Unhappy Wealthy poor
 Middle-class Urban Suburban Rural
 Deeply religious(if so, which one?) Religious
 Secular Conservative Labour
 Liberal Not concerned with politics
 Communist

If you grew up in a country other than Britain, which one?

b. About your own education:

Malaya

Was it dominated, in the Primary phase, by any religious group?(If so, which one). None No schooling until aged 7

Was it dominated YES or influenced by any particular religious group during the Secondary phase?

If so, which one(s)? R.C

Were you 'educated' in a Private school: YES

*Like the inverted commas
 so true! Trained would
 be even better, or
 regulated.*

State schools:
 & combination of both:
 Free schools:
 Public school:
 Church school? YES *Same. R.C. Boarding School from 7-17*

Were your primary school days happy or unhappy?

Was your secondary school experience happy mediocre very stimulating or unpleasant?

Did you attend a college? Yes No

Did you attend a university? Yes No

Do you hold a teachers certificate? Yes No

Do you have a bachelor's degree a Masters a Ph.D?

Do you have a special area of knowledge or study? If so, what is it?

c. Have you travelled in any of the following countries:

Britain Western Europe Russia Canada
 Eastern Europe North Africa Central Africa
 Eastern USA South Africa Western USA
 Scandinavia Australia China (None)

d. Have you visited alternative schools in any of the countries listed above? In Britain.

e. Have you read extensively about the alternative schools in any of the countries listed above? Yes - USA & Britain.

f. How old are you? Under 30 30-40 40-50
50-60 Over 60

g. Have you ever taught in a state school? Yes No
 Primary? Secondary? Infants?
 Large? Small? Open-plan?
 Traditional? College? University?

h. Was it your teaching experience which motivated you to become involved with free schools? Yes No

i. Are you a member or supporter of any political party? If so, which one? Labour supporter.

j. Was your motivation for becoming involved with free schools a reaction to political educational
 religious home
 experiences; or was it a natural extension of your childhood? partly.

k. In what ways, if any, have the writings of Paul Goodman influenced your thinking? _____

l. Of the people listed below, please indicate which have strongly influenced you.

| People | Strong influence | Read | Never heard of |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Gastonade | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Pestalozzi | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rifferty | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Kozol | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Leonard | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Montessori | | | |
| Ismaes | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Anna Freud | | | |
| Winnicott | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sylvia Klein | | | |
| Fromm | | | |
| Marouse | | | |
| Rousseau | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Dennison | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Illich | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Talor | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Neill | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Lister | | | |
| Duane | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| McLuhan | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

- i. What percentage of the kids' parents are antagonistic towards the school?
- j. What percentage of the kids come from homes which are.....
Catholic Protestant Immigrant
- k. How many of the children in the school are from your own family?
- l. What percentage of the children in the following age-groups could not read when they came to the school in September 1974 (or whenever the school opened)?
- 2 - 4 yrs 4 - 6 yrs 6 - 10 yrs 10 - 12 yrs
over 12 yrs.
- m. What percentage of the children listed above as unable to read, have learned to read -or are learning fast - since coming to the school?
- 2 - 4 yrs 4 - 6 yrs 6 - 10 yrs 10 - 12 yrs
over 12 yrs.
- n. Do you use a reading scheme, or specific method to help the kids learn to read? Yes No
If so, which one is it? _____
- o. Have you used and subsequently rejected any particular methods and/or reading schemes?
If so, which ones? _____
- p. If you don't have a reading scheme, and would like one, which would it be? _____
- q. Could you -or would you - when asked, prepare your kids for examinations such as CSE and GCE? Yes No

NOTE: With these questions about reading, I'm not trying to find out how you teach reading, but I've got an idea that a lot of children learn to read very well when they're in a situation that respects their natural ability to communicate. If I can indicate that the free-school approach, which usually considers literacy an integral part of total development, works well, this might provide an interesting alternative to the Bullock proposals.

4. a. **Finance:**
Please explain the sources of your financial support, in approximate percentages against the following list.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| LEA support | |
| Voluntary donations | £ 155 |
| Grant-making trusts | |
| Fees paid by parents | £ 32.60 |
| Fund-raising activities | £ 58 |
| Local council support | £ 250 |
| Personal savings and outside earnings | £ 10,000 |

- b. Do you rate your chances of survival as a school over the next two years as excellent good or poor?
- c. Have you ever been threatened with court action by the LEA?
Yes No
- d. What in your opinion is the attitude towards the school of the following agencies:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| LEA | Indifferent |
| Press | |
| Church | |
| Local state schools | |
| Local College of Education | |
| University | |
| Polytechnic | Interested. |
- e. To what extent are you in contact with other free schools?
Lifespan (Leeds) Southampton

In the USA, Canada and Australia, free schools are backed up by fairly large, well-organized agencies such as the American Summerhill Society, Communitas Exchange and the New Schools Exchange. Do you regard the development, on a nation-wide basis of similar organizations in Britain to be.....

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Undesirable | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unnecessary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Already sufficient | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Desirable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Essential? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- p. Have you had any direct contact with the Children's Rights Workshop?
their literature
- q. Have you had any direct contact with the A.S. Neill Trust?
Member
- h. Throughout history various political, religious and social alternatives have evolved. The ones which seem to have survived best have been (with the notable and overworked example of Summerhill) those which have compromised their ideals. An example of this would be Dartington Hall. Have you had to compromise in any ways in order to survive? If so, I would appreciate any observations you may have about this, because I think it is particularly significant in terms of establishing just what free schools have been able to achieve alone, and in what areas they have had to work within a hostile, or undesirable environment.

Due to a local petition with 40 signatures against my 'Private Bristol' I have had planning permission for my converted chapel to be used for only 30 pre school children. However during the holidays about sixteen kids over 6 years old have attacked themselves to the centre & I have only had it open one month. My chief compromise is in not mentioning freedom - but demonstrating it. Appeals to trusts for money are carefully worded to avoid Free School connotations.

- 1. Dr. Eric Midwinter, in a widely publicised article which encouraged educational innovators to stay within "the system", suggests that free schools are short-lived, and have had less effect than some commentators have indicated. Furthermore he wrote: "The right wing of independent education has had more impact than free schools." To me this reflects a symptom of a common academic malaise which renders the victim incapable of accepting anything unless it can be measured. If you would like to respond to this, I'll include your thoughts in the book.

Item 72.

Letter to the author from Mrs. Gwen Lambert, of
Taylor Hill Centre, Huddersfield, May 31, 1975.

Footnotes:

240, p.170

242, p.171

1 Garden St.
Lochwood.
Huddersfield -
HD1 3RD.

31st May '75.

Dear Geoff,

Your questionnaire was very difficult for me to answer & I may not have given you the right answers anyway. Having just got off the ground there is little of relevance & I feel as if I've only got a toe in the door of the movement, if you'll excuse the odd metaphor. My only credibility as far as you are concerned is that my faith in the freedom to be oneself has led me to put every penny I had saved a great deal of Tom's (unofficial, please) into carrying out one small area of my project. I am too old & realistic to expect to change society; my especial interest is in changing the vision & the reality for those who come under my influence. (Big headed!)

This month has been a very happy

experience for me - the centre has had a very good start in human terms.

Did you see Tuesday's Guardian (27th May) with Peter Lund's few words on 'A case of Neil & Pray?'?

Before moving out of this area of the world could you please return Robin Guttridge's literature to me, especially his formal stuff.

(C) Re the ending of the questionnaire - I attended a talk at Banbury Road (Teachers Centre: Hudd.) given by Dr. Eric Midwinter & while finding him witty & amusing I could not bring myself to approach & talk to him afterwards, feeling sure he was too enmeshed in orthodoxy, however enlightened. Your quote bears this out.

(J) Freedom in our centre (not school) means freedom to let the heart rule the head. I express myself better emotionally than vocally, my tears or smiles mean more than my words. Forgive me if I have not the erudition to use smooth & telling phrases, and give you nothing to quote in your book.

(R) Illich is ruled by his head; he is brilliant and quirky, but one suspects he is most at home with academics. I don't know enough about

I despatch to make a useful comment - I suspect I might go along with it if I knew more.

I hate answering questionnaires because my answers never fit the questions. Instead I always want to know why the question is asked & why it always has a bias. Really I do not fit into such forms & feel frustrated by their not asking me what I can answer.

e.g. Why do you associate with the 'Free School' movement?

a) Because it has more relevance to living. b) Because the state system is stultifying c) Because I love children.

I think my centre will have a flavour of its own, that it will have a unique influence locally, that its happy atmosphere will impress all who come in contact with it.

Bless you!

Gwen.

I may send you photos etc. at a later date if you give me your address in Canada.

Item 73.

Letter to the author from E. Ward, Headmaster, Mount
Pleasant Junior School, Huddersfield, September 28,
1976.

Footnotes:

241, p.171

KIRKLEES DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Telephone: Huddersfield 28035

Headmaster: E.B. Wood

Mount Pleasant County Junior School,
Mount Street,
Lockwood,
Huddersfield, HD1 3QP.

EM/ESC.

28th. September 1976.

Mr. G. Potter,
University of Victoria,
P.O. Box 1700,
Victoria,
British Columbia.
CANADA. V8X 2Y2

Dear Mr. Potter,

Thank you for your further enquiry dated September 20th about 'alternative' schools.

Mrs. Gwen Lambert currently runs a pre-school play group at Taylor Hill, which is why I did not connect her with your original request for information.

I now understand that Mrs. Lambert originally intended to run a "free" school but I have no information as to why there was a change of mind.

Obviously her present activity has no bearing on this school or the parents. Sorry I cannot be of further help.

Yours faithfully,



Headmaster.

Item 74.

The Monthly Bananza, Barrowfield Community School,
Glasgow, 1974.

Untitled paragraph by "Anne" - a pupil.

Footnotes:

257, p.185

259, p.190

My school's the best school in the world
the best was school in the world on the
that's wrong that it is the best school
because it has the best teachers
he says to the teacher or the
he says to God to give him a
to enter the gains on a Monday. H.H.H.H.H.H.H.H.H.H.

The real truth about our school is that it is good
and it is the same as any other school in a way
because it has almost as many subjects and we have
just as much work to do and even harder stuff, sometimes
harder than the work in an ordinary school, our school
is called Barrowfield Community School, our school is a
sort of a free school and able to understand.
The teachers and pupils understand each other and their
work and we get on better than we would at an ordinary
school. THE END

PEAR IN THE BOTTLE

A growing twig with a bud is put in the bottle.
The pear grows inside the bottle.

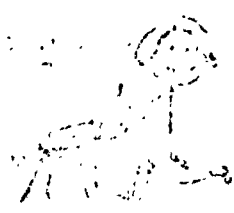
THE ANSWERS TO FOR THE QUESTION

- 1) Elvin Pressley
- 2) Every time
- 3) Antony Newton
- 4) The Archies
- 5) Three Degrees with
"When will I see you again"
- 6) Slide
- 7) Third November
- 8) Alan Osmond
- 9) Jim Lea
- 10) Edinburgh
- 11) Wolverhampton
- 12) Utha in America



There was a young man from Longall
who went to a fancy dress ball
he went just for fun
dressed up as a bun
and the dog ate him up in the hall.

Mary had a little pig
she couldn't stop it grunting
she took it up the garden path
and kicked it's little CUNT in.



Item 75.

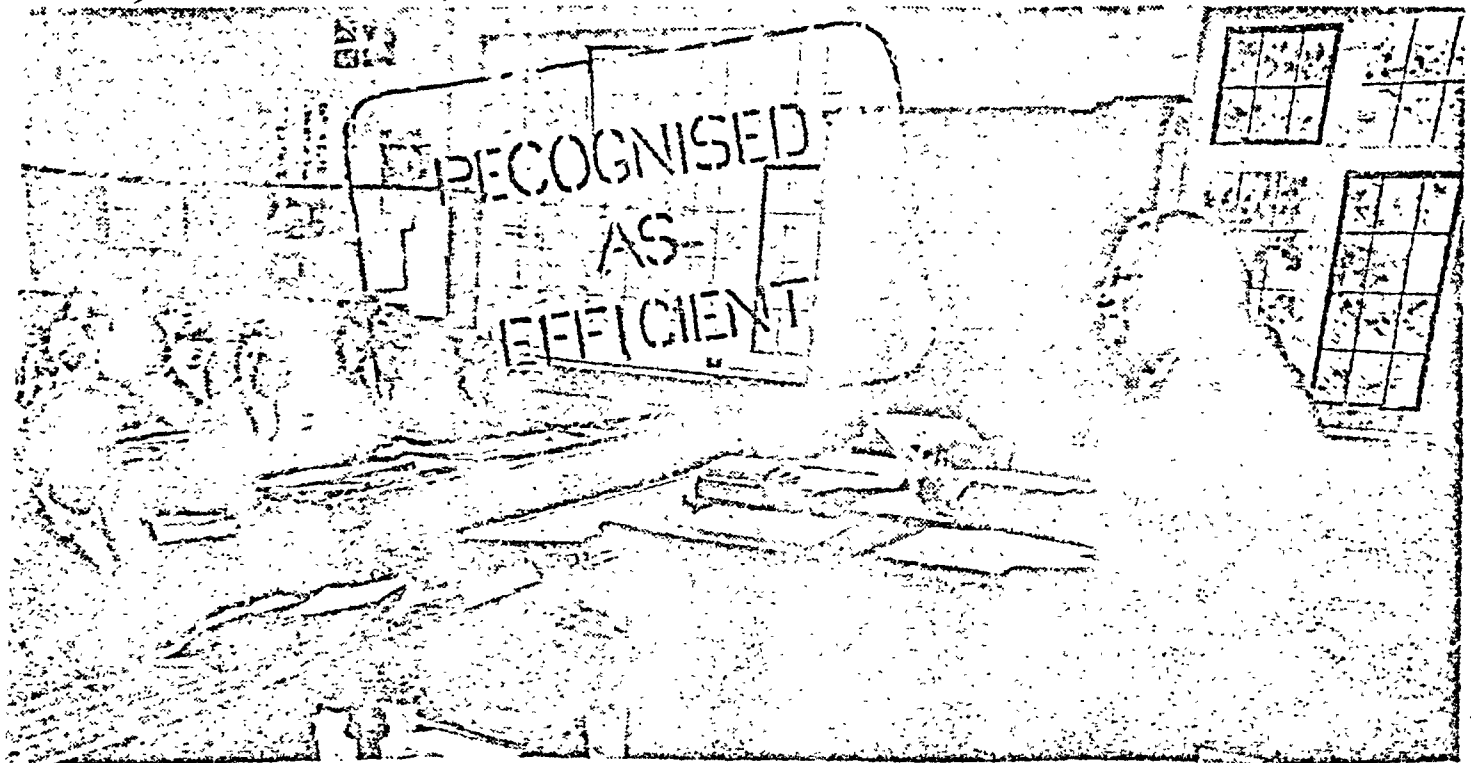
Rowan, P. "D.E.S. May End Private School Inspections",
Times Educational Supplement, January 7, 1977.

Footnotes:

Pt. 11, Ch.1

260, p.192

261, p.194



may end private school inspections

by Patricia Rowan

inspection of independent schools with its recognition as efficient is considered at the Education and

ins have yet been time, which is considered as an economy preliminary discussion place with the independent organizations.

ied with considerable tragedy"

J. Walesby, secretary of Independent Schools. The independent schools have long been the impractical recognition of the Department by the Depart-

ment, gives them both in this country and abroad. They wonder if the sheep are not seen to be sorted from the goats, how the goats are to be prevented from damaging the reputation of all the others.

Although the independent schools accept that the proposed cut is designed to save time and money for an already overburdened Inspectorate, there is little doubt that when Mrs Shirley Williams, the Education Secretary, comes to decide whether to cut out this chore, it will have political implications. Such a decision could hardly fail to commend itself to socialists.

The story began with an earlier round of cuts in projected public expenditure last year, when a reduction in the size of the Civil Service was called for. Along with other government departments, and well before the arrival of Mrs Wil-

liams, the DES asked all sections to put forward suggestions for savings. The response from the Inspectorate included the possibility that they could save staff by discontinuing the practice of inspecting independent schools. Since only a few DES staff are involved the main saving would be in HMIs, and even then it would only be the equivalent of several salaries since none of them does the work full-time.

The work is, though, time consuming. There are some 2,500 independent schools and only 400 HMIs to cover the maintained sector as well as the private sector. Now they have an important addition to their work load in the Great Debate and the monitoring of standards and curricula. And, anyway, the inspectors were already years behind in meeting their commitment to initial recognition of private schools and subsequent renewal.

But the DES recognized that the independent schools would need plenty of time to consider their position and decided to sound out opinion informally last September. The response of the Independent Schools Joint Committee was to ask for a meeting for an exchange of views, and this took place at the DES on November 30.

The DES were led by Mr Mark Hodges, the Registrar of Independent Schools, backed by two staff inspectors and a couple of officials. The schools team was led by Mr John Dorrell, secretary of the HMC and IMA, together with Mr J. Walesby of the ISJC, Mr J. H. Dodd of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools, Mr Patrick Nobes, head of Bedales, and Miss Margaret Hamilton, president of the Girls Schools Association.

DES to end checks on private schools?

continued from page 1

The ISJC representatives made five main points in favour of continued inspection and recognition. They were:

- A stimulus to good schools to be better, and to achieve and maintain standards;
- A guarantee to teachers joining the staff that it would be a good school;
- The vast experience of inspectors was useful to schools as well as to the DES;
- A protection to parents and children;

It was also one of the features of the United Nations covenant of human rights that independent schools should be permitted and that government should satisfy themselves that such schools met the standards laid down.

Apart from emphasizing their main point that the measure was designed to deal with problems of finance and manpower the DES position was that their obligations under the 1944 Education Act and the UN Charter would still be met by the initial registration of independent schools since there was no question of abandoning this statutory requirement.

Although the DES is technically correct, and the 1944 Education Act simply lays down minimum standards, the inspection which follows preliminary registration is a fairly negative operation which does little more than check on staffing and safety standards.

"It is nothing like as thorough as inspection for recognition", says Mr Dodd. "All that it means is that a school is suffered to exist, that it is not unworthy enough to be closed down."

Recognition is in fact a non-statutory practice which has grown up since the 1930s as a mark of special esteem for the independent sector, in which the selected entries are able to make use of the fact if they like.

If the Government decides that it can no longer afford to provide this service, it would be open to



The prep school ethos—but can standards be maintained?

the independent schools to operate their own inspection and recognition process in the same way as other professional bodies, perhaps staffed by retired heads and ex-inspectors.

"If this wretched thing comes off, we would have to think about doing it ourselves", said Mr Walesby. But the ISJC is reluctant to discuss it before the cut becomes a fait accompli, and would like it to be monitored by the DES. The Department is likely to say that it would do anything to help such a scheme—if it does not cost any money.

Finance apart, the independent schools' objection to such a proposal—as well as to another idea that the job might be transferred to the local inspectorate—is that there would then be no national comparability of standards across the private and maintained sectors.

Some independent machinery for inspection exists already and could be extended. Membership of the IAPS attaches to the headmaster rather than the school. Any new head appointed has to submit himself for approval and his name and qualifications are circulated to the entire association. If there are any queries, the IAPS council

inspects the school and can reject the application.

Official recognition remains essential for membership of IAPS, as for the Independent Schools Information Service, and is regarded as a useful entrance exam for their association with its 450 members and for the girls' prep schools association.

It is felt that public schools do not need it to the same extent, since there are fewer to inquire about and they can rest upon reputations acquired by other means.

The independent school organizations remain deeply worried about the long-term effect of such a change. "Recognition is an elementary but extremely important safeguard which demands certain standards of teachers and requires a school to prove it is doing a good job", said Mr Donald Lindsay, director of ISIS.

"One can only hope that it is the less reputable schools which go to the wall if the financial squeeze gets worse", said Mr Dodd.

No announcement is expected for a month or two, and the ISJC will probably wait until its next meeting at the end of February before deciding whether to ask for another discussion at the DES, or to make more official representations.

It will be a very difficult and complicated decision for Mrs Williams, and particularly hard to square with her concern to draw the definition of effective independent schools more tightly.

When she was last at the DES in 1968, Mrs Williams was keen to extend recognition, and would have liked all independent schools to be required to reach that standard. But it was an expensive idea, needing more inspectors, and was finally dropped by Mrs Thatcher when she took over as Education Secretary.

Although the saving from such a cut would be small, it is one of several small but sensitive areas in which cuts have to be decided.

The independent schools may, for example, have to be balanced against the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the projected staff cuts would mean the end of the regional service and have already caused considerable public outcry.

Item 76.

Truefit, Alison. How To Start A Free School,
White Lion Street Free School publication,
"Registration", pp.9-14.

Footnotes:

261, p.194

could prove, however, that they were separate set-ups, each could go ahead and have well equipped premises, and all the other things which an ordinary *full-time* "otherwise" project may have to avoid if it is not to be regarded as an independent school.

"Education"

There is no official guidance, either in the Act, or elsewhere as to what "education" means. If the DES had refused to register Summerhill on grounds that lessons were not compulsory Neill might have fought an interesting case on the question of whether what the children were doing when they were not at lessons constituted education. If free-schooling becomes a strong movement in this country, and the compulsory attendance at lessons bit is challenged on a big scale, it could be that such a test case will have to be fought, and the law more carefully formulated. This is not the only way in which a free school movement could conceivably lead to a change in the law. See the sections on "Otherwise for Parents".

However, some idea of what the DES, via the inspectors, regards as education can of course be gathered from the reports on schools that have been inspected, and the action taken, if any, by the DES as a result.

We know of only three recent reports on free schools in this country, and two are similar in many ways. (See also the next section on Registration). They are undoubtedly the best guide so far to the kinds of requirements free schools will have to meet.

Briefly, on "education", there is nothing in these reports to suggest that free schools are going to be subject to unreasonable pressure to pursue the kind of tight traditional curriculum which they, and many others, have rejected. The demands are for systematic practice and planning of basic skill learning, for a challenging programme of knowledge and skill acquisition beyond that, for continuity, assessment of individual needs and the encouragement of persistence, and recording of progress. It is hard to see how anyone could want to do less than that.

"Registration"

Section 70 of the Act requires all independent schools to be registered by the DES. There is an actual register, open to public inspection. Insurance companies, estate agents and equipment firms find it a useful mailing list . . .

We have been amazed to get unsolicited details of very expensive Belgravia properties which "may interest" us.

Assuming your school counts as an "institution", provisional registration is awarded automatically once you have sent in the application form for full registration, giving the proprietor's name, children's ages and sexes, and names and qualifications of staff. Strictly you ought to be provisionally registered from the moment you start to operate with five or more schoolage children — but "a few weeks' margin" would be given in practice by the DES, they say.

Registration proper is awarded by the DES only after the HMIs have visited the school and are satisfied that it meets certain requirements. The Act gives four

headings under which the inspectors must be satisfied:

1. "suitability" of premises;
2. "adequacy" of premises, "having regard" to the children's ages and sexes;
3. "efficiency and suitability" of the instruction having the same regard; and
4. "properness" of the staff.

These headings, or criteria, are, again, open to every conceivable interpretation. The act gives no further guidance on how independent schools are to be judged, and the DES says that no further written guidance specifically on independent schools has been formulated. The frame of reference used by the team of inspectors whose full-time job it is to vet independent schools are the premises regulations and school regulations laid down for state schools. In theory, these do not apply at all. In practice, it seems they are applied with varying degrees of rigidity by different inspectors.

The regulations, (Standards for School Premises Regulations 1959 S.I. 890 and The Schools Regulations 1959 S.I. 364) which can be got from the DES lay down quite specific minima for the size of sites, playing fields, teaching spaces, eating spaces, storage, medical and staff rooms, and numbers of toilets and washbasins required per child and rules for the length of terms and holidays, number of compulsory teaching hours, timetables, teacher/pupil ratio etc. (Both have been the subject of some minor amendments.) But these are regulations for *new* schools and many existing state schools come nowhere near meeting them.

Registered independent schools, as distinct from "recognised" independent schools (see below) need to have standards "reasonably approaching" state schools regulations, it seems. The state school regulations say, for example, that for a primary school with not more than 70 pupils there must be teaching space at the rate of 40 square feet for each of the first 25 pupils and 23 square feet per pupil thereafter. For what would constitute a "reasonable approach" to that your guess is as good as ours: say two 20 x 18 foot rooms for 25 children? As well as this, you'd need to have a hall or some sort of indoor jumping around space (known as a gymnasium in the regulations), a library and somewhere for "practical instruction". For up to 50 children you had also probably better have at least four lavatories and the same number of washbasins, with some steps, platforms and, better still small W.C.s for young children. And so on. And if you want to cook meals on the premises for the children, or to have boarders the regulations become much more strictly applied. The section below on premises gives more details of things you may have to do to meet building by-laws, fire and health requirements.

Two free school reports we know of led to official complaints about dirt in kitchens and other rooms, broken windows, light fittings without bulbs, broken and hence hazardous concrete flooring, untidiness, unacceptable decorative condition, lack of heating, dangerous rubble outside and lavatories being too big for little children. Again, with the possible exception of the last item (some of the best homes have only a normal adult-size lavatory), it is hard to disagree with these sorts of requirement. Clearly, there will be differences of opinion about what constitutes "untidiness" for example, but the HMIs reports on these schools suggest that they were not simply carping at a few bits of paper on the floor.

You had better have a "reasonable scatter" of people with registered teacher status. (For those graduating before 1973 a degree is enough). They must not be

on the black list. (This is the list of all teachers dismissed from state and independent schools for sexual or other unteacherly offences. It is consulted whenever new teachers — whose names you have to give to the DES — are appointed by independent schools.)

You had better also have the equipment to offer something resembling the range of activities found in state schools for children of comparable age to yours; books, records, a gramophone, stationery, science equipment, games equipment, paints, craft materials, tape recorder, TV. And if you're not going to have timetabled lessons in things regarded by inspectors as basic — such as reading — you had better have a reasoned alternative ready.

You had better also, though this is not indicated by the Act in any way, be able to show that you are "financially viable". In a decade when many little independent schools have been killed by inflation, the DES is now watchful for schools which may skimp on what they consider important educational expenditure in order to keep going — or disrupt their children's education altogether by closing suddenly. (And see paragraphs below on Charitable Status.) Also, if you are providing meals for children, keep pretty close to the standards detailed below in the section on kitchens.

Given all this, you would probably have a good chance of getting registered. Although the number of schools getting registered each year is tiny — 29 in 1969 for example, compared with over 120 closed in the same year — it is a large proportion of those applying. The DES will not give figures, but discussion with officials suggests that only about 25 per cent of applicants get refused, and this is most often because they are not "devoted", but only in it for the money (what money?)

The actual procedure of registration once a school is provisionally registered, is as follows. A single inspector will visit the school. If, in his view, it is clearly super, then theoretically that is all the inspection it has to have before being fully registered, though it will get a full inspection at some time, on the rota under which under the Act all schools must be seen at intervals.

If he is not satisfied, then there may be a series of day or half day visits by inspectors and finally two or three or more will spend up to a week in the school, doing a "full inspection" at the end of which they issue a full report in writing — to the school and the DES. This report is a general, discursive account of their impressions, and it has no legal status. What gives their reactions legal i.e. actionable, form, are the complaints served on the school, which state either that they consider some or all aspects of the set-up are "irremediable" or indicate how they must be improved in order to merit registration. The decision to issue a complaint is made by the DES — i.e. the Registrar — on the advice of the HMIs.

The actual procedure of inspection and registration, once a school has been provisionally registered, has, in the case of free schools so far followed a similar pattern.

* *This is what happened to us. The HMI who happens to be allocated to our area visited us in the three months after we opened. (In Liverpool the first visit came after only four weeks.) He is not a "specialist", unlike some HMIs who are experts in particular curriculum areas. It does not seem to be the practice to come unannounced. Occasionally he has called to make an appointment for a*

visit, or to return a report we'd written (for our full inspection), but could not be persuaded to come right in even for a cup of tea. He came only once quite unexpectedly a few days after our full inspection saying he'd forgotten to check the lavatories and register. He looked at them and then went straight off again. *

After the first visit, which was a full day (inspectors always seem to go out for lunch), he returned every three or four months for another day. He usually brought a colleague with him, or two. Once we had an HMI psychologist, and on another occasion a special school expert. On another occasion, which was explained to us as "preliminary" to a full inspection, he brought a maths and craft expert. We had several months warning of the full inspection, and some clues from the previous visit about things they wanted doing to the building.

They said they'd probably stay a week. In fact the three HMIs stayed only three and a half days. They clearly divided the territory among them. Having spent the first half day reading the literature we had ready for them, they went and sat in with or accompanied different adults for one to two hours.

Though they did some mere observing, most of this time was spent talking to the adults who after about 20 minutes usually gave up the attempt to hold the children's attention simultaneously. This did not seem to matter.

They did not seem anxious to probe into material we had not specifically made available to them. They looked through piles of children's work folders we gave them, but we didn't get the feeling they were combing through drawers and cupboards searching for evidence against us. In fact the onus was very much on us to provide what we could.

Despite (or perhaps because of) our determination to meet fire, health and safety requirements, they seemed very little interested in the detail of our cooking or washing arrangements. They have certainly checked carefully with local council departments to make sure we've met the local fire regulations.

As on previous occasions, before they left on the final day we asked them to tell us what their impressions were. They were at first reluctant to speak to the whole group of us adults but finally agreed. (We did not try to include children. The Leeds Free School did and failed after an argument.) They said little specific and could not be drawn on whether they would recommend our full registration, nor how long it would take.

Six months later we received printed copies of the HMIs' report on us, and a letter saying tho' we would be fully registered as soon as final clearance from the local fire officer had been received. This was two years after we first opened.

Our HMIs explained that it was normal practice for new schools to be provisionally registered for about two years. This is to allow a kind of settling-in period. It also seems possible that in a case where it was not sure about a school the DES might continue to extend provisional registration, even longer than this. This would clearly happen during the six months within which a school had to meet any formal complaint made by the DES. But it could equally happen in the absence of any official complaints (perhaps just to postpone a public commitment about a politically hot free school?)

There is no reason why provisionally registered status should be a bad thing. We have found that charities and local councils who want to see you get some sort

of DES acceptance before they give you money or other help, are willing to take provisional registration as a sign of this.

If the worst happens and the DES issues complaint notices against your school, you can either try to meet them — a minimum of six months is given for this — or appeal to an “Independent Schools Tribunal”. However, the members of these tribunals are appointed by the Lord Chancellor and the Lord President of the Council on the basis of their legal or teaching experience. They could therefore be much less sympathetic than HMIs.

A word of warning is needed. Reports on schools by HMIs are strictly confidential. They may not be disclosed to anyone outside the school, in whole or in part, without written permission from the DES. No-one outside the DES is therefore in a very good position to generalise in any way about inspectors. But it does really seem that they operate very much as individuals. The few that we have been in contact with or heard about have been pretty flexible and progressive in outlook.

Some, if not all of the HMIs presumably see themselves as professionally open minded, and they probably represent a wide range of educational opinion. That their opinions do differ is acknowledged by the inspectorate which apparently makes a practice of allowing sympathetic or specially interested inspectors to visit particular schools. It is not impossible that one or two inspectors might even become champions of the free school movement.

But it seems that inspectors have to cover geographical areas, as well as ideological or curriculum areas, and this might mean that free schools in some areas could be faced with very hostile HMIs, while others might find the opposite. Another point worth noting is the likelihood that Inspectors will say they want to judge a school against its own declared intentions, rather than against any absolute scale. Though one may question the extent to which anyone can make isolated judgments of this kind, it certainly suggests that one should make a very serious attempt to convey the school's philosophy to any Inspectors.

We produced a considerable amount of literature for ours -- notes on planning, structure, syllabi, children's development, staff etc, etc. This approach seems to have been worthwhile since we are now registered.

There may also be a wish on the part of the inspectors not to pay too much attention to labels such as “free school”. They would probably prefer to pass judgement only on individual schools and not on an educational movement with strong political implications.

Technically, it is not the HMIs who make the final decision about any school, but the minister, or his officials at the DES. Because technically the HMIs are an independent body of people who make reports and recommendations only, not decisions. Official complaints do not come from them, but from DES officials, as do letters even though their contents are the result of HMI observations.

In practice it is not clear how far the DES merely rubber-stamps HMI recommendations. Many HMIs claim that the decisions are out of their hands. But this may be self-protection. We simply do not know.

Certainly, over the past ten years or so there has been a quite explicit tightening up by both inspectors and the DES in their approach to independent schools. This is partly an inevitable reflection of the general “improvement” (if that's what it

is) over recent years in the kind of equipment, buildings and qualified staff available in state schools.

This change was formalised by the last Labour Government when it began its systematic attempt to up-grade private schools, forcing many to close. (Many were closing anyway from the combined effects of inflation and a sharp decline in parents wanting to send their children to boarding school. For several years the closure rate rose to around 150 annually). Although the Labour Government's campaign was officially relaxed by Mrs Thatcher it seems hard to believe that this caused more than a slight slowing down of complaint levels, if that. It remains to be seen whether the new Labour Government will continue its purge. The 1974 election campaign has seen some further Labour toying with the idea of total abolition of the private sector. This would of course make it unnecessary for them to pressurise independent schools via the existing laws and HMIs. But it does not seem likely to be something that a Labour Government with a tiny majority would give priority to.

However, it does seem possible that as things stand now independent free schools might have a better chance of survival under a Tory than a Labour Government. It depends exactly how such a change of law was made. It could, for example, be aimed at "fee-paying" as distinct from "independent" schools, which might leave free schools a loophole. It is unfortunately likely that free schools do not yet figure sufficiently large in the thoughts of Labour education people to make them think twice about this. It's therefore a point worth making to everyone in sight.

The special position of Summerhill may also be relevant here. The late A. S. Neill's Summerhill is about the only well known independent school which is not "recognised" but only registered. It was opened in 1921 and was world famous by the time the 1944 Act was passed. And fame, it seems, was, at one point, all that saved it from the inspectors' axe. For although the first inspection it had carried out for the purposes of registration in 1949, the report of which Neill reprints in his book *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Education* — allowed it through onto the Register, with only a few critical insinuations in passing, (and some praise) it would apparently have been closed if the Labour Government's last purge had been carried through to the bitter end.

It is known that the inspectors put it at the end of their list of schools to be re-inspected, out of fear of the world uproar they'd have created if they had closed it. And it is known that they expected to "have to" close it, if they had reached that point in the list before the Labour Government was voted out. For they felt that its disorganisation, together with the poor state of its premises would have ruled it out.

"Recognition"

This isn't directly relevant to free schools etc, but is included here because there is much understandable confusion between "registration" and "recognition", and because it completes the independent sector jigsaw. Registration is, in fact, the non-U category. Most "respectable" independent schools, and all famous ones except Summerhill, are recognised, not registered.

Letters to the author reflecting viewpoints about
free schools.

(Note: Most such letters received by the author
are referred to in various parts of this study,
and contained in this appendix.)

Footnotes:
262, p.196



London Borough of Waltham Forest

W. E. D. Stephens, M.A., PH.D., Chief Education Officer
Municipal Offices, High Road, Leyton, London E10 5QJ 01-539 3650

Please quote ref. WEDS/KJN

24th April, 1975.

Your ref.

Dear Sir,

I am replying to your circular letter of the 14th April. I regret that current pressures on my staff and myself make it impossible to respond to enquiries such as yours. I offer the following brief comments:-

- (a) I cannot conceive that this Authority would assist the establishment of a "free school", however that is defined.
- (b) Like most Authorities we regard Section 56 as empowering us to provide home tuition for children who are for some reason, usually physical, unable to attend school. We do also provide centres for individual (part-time) tuition for children with special learning difficulties, but they remain on the roll of and attend their normal school.
- (c) Independent Schools do not come within the ambit of a Local Education Authority's powers; only the Department of Education and Science can inspect them and if necessary close them.
- (d) Cases in this area of parents attempting to educate their children at home are very rare (perhaps two in ten years) and the attempts did not last very long.
- (e) At the risk of appearing complacent, I must stress that truancy here even among 15 year olds is no more a problem now than it was among 14 year olds ten years ago.

Yours faithfully,

Professor G.D. Potter,
University of Sheffield,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
Sheffield,
YORKS.



TOLLINGTON PARK SCHOOL
 Turle Road, N4 3LS. Telephone: 01-263 1465/6/7
 Headmaster: G L Watt, M.A(Cantab), M.I. Biol.

Professor Potter,
 University of Victoria,
 P.O.Box 1700,
 Victoria,
 British Columbia, Canada V8Y 2Y2.

7th June 1976.

Dear Professor Potter,

My reply to your letter dated 27/5/76 concerning truancy centres will be brief. I'm afraid I have no experience of free schools and I suspect that, as you say, some are sincere and useful, and others are just dreadful places. Judging from the protagonists of some of the more doubtful ones I suspect that they are more concerned with political indoctrination than with the development of those very skills which will make the changing of society possible.

However, to write of what I have first hand experience of. Our local truancy centre is experimental. It has two trained teachers funded by the Education Authority, it also has a full time social worker and various other adults who are around. The Family Service Unit carry a large part of the costs and it is in a sense their unit. The centre serves 2 secondary schools, referral starts with the school but the Education Welfare Service are involved as is the local Educational Psychologist. The centre has the absolute right to reject or accept. It establishes close links with the family and if necessary collects the pupils. There are about 15 pupils. I do not believe any pupil has returned to ordinary school from the centre. They are very severe truancy cases to start with, the ethos of the centre is very permissive compared with ordinary school, and, perhaps most important, the level of individual care is very high indeed - some of us wonder whether it may not be too high in terms of preparation for life. However, though the experiment has failed in terms of returning truants to school, it has provided security and education (including much emphasis on the basic skills and the importance of accepting responsibility for one's actions). It has therefore served a most useful purpose and since it carries on continuous and self searching evaluation it may well come up with an answer to the return to school problem. Its own attendance rates are very high.

The attitudes of the staff concerned at this school are I would say supportive - the personal relations are good. One of our teachers goes to the centre for a couple of hours a week, and one of their's comes here to teach for two hours a week. Some of their pupils have come to Art classes here but that is about all. One strenuous effort to re integrate a boy into the school failed after a short time - perhaps (they could say definitely!) we did not go out of our way sufficiently to help.

I am passing on your letter to Mr. and Mrs. Grunsell who run the centre in the hope that they can find time to write to you. I am also sending them a copy of this letter which they will I know feel free to criticise in a friendly spirit though none the less keenly for that. Here too is the address of a school on the outskirts of Edinburgh which seems to be having some success with a different sort of truancy centre - Hugh D. Mackenzie, M.A. Headteacher, Craigroyston Secondary School, Pennywell Road, Edinburgh, EH4 4QP, Scotland.

I shall be interested in due course to read any paper you may publish on this problem.

Yours sincerely,


 G.L. Watt
 Headmaster



INNER LONDON EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Copy to Mr. and Mrs. Grunsell.

I shall
 Yours sincerely,

7th June 1976.
 Dear Professor Potter,
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 The attitudes of the staff concerned at this school are I would say supportive - the personal relations are good. One of our teachers goes to the centre for a couple of hours a week, and one of their's comes here to teach for two hours a week. Some of their pupils have come to Art classes here but that is about all. One strenuous effort to re integrate a boy into the school failed after a short time - perhaps (they could say definitely!) we did not go out of our way sufficiently to help.
 I am passing on your letter to Mr. and Mrs. Grunsell who run the centre in the hope that they can find time to write to you. I am also sending them a copy of this letter which they will I know feel free to criticise in a friendly spirit though none the less keenly for that. Here too is the address of a school on the outskirts of Edinburgh which seems to be having some success with a different sort of truancy centre - Hugh D. Mackenzie, M.A. Headteacher, Craigroyston Secondary School, Pennywell Road, Edinburgh, EH4 4QP, Scotland.
 I shall be interested in due course to read any paper you may publish on this problem.
 Yours sincerely,
 G.L. Watt
 Headmaster

on this problem.

Item 78.

List of trusts most likely, in the opinion of
the author, to support free schools.

Footnotes:
263, p.197

List of Grant-Making Trusts which might finance free-schools and associated projects.

- A.T. Smith Foundation. A.Kramer, Messrs. Kramer, Smith and Co.
40, Portland Place, London W.1.
- Viscount Amory No. 2 Charitable Trust. L.F. Duffield, Lowman
Mfg. Co.Ltd. Lowman Green Tiverton, Devon.
- The Chase Charity. Carlton Younger, Gen Sec. 77, Gloucester Rd.
London SW 7,4 SS.
- Acorn Trust. Potheary and Barrett, Talbot House, Talbot Court,
Gracechurch Street, WEC 3.
- Appleton Trust. E. Williams, 9, The Precincts, Canterbury, Kent.
- Rt. Hon Herbert Baron Austin Will Trust. The Trust Manager,
London Life Association Ltd., 81 King William St.,
London EC4N7BD.
- Benham Settlement. Smallfield, Fitzhugh, Tillett and Co.Ltd.
24, Portland Place, London WIN 4 AU.
- Sydney Black Charitable Trust. The Secretary, Beaumont House,
179/187 Arthur Road, London SW19 8AF.
- Building Industry Youth Trust. Brigadier N.J. Dickson, DSO, GM.
Director, 26, Bedford Square, London WC 1 B 3HU.
- Carroll-Marx Charitable Foundation. Director, Rothschild Exec-
utor and Trustee Co. Rothschild House, Whitgift,
Croydon, Surrey.
- The Chrimes Family Charitable Trust. Messrs. Cook and Co. Ltd.
87, Lord Street, Liverpool.
- Roger and Elizabeth Clark Charitable Trust. R.J. Clark, 17,
Markham Square, London S.W. 3.
- Clover Trust. Mrs. E.M. Wright, FCA, Messrs. Bullimore, Wright
and Co. C.A. 3, Throgmorton Ave. London E.C. 2.
- Normanby Charitable Trust. Messrs. Dearden Lord Annan Morrish,
21, Park Row, Leeds, LS1 5SE.
- Carnegie U.K. Trust. M. Holton, Secretary, Cornely Park, House,
Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland.
- Alexandra Day. Mrs. E. Day, 1, Castlenan, Barnes, London SW 13.
- Sir John and Lady Amory's Charitable Trust. F. Johnstone, OBE, JP
John Heathcote and Co. Ltd. Tiverton, Devon.
- Ambrose and Ann Applebee Trust. Ambrose Applebee Esq., The Elms,
Fitzroy Park, Highgate Village, London N.6.
- Aldwyns Trust. Mrs. P.M. Sollom, The Tiled House, Spinney Lane,
West Chillington, Pulborough, Sussex.
- Paul S. Cadbury Charitable Trust. A. Wilson, 32, St. Mary's Rd.
Harborne, Birmingham.
- The Patrick Trust. P.M. Barclay, Messrs. Beachcroft and Co.
29, Bedford Square, W.C. 1.
- Lloyd's Charities Trust. David Bull, Secretary, Grants Sub-
Committee, Lloyds, Lime Street, London E.C. 3.
- G.W. Cadbury Charitable Trust. Messrs. Gillett, Kelland and Co.
Ltd. 6A Highfield Road, Birmingham 15.
- J. Reginald Corah Foundation Trust. A. Bates, c/o Corah Ltd.
Burleys, Day, Leicester, LE1 9BB.
- Oppenheimer Charitable Trust. S.P. Shoemith, 2, Charterhouse St
London E.C. 1N 6RS.

Miriam Sacher Charitable Trust. Messrs. Nicholson, Turk,
Brandes, Fraser, Fraser and Co. Ltd. Hillside
House, 2, Friern Park, London N.12.

The Yapp Education and Research Trust. D.W. Cornforth, Messrs.
Macdonald, Stacey and Co. Ltd. 7 & 8 Kings Bench
Walk, Temple, E.C. 4. 7DT.

The Bronte Charitable Trust. The Joint Secretary, The Barbinder
Trust, Abacus House, Gutter Lane, Cheapside, EC2.

Noel Buxton Trust. The Secretary, 125, Kennington Park Road,
London SE11.

Lilian Frances Hind Bequest. Wells and Hind, Sols. 14/16 Fletcher
Gate, London NG1 2FX.

The Mathilda and Terrence Kennedy Charitable Trust. Nicholson,
Turk, Brandes and Co. Hillside House, 2, Friern Park
London N. 12.

Notes.

Most of these trusts have given money in the past to schools,
and mostly to organizations which work with poor, deprived kids,
offenders, special social projects.

Acorn, Appleton, Black, Carroll-Marx, Chrimes, Clark all gave
out less than £5000. in total in 1972.

Day, Carnegie, both gave over £180,000 in 1972.

Clover, Chase, Benham, Austin, all gave between £32,000 and
£68,000 in 1972.

The others are mostly around the £8,000 - £15,000 a year
range.

Austin wants to see your accounts and proof of registration
as a charity.

Black deals specifically with projects to help young offenders.

Chase gives only for specific purposes, not running costs.

Appleton is connected with the C. of E.

Really promising ones (i.e., with a history of grants to
organizations close to free schools and projects) are Amory,
Day, Carnegie, Normanby, Aldwyns, Sacher, Bronte, Yapp.

Building industry may help projects which involve premises,
renovation, etc.

Wates and Gulbenkian have given money to free schools.
Last time they were approached, Charles Clore gave £10.
and Fortes gave £5!

Item 59.

"The School", unpublished statement from
The Bermondsey Lamp-post Free School, 1973.

Footnotes:
216, p.150

Item 80.

"School with a difference Achieves Recognition.",
Manchester Guardian, January 25, 1972.

Footnotes:

275, p. 207

(Note: This item was badly damaged when received by the author
and could not be properly duplicated.)

Item 81.

Letter to the author from Mr. K. Antcliffe,
Director of Education, City of Liverpool,
December 22, 1976.

Footnotes:
277, p.208



**City
of
Liverpool**

Kenneth A. Antcliffe
Director of Education
14 Sir Thomas Street
Liverpool L1 6BJ
Telephone: 051-236 5480 Ext: 34.

G. Potter, Esq.,
Assistant Professor,
Faculty of Education,
University of Victoria,
P.O. Box 1700,
Victoria,
British Columbia,
CANADA V8W 2Y2.

Your ref
Our ref RP/3/3
Date 22nd December, 1976

Dear Professor Potter,

Thank you for your letter dated 6th December, 1976. I am returning your questionnaire, there are one or two points that I would wish to make.

Question 2 - This question asks how many children attend LEA. schools. I feel, that as you have made reference in question 3 to numbers attending catholic and non-catholic church schools, that I should point out that many of the children attending LEA. schools are in fact attending church schools. The Voluntary Aided Church of England and Roman Catholic (and the one Hebrew) schools are staffed and maintained by the LEA. The church bodies concerned pay 15% of the capital cost of providing the schools. The number of 5 to 12 Church of England pupils is approximately 4,200, the number of Roman Catholic pupils is approximately 19,500 and the number of Hebrew 450. In the 12+ group approximately 16,750 attend Roman Catholic schools, 1,490 attend the Church of England schools and 550 the Hebrew school. I would repeat that all these pupils are attending schools maintained by the LEA.

Question 3 - Refers to children not attending LEA. schools. The schools attended by the 5 to 12 year group are not maintained in any way by the LEA. In the 12+ group the 2,520 pupils for the catholic church schools are paid for by the LEA; these are pupils who attend the four Direct Grant Roman Catholic schools; the non-catholic and private school pupils are not paid for by the LEA.

Question 4 - The figures here are pupils considered playing truant on a given afternoon in June and could be considered to be the average level prevailing throughout the year.

Questions 5 and 6 - We have no information which could truly give such a breakdown, but I would point out that Liverpool is essentially a working class community.

Question 7 - Whilst we have no information available here it is a policy of the City Council that so far as possible families with children are not housed in high rise blocks.

Question 8 - No children at present are being educated at home by parents or private tutors. The LEA. would actively discourage this.

Question 9 - There is now no FREE school in Liverpool, this ceased functioning some time ago. I am enclosing some news cuttings relating to the FREE school from our files.

/Cont...

When telephoning or calling on this matter, please ask forMr. J. Glover.....

Question 8 - No children at present are being educated at home by parents or private tutors. The L.A. would actively discourage this.

Question 9 - There is now no FREE school in Liverpool, this ceased functioning some time ago. I am enclosing some news cuttings relating to the FREE school from our files.

/Cont...

When telephoning or calling on this matter, please ask forMr. J. Glover.....



City
of
Liverpool

Kenneth A. Antcliffe
Director of Education
14 Sir Thomas Street
Liverpool L1 6BJ
Telephone: 051-236 5480 Ext: 34.

G. Potter, Esq.,
Assistant Professor.

Your ref

Our ref RP/3/3

Date 22nd December, 1976

- 2 -

Question 13 - For some time before the introduction of ROSLA., the LEA. was running a curriculum development programme; this is an on-going process and the work is currently being continued by the LEA's Teachers' Centre which is involved in all our in-service training.

Questions 14, 15, 16, 17 - Whilst the LEA. would be opposed to the establishment of FREE schools I have indicated those items which I am sure would be considered desirable if approval were ever to be requested for a FREE school.

Question 25 - Whilst the FREE school was in existence the LEA. did not give any financial support, but towards the end of its life the LEA. did assist to the extent of allowing the FREE school to make use of an old and surplus school building at a peppercorn rent.

I hope that the information I have supplied will be of value to you. If you have any further questions perhaps you would address them to one of my Senior Officers, Mr. J. Glover, Assistant Education Officer (Research and Planning Section).

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth A. Antcliffe

Director of Education

When telephoning or calling on this matter, please ask for Mr. J. Glover

Item 82.

"Former Free School Pupils Settle In",
Liverpool Weekly News, June 14, 1974.

Footnotes:
279, p.209

Former Free School pupils ^{Weekly} settle in ^{News}

The education guidance unit, set up last month for former Scotland Road Free School pupils, looks like a success, according to Councillor John Bowen, chairman of the city council's Education Committee.

"The first ten pupils have very quickly settled in and responded to the educational programme with such success that a further four — this time girls — are to join the group soon," he told the committee.

The unit caters for the special needs of children in the Scotland Road area who were unable to return to other local schools when the Free School closed last December.

Parents have expressed their appreciation of the unit's work. Cllr. Bowen added: "The work and interest of the pupils themselves shows their wish to make a success of the opportunities the unit offers."

At the moment the unit is staffed by senior members of the education department's advisory staff, and a teacher has been appointed to take permanent charge of the unit from September 1st.

Item 83.

Letter to the author from J.L. Barrows,
Schools Branch 1, The Department of Education
and Science, July 4, 1975.

Footnotes:
301, p.235



Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House York Road London SE17PH

Telegrams Aristides London SE1 T8lex 23171
Telephone 01-828 9222 ext 3333

G D Potter Esq
Hon Visiting Lecturer
Faculty of Educational Studies
Arts Tower
The University
SHEFFIELD
South Yorkshire

Your reference

Our reference
S400/75/171

Date

24 JUL 1975

Dear Mr Potter

I am very sorry it has not been possible to let you have an earlier reply to your letter requesting information on truancy and the "free" schools, which I am answering in the numerical order in which you put your questions.

1. Table 16 in Statistics of Education Vol I shows the denomination, status and type of maintained primary, middle and secondary schools. The number of pupils in attendance at county (ie state) schools on 1 January 1973 was 6,657,765.
- 2.) I enclose the results of a school absence survey carried out in January 1974, published in July 1974.
- 3.) I enclose the results of a school absence survey carried out in January 1974, published in July 1974.
4. The number of "free" schools which have been registered with this Department over the past five years is approximately 12, of which only the White Lion Street Free School has been granted final registration; the others remain(ed) provisionally registered.
5. Two of the provisionally registered "free" schools were served with notices of complaint under Part III of the Education Act 1944, but both closed voluntarily. Information concerning HM Inspectors' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with standards at independent schools is otherwise confidential.
6. None of the "free" or "progressive" schools are recognised by the Secretary of State as efficient; the following is a list of "free" schools which are provisionally or substantively registered with this Department.

Bermondsey Lamp Post School
184 Long Lane
London SE1

Freightliners Free School
Maiden Lane Community Site
York Way
London N7

New School
441 Latimer Road
London W10

ENCs.

1.

This paper is suitable for Dyaline Photocopying

Freightliners Free School
Maiden Lane Community Site
York Way
London N7

New School
441 Latimer Road
London W10

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6. None of the "free" or "progressive" schools are recognised by the Secretary of State as efficient; the following is a list of "free" schools which are provisionally or substantively registered with this Department.

White Lion Street Free School
57 White Lion Street
London N1

Balsall Heath Community School
121 St Paul's Road
Birmingham 12

Manchester Free School
Hideaway Youth Club
Stockton Street
Manchester 16

I am afraid that I have no list of "progressive" schools that I can send you. The most notable school of this type is probably Summerhill School, Leiston, Suffolk, and it may help you to know that the late proprietor, Mr A S Neill, wrote several books on the subject of progressive education, one being "Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Education", published by Gollancz, 1962.

I am also enclosing a reading list on the subject of free schools which should provide you with more detailed information. In addition there is a book called "The Free School" by W Kenneth Richmond, published by Methuen (1973), and the article by Sasha Moorson in the magazine "where" (see list) also refers to a pamphlet on "How to set up a free school" by Alison Truefitt, a teacher at the White Lion Street Free School.

7. The 1974 Survey Prices show that the net cost to the public sector in the financial year 1973/74 was £140 per pupil for all children in primary schools (ie, children in nursery classes, infants schools and junior schools), and £235 per pupil for all children in secondary schools. These figures exclude loan charges and pupil support.
8. The addresses of maintained schools are not shown in our central records, and I would therefore suggest that you contact the appropriate local education authorities for details of the schools in these areas.

I hope you will find this information useful, and apologise once again for the delay in replying.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J L Barrow
Schools Branch I

Item 84

Letter to the author from K. Brooksbank,
Chief Education Officer, City of Birmingham,
April 28, 1975.

Footnotes:
303, p.237



**City of
Birmingham**

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Council House,
Margaret Street,
Birmingham 3 3BU.

K. Brooksbank, D.S.C., M.A., M.Ed.
Chief Education Officer

Telephone communications to 021 235 2541
Switchboard 021 235 9944

your ref.

our ref. **SCB/PCL/SC**

date **28th April, 1975**

Professor G.D. Potter,
University of Sheffield,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
Sheffield,
Yorkshire.

Dear Professor,

Thank you for your letter of 14th April, together with the enclosure.

I regret that I am unable to complete the questionnaire but the following information may be of interest to you.

Within the Authority we do have many catholic and church of england schools, as well as one jewish primary school and various private schools. We also have one free school, which is now known as the Balsall Heath Community School. It started off as the Balsall Heath Free School but they have now decided to change their name. Home tuition is used to provide education for various groups of children, including school phobics, pregnant schoolgirls and suspended pupils amongst others. The Authority does recognise that parents have a right to educate their children outside its schools and if they make application to do this, then two inspectors from the Authority visit the home and discuss the curriculum which is being provided for the children, with the parents. If they are satisfied that it is appropriate, then the Authority will allow this educational provision to continue.

With regard to the position of the Balsall Heath Community School, the Authority were not able to make a financial grant to this school, though they have granted school meals' provision to the members of the school and, in fact, school meals are now provided on the site. The pupils also make use of the schools' dental and medical services and the Authority has made available a small quantity of surplus furniture for this community school. So far, some eight children have been officially transferred from the Local Authority's schools to this community secondary school. In addition there is a close working relationship between the officers of the Authority and this school. A special meeting was held recently to explain the work of the community school to local headteachers and social workers.

The Authority does not have any truancy centres though it has recently set up three Units to make provision for children who have been officially suspended from school.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Education Officer.

All letters to be addressed to the Chief Officer. Telephone Calls to Mr. P.C. Lee

set up three units to make provision for children who have been
suspended from school.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Education Officer.

Item 85.

ILEA forms 293, 294 and 298,
concerning support for truancy projects.

Footnotes:
306, p.239

Inner London Education Authority

Education Committee
SCHOOLS SUB-COMMITTEE

Report (21.6.75) by
Education Officer

| | |
|--|----------|
| Item | |
| 6 | IEEA 295 |
| SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS (EDUCATION GUIDANCE CENTRES AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS) | |

1. Since March 1975 each division of the Authority has had an Education Guidance Centre, staffed by two teachers (Scale 4 and Scale 2 posts). During the year 74/5, 142 pupils were admitted to these centres, and spent approximately 5 months in them. Children are placed in the centres on the advice of the educational psychologist, in consultation with the Head Teacher.
2. Recent assessment of the work of the Educational Guidance Centres suggest that in general they are fulfilling two useful functions - (a) relieving schools temporarily of extremely aggressive and disruptive children and (b) enabling such children to be re-integrated into their schools after a period of attendance at the centres. Maladjusted children who need psychological and psychiatric help do not appear to benefit from the short-term provision offered and their placement in these centres is considered inappropriate. The essence of attendance at the Guidance Centre is that pupils stay on, or are admitted to, the roll of an ordinary school and attend the centre, either full time or in special circumstances such as a phased return to school, part-time. The Education Guidance Centre is not a permanent alternative to school, and does not therefore provide education for children excluded from school. It is a means of helping children to cope with the ordinary school.
3. The programme of establishing 1 Education Guidance Centre per division having been achieved, it appears that these centres do not yet adequately meet the needs of the schools in the divisions. Their siting is bound to be inconvenient, and relationships with the schools on whose rolls the children still are, cannot be very close, in consequence. The necessarily long term stay in these centres restricts the facility, and the process of placement is also lengthy.
4. I consider that the needs of schools, and of the individual children, would be better met if there were a gradual expansion of support arrangements in two ways.
5. Firstly where the geographical location of the centre is inconvenient (for example in Division 1, where the first centre was established in 1966), a second centre should be set up, to allow for easier access for the children, closer relationship with the contributory schools, and an improved rate of placement and discharge. Problems of location may well be overcome by re-siting, and the provision of additional centres will depend upon the availability of appropriate staff, as well as adding to the load upon the team of psychologists.
6. Secondly and complementary to the Education Guidance Centres, some limited development of co-operative arrangements between groups of schools should be made. These arrangements would involve a group of schools jointly providing staffing and other resources to set up an off-site sanctuary, or support centre, for children on the rolls of the contributing schools.

school, and in a controlled environment encouraged to overcome those behaviour problems which had made it difficult for them to learn, and were disrupting the essential teaching and learning styles of the schools. It will be necessary to ensure that such centres are staffed with above average teachers, capable of maintaining a controlled and therapeutic situation.

7. Assistance from central funds will be needed both to establish additional Education Guidance Centres, and the support centres, as sites become available, and further reports will be submitted to seek to draw funds from the reserve for developments foreseen, should these opportunities occur during the 1976/7 financial year. Head teachers in Division 1 and 6 have submitted carefully planned schemes to establish Support Centres involving significant contributions from their own resources, and if the Sub-Committee agrees in principle to this new development, I hope that detailed proposals would be shortly available.
8. The Sub-Committee will recognise that these support arrangements are for children who remain on the rolls of their schools and are aimed at getting these children back into the main-stream of learning and co-operative behaviour as rapidly as possible. Nonetheless there will be some young people, probably within the last two years of schooling, whose hostility to school, and to their fellows, has resulted in their being removed from school rolls, and in certain cases being placed in community homes. Returning such young people to another ordinary school presents considerable difficulty, for very often there is a long history of disruption. The Sub-Committee will recall that in the Authority's report to the House of Commons Social Services and Employment Sub-Committee of the Expenditure Committee, the attention of the sub-committee was drawn to the weaknesses of the operation of The Children and Young Persons Act 1969 in that 'since the Act, heads of community homes can now refuse to take especially difficult juveniles' and that 'boys and girls are quite often sent home in their last year of school and because of their behaviour it is virtually impossible to find a place for them in an ordinary school'. Our evidence recommended that 'community homes should normally retain children in their last year of compulsory schooling'.
9. I have received a proposal from Division 3 that following discussions there with the District Inspectors, Heads of Secondary Schools, the Area Youth Officer, AEO/CEC and the Director of Social Services for Islington, a centre should be established for older pupils, in the premises of the White Lion Youth Centre which will be under the supervision of a tutor warden, and working in close relationship with a group of secondary schools, which will provide a complete programme of educational activities for young people excluded from school, both with those schools, and with the youth centres and colleges of further education. The aim of this experimental arrangement would be, by using a variety of approaches, involving this contribution of the wider education service, to integrate these undoubtedly alienated young people back into the education system, to further education courses and to employment. Staffing and running costs would be as for an Education Guidance Centre (Scale 4 and Scale 2). The teacher-in-charge would be responsible to the District Inspector and work closely with the tutor warden. Placement in the centre would normally follow a Problem Case Conference, and be made by the Divisional Officer.
10. I am encouraged to see that in many divisions, groups of Heads are assisting the Divisional Officer with advice on the placement of children who have been expelled from schools, or are returning from community homes, and I recommend this initiative from heads and officers in Division 3 as an extension of that type of assistance.

Costs in a full year at current rates would be as follows :

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1 teacher (scale 4) | 6,392 |
| 1 teacher (scale 2) | 4,810 |
| equipment allowance | 353 |
| secretarial assistance | 355 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 11,940 |

Of this sum £6,965 would fall into charge in the current financial year and can be met from provision made in the revenue reserve for developments in respect of help for the truant and disruptive child.

11. The Authority's resources for home teaching are designed to meet the needs of the following pupils:
- handicapped pupils unable to attend schools either permanently or temporarily
 - handicapped pupils excluded or suspended from ordinary schools and waiting special school places
 - handicapped pupils excluded or suspended from special school and waiting re-placement (a remote possibility with older pupils).

The group of children with which this report has been concerned does not include any who have been deemed handicapped and in need of education in a special school. Every effort is being made to use the capacity in the Authority's day special schools, but there are still children in category (b) for whom home tuition is needed, and resources are under considerable pressure. Also despite the extensive and patient efforts made inside the school (and the appendix provides an interim inspectorate review of a number of the withdrawal arrangements), some children do have to be excluded from ordinary school. On occasions it has been possible to provide home tuition for these pupils without putting at risk the service to handicapped children. During the period required to place the non-handicapped child in another school, it would be helpful if more home tuition time could be available and I therefore recommend that some use of the home tuition service should be allowed to provide for greater flexibility in meeting the needs of handicapped and non-handicapped children excluded from school. If the Sub-Committee agree in principle with this recommendation I shall submit a further report on its implications.

12. During the last two or three years, Headteachers and staff in both primary and secondary schools have magnificently coped with the many behaviour problems that do inevitably present themselves in areas of urban stress. The situation was worsened by shortage of experienced staff, and the instability of staffing in many schools. I have no doubt that with much more stable staffing, especially in the primary schools which establish the foundation of learning, and learning behaviour, schools will be well on the way to solving some of those problems. The arrangements discussed in this report are intended to bring more help, especially to secondary schools, at this crucial stage of the development of a fully comprehensive system, so that the ordinary school can provide well for the wide range of pupils who will be in it.

13. Recommendations

- That where the Education Guidance Centre is inconveniently sited in a division, a second centre of similar size be established, as soon as site and resources are available.

12. During and see problem. The size of staff staffed learning.

13. Recommendations

- That where the Education Guidance Centre is inconveniently sited in a division, a second centre of similar size be established, as soon as site and resources are available.

2. That encouragement be given to groups of secondary schools to set up shared off-site support centres for children on their rolls, and that the Education Officer forward detailed proposals from time to time, and within the resources available.
3. That subject to the approval of the Finance Sub-Committee to a Drawing (No. 46) on the revenue reserve for developments foreseen in 1976-7 of £6,965 an experimental arrangement be set up in the premises of the White Lion Youth Centre in Islington to assist young people excluded from school, to return to the education system.
4. That ~~as soon as resources allow~~ some extension ^{of use} be made to the home tutor service so that it may provide for the needs of non-handicapped children suspended or excluded from ordinary school.

AEO/Secondary
Ext. 5657

with greater flexibility

Chief Financial Officer (24.6.76)

- 1 The Sub-Committee decided to earmark £80,000 in the revenue reserve for development for assistance with the truant and disruptive child. £27,500 has been drawn and £10,187 will be required for the proposal contained in a further report on today's agenda (Item 7 ILM 294).
- 2 The cost in 1976-7 of any new proposals arising from the recommendation in the main report, i.e. £6,965 for the unit to be established in the premises of White Lion Youth Centre (recommendation 3) and any expansion of provision in accordance with recommendations 1, 2 and 4, would have to be met from the balance of about £42,000.
- 3 The difference between the full year cost of the proposed new unit and the cost in the current year i.e. some £5,000 will be a pre-commitment for 1977-8.

CFO 269

TR/21/6631

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION UNITS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. In the Education Officer's report in July 1974 on "Children with Special Difficulties" encouragement was given to schools to establish special units or "sanctuaries" within their organisation as one means of meeting problems raised by pupils for whom the normal classroom situation was temporarily inappropriate for various reasons. Since then it has been possible to provide a measure of financial assistance for schools in the establishment of such units and at present some schools are known to have benefited.

During the school year 1975/76 the inspectorate, with the assistance of colleagues from the schools psychological service, have been visiting and reporting on these units and this paper attempts to give an account of the present situation based on the 13 schools which have been visited up to the time of writing. It is not easy to quote a precise figure for units of this kind. Provision in schools for children presenting special problems is varied and complex, and the boundary between procedures for withdrawal and identifiable separate provision is blurred. To date, however, some 45 "sanctuary" type units have been identified, but the situation is one of constant change.

2. Function of alternative education units

The term "sanctuary" which was attached to the earliest units implies a place which affords protection from the violence and stresses of life outside, a place to which a child might retreat temporarily and be helped to relax and gain strength with the support of an experienced and caring teacher. This original idea of a supportive service for those subject to particular internal or external stresses, with the opportunity for taking stock and deciding perhaps whether the help of other agencies might be sought, seems, however to have been largely overtaken by events. Schools are now experimenting with a variety of kinds of unit in an effort to continue to function effectively in their traditional role while at the same time retaining within their structure pupils presenting a range of educational and behavioural problems who might otherwise be suspended from school and for whom transfer to special schools is either undesirable or impracticable. The term "sanctuary" is still used, but other more appropriate names have appeared and the best omnibus reference now, perhaps, is to "special units".

The range of functions covered by on-site special units is now complex and individual units may sometimes attempt to cater for a variety of needs depending on individual school circumstances. These functions may be categorised for convenience as follows but they are of course closely related with reference to individual children:

- (a) To provide a temporary release from the ordinary classroom situation for pupils suffering from emotional or social stresses which they are unable to cope with.
- (b) To act as a kind of decompression chamber - providing the opportunity to "cool down" or "ease off" before a moment of crisis occurs and aggressive behaviour erupts.
- (c) To provide a period for observation or screening prior to decisions being made in relation to external support or assessment.
- (d) To provide a place where a disruptive pupil may be helped to develop better self-control or ability to adjust to the demands of the normal classroom situation.
- (e) To provide special tuition in basic skills for some pupils whose behaviour problems spring from failure in the learning situation, and thereby to improve self confidence and self-esteem.
- (f) To provide an alternative atmosphere and programme for those unable to accept or cope with the normal full school situation; or to provide a "re-entry zone" for pupils who have truanted from school.
- (g) To provide simply for the containment of pupils who are not controllable in normal lessons.

The range of
units may
school circumstances
but they are

(a) To provide
suffering from

(b) To act
down" or "ease

(c) To provide
in relation

(d) To provide
control of a

(e) To provide special tuition in basic skills for some pupils whose behaviour problems spring from failure in the learning situation, and thereby to improve self confidence and self-esteem.

(f) To provide an alternative atmosphere and programme for those unable to accept or cope with the normal full school situation, or to provide a "re-entry zone" for pupils who have truanted from school.

26 schools of the 33 visited included (d) as a major function of their unit, 15 (e), 13 (g), 11 (a) and (f), 6 (c) and only 4 (b). In most cases the unit existed to meet the needs of different kinds of pupils. Some schools quite deliberately refused entry to their unit to violent pupils or those likely to be too disruptive. There were examples of sanctuaries which had failed because schools had not done so and a concentration of extrovert, aggressive children had proved too much. Most schools seemed able to maintain a balance in the use of the unit and referred in the main pupils with whom there was some hope of successful impact. At the extreme was one school which saw the function of its sanctuary as analogous to a special class, the teacher in charge having had experience in a maladjusted school.

In all cases the intention of the unit staff was the re-integration of pupils into the full normal school situation. To this end some schools insisted that no pupils should attend full time in the sanctuary; links had to be maintained with the peer group and its educational programme. Return to the full classroom situation was, however, a gradual process and was watched carefully. Often, pupils were able to return to the sanctuary for short periods of their own choice, and in one case the unit teacher went back into the classroom of a returning pupil to give support in the transition. In some schools, however, it was recognised that some pupils needed to be full-time in the sanctuary with little hope of re-integration but with the probability of transfer to special schools. Occasionally it was remarked that more co-operation was needed from other staff over the return of pupils.

One school firmly resisted any therapeutic approach in its sanctuary which it saw as a filter rather than a treatment centre.

Periods of attendance varied in general from a week to a term, but there were instances of longer periods.

The following extract from one report may be of interest:

"It has been observed that when girls are first admitted, there is a rapid improvement in their behaviour. This continues for some weeks and then they seem to strike a plateau, with little further improvement. Several reasons have been put forward for this initial progress - (a) they are accepted for what they are and are not always in trouble; (b) they have a chance to achieve something worthwhile, and do not have to live up to the image of being the fool in the class, or the one who is always causing disruptions; (c) they have time to make mistakes, have them corrected, then do a good piece of work; (d) their pride does not suffer if they do something wrong, or take longer than the others to finish a piece of work; (e) they are learning to work as a group and to help each other.

"It is possible that the levelling-out point arrives when initial difficulties of re-adjustment have been overcome, but deep-seated problems then come to the fore and stop improvement at the same rate. As these are overcome, however, with some children at least there are signs of further progress."

Staffing

There was little doubt as to the importance attached to finding the right teacher to staff the unit. Unsatisfactory appointments led to the collapse of sanctuaries on more than one occasion and success was frequently attributed to the outstanding quality of particular individuals. In view of the varied and developing nature of the units there is no special training course available in relation to them. Many existing courses, however, relate to different aspects of the work and teachers concerned had attended those relevant to their particular needs and interests. Two teachers, at least, had been on one of the Authority's TOSLADIC courses. Teaching backgrounds varied. Often appointments were made from within existing departments of teachers known to have an interest in problem children or a special gift for establishing relationships with them. Two at least were ex grammar school teachers; occasionally the school

counsellor was responsible or the head of the remedial department. Sometimes a senior member of staff had oversight and a younger teacher worked under his/her direction. In yet other schools a group of senior staff shared responsibility. Normally one teacher was employed full-time in the sanctuary, often with part-time help from other staff and occasionally with ancillary help paid for out of A.U.R. In one instance students from a College of Education Urban Studies Centre also made a valuable contribution.

In this complex situation it was difficult to draw any general conclusions about the kind of teacher likely to be most suitable for work of this kind. Personal qualities, such as warmth, interest, experience, courage, stamina, firmness, organising capacity, seemed more obvious than specific paper qualifications. What was apparent, however, was that the interest, understanding, support and active co-operation of the staff as a whole were necessary for the most successful operation of any kind of unit. The demands on any one person are too great to be sustained alone.

4. Accommodation

Most units were established on the school site: sometimes by the adaptation of an existing room - a classroom, cloakroom, study room or disused specialist room; sometimes by the provision of hatted accommodation and, in one case, by the provision of a carport. Occasionally a school had a suite of rooms. One school, for example, raised £2000 from a variety of activities, added £1500 from its A.U.R., and with help from the Authority's Alternative Education Units Fund eventually had hatted accommodation comprising 1 large room, office, kitchen and bathroom with shared use of a literacy room with the remedial department and of a small study room with the 6th form.

In a few cases various kinds of accommodation off site were used, including the premises of local youth clubs or centres. It is perhaps worth recording that one sanctuary, which had moved its site from within to outside the school, was beginning to feel some sense of isolation and segregation from its parent body.

Although some of the accommodation used was ad hoc and not very hospitable, in most cases rooms were attractively furnished in an informal way, sometimes with a sink or cooker unit. In most there was good provision of audio-visual aids and material for a variety of work. The provision of more than one room, to make individual counselling possible or to isolate children likely to disturb others, was rare because of general accommodation difficulties, but much valued where present.

5. Age range of children provided for

Practice again varied considerably. A few schools admitted pupils from the whole range of years 1 to 5 to their units. Most concentrated on years 1-3, a few on years 4-5, and two schools had two units - one for years 1-3 and one for years 4-5. The greater range of age might have been expected to militate against success, but each school was committed to its own concept of the role of its unit and organised its work programme accordingly. Some of the most effective units covered the wider age range in fact, but policy in most schools was to attack problems and concentrate resources in the early years.

6. Size of groups in units

Generally groups were small, between 6 and 12 pupils at any one time, though a much larger number might be on the roll of the unit, attending only part-time. Staffs in schools where serious thought had been given to the purpose of the unit did not use it, as might have been feared, for the removal from their classes of any pupils they wished to be rid of. Close control of entry was generally established and in fact it was reported that where a sanctuary was operating well, admissions tended to ease off as staff became more sensitive to what they were doing, more thoughtful about the needs of individual children and more secure in themselves with the knowledge of a supportive unit in the background. The two appendices to this report, which are examples of

Generally groups were small, between 6 and 12 pupils at any one time, though a much larger number might be on the roll of the unit, attending only part-time. Staffs in schools where serious thought had been given to the purpose of the unit did not use it, as might have been feared, for the removal from their classes of any pupils they wished to be rid of. Close control of entry was generally established and in fact it was reported that where a sanctuary was operating well, admissions tended to ease off as staff became more sensitive to what they were doing, more thoughtful about the needs of individual children and more secure in themselves with the knowledge of a supportive unit in the background. The two appendices to this report, which are examples of

school documents relating to the establishment of special units, give an indication of the concern schools have that control should be such as to ensure that appropriate support and treatment can be given.

7. Methods of referral and review

In almost all schools visited, the need for care in the procedure for referral was fully understood. Suggestions usually came up from class or subject teachers through heads of years or houses to a committee of senior staff with the head or deputy head present, plus the counsellor or unit teacher. Case conferences were held and only after serious consideration were decisions made.

In order that there should be no stigma attached to attendance at the unit some schools attempted to present attendance as a privilege and ruled that attendance at the unit should not be compulsory. Parents were normally consulted and some units welcomed their active participation. Home visiting was also a feature of a number of units.

Continuing case conferences, recording and filing of progress reports on pupils were reported in most schools, frequently involving educational psychologists and education welfare officers.

8. Liaison

The importance of full collaboration within the school between the unit and heads of departments, heads of years and houses, remedial teachers, counsellors and parents was generally recognised. Close liaison is also required, however, with the Schools Psychological Service, the Educational Welfare Service, and the Social and Medical Services. In some schools consultation took place before the referral of pupils, and the educational psychologist or education welfare officer played a prominent part. In most, however, contact was established as considered necessary after entry to the unit. Monthly case conferences were common as were specific references of children thought to be suitable for placement elsewhere. There were instances, however, where appropriate liaison was still to be developed.

9. Work Programmes

Each school once again had its own organization related to the accepted functions of its unit. Some units, generally more associated with simple containment, had no specific programmes. Work was set by subject teachers and this was done by the pupils in a controlled situation generally under the supervision of senior or volunteer staff. Most units, however, developed programmes of their own, often in collaboration with subject staff or remedial department and geared as far as possible to the needs of the individual. These programmes were often divided between work in basic skills and project or practical activity of various kinds. Mornings were devoted to academic work and afternoons to a more flexible programme including visits and excursions. For many pupils, of course, part of their normal education programme continued with their own classes.

In one school with a unit for 4th and 5th year pupils, the unit programme had developed into a full-time course for about 30 girls. It included English, Social Studies, Home Economics, R.E., P.E., typewriting, with pupils going out for 1 or 2 days on work experience and community service. Some R.S.A. and C.S.E. examinations were possible at the end of it. Although the intention was to meet the needs of the truants and the disruptive and the slow learner, entry to the unit was seen as a privilege because of its comparative freedom in a tightly structured situation. Attendance was good and motivation and work were improving rapidly.

In Section 2 of this report, reference was made to a school which saw its sanctuary unit as analogous to a special class. The following is a description of the unit's approach to curriculum:

"Pupils are registered in the Unit, and are required to undertake work in the basic skills, which is extended into a range of projects frequently related to the interest of the student working in the centre at the time. Some of the pupils do need help at an elementary and remedial level, but on the other hand there is at the moment one pupil who is abreast of C.S.E. work in English.

"The Unit seeks to maintain very close relationships with the community, and to build a strong group relationship amongst the pupils involved. The School has its own part-time Educational Welfare Officer, who is paid for out of its A.U.R. and based in the school, but who works as a member of the D.E.W.O.'s team. This Officer provides close links with the parents of the pupils in the Unit, and is in constant touch with the Unit teacher. The teacher also seeks to have regular contact with the Social Services in the area. Parents are however invited to the Unit, and the teacher attempts to meet every parent two or three times a year. In December, mothers were invited to a Christmas dinner which was cooked and prepared by the children. The Unit also seeks to provide a measure of residential experience and organises extended outings two or three times a year. Last October the group were allowed to use the College of St. Mark and St. John at Plymouth as a base for a seven day visit, and were enabled to explore Dartmoor, the Plymouth Dockyards, the local Airfield and a number of valuable interests including a flight for every pupil. A camping holiday is organised most summers, and it is hoped this year to make a five day excursion to France. There is some expedition organised for at least half a day every week, and this has been used to explore to a very considerable degree the sites of historic and other interest in the neighbourhood and in London as a whole. In the Unit at the moment is some lively art work on volcanoes inspired by a visit last week to the Natural History Museum as part of a project on volcanoes which is currently being undertaken.

"Because of the extreme social deprivation of many of the pupils in the Unit, systematic attempts are made to awaken their interest in members of the community with greater disabilities than themselves; they have visited Old People's Homes and Geriatric Units, and are planning to establish a link with a school for Physically Handicapped children. There is also a formal meal organised once a week which is intended to have a valuable socialising influence."

Personal and group counselling was another ingredient of most unit programmes. Sometimes the school had the services of a qualified counsellor for this purpose, but most often the counselling was of an informal kind based on the experience and wisdom of the teachers in the unit and their knowledge of the pupils and the school.

10. Conclusions

Although some units have been in existence for 2 or 3 years, most are considerably younger and are still finding their way and working towards a clearer concept of their role. Their existence and success depend very much on the availability of the right teachers and several schools are anxious lest the departure of a particular teacher should spell the end of their experiment.

It is too soon to evaluate objectively the success of these units in meeting the problems that schools face with individual pupils who cannot or will not accept a normal school programme or the self-discipline that must go with it. However, there is no doubt that schools have given a great deal of thought and put much of their resources into sanctuary or similar type provision. Most of those who have done so are convinced of the value of what they have created. They point to improved staff morale, successes with individual children in attendance, behaviour and educational progress, and a more coherent approach to pastoral work. These are subjective views but they are borne out by the observations of the inspectorate and schools psychologists.

Lack of full staff involvement, support and understanding is still a problem in some

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Lack of full staff involvement, support and understanding is still a problem in some

scholar, but their number is small. The financial support which the Authority has made available has been much appreciated and would seem to have been a worthwhile investment.

UNIT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Aims: The primary purpose of the Unit is to provide for those students who cannot participate in the normal school activities, because of non-attendance, emotional or behavioural problems, a special curriculum which would be both compensatory and remedial and which would enable them as quickly as possible to rejoin the normal life of the school.

The Unit will aim further to help teachers to deal with students who are so disruptive as to hinder the educational progress of the majority in the classroom. It is envisaged that by participation in a small group such students will work through their hostility by gaining insight into their behaviour, leading to attitudinal change. The Unit is in no way to be seen as a punitive institution nor as a "sink".

Building Requirements: One large room plus an office. The room will be comfortably furnished and spacious enough to allow for many and varied activities. The office will be used partly as a storage space, and partly for individual work with students. Experience gained from the management of a group of students last year would suggest that the best siting for the Unit would be in a hut away from the main school buildings.

Staffing Requirements: The minimum requirements will be one full-time teacher on Salary 2. Bearing in mind the aims of the Unit this teacher will ideally have experience of dealing with difficult children and also of remedial work. The school may be able to provide some part-time supportive help, i.e. the Tutor-Ward of the Youth Centre might spend some time helping in the Unit. Many of our local difficult students attend the Youth Centre in the evenings.

Members of the P.T.A. have expressed willingness to help out in the Unit. They would be used by the teacher in charge to help with reading, outings and visits and form supportive relationships with some students.

Since the school is now used as a training placement for Counsellors by Reading and London Universities and by Middlesex Polytechnic for social work students, it is intended that work in the special Unit should form part of their fieldwork experience. They will do counselling and case work with the students and when necessary will visit homes to encourage greater parental involvement in helping the child to follow a normal school life.

Admission of students to the Unit: Students will be admitted to the Unit only after the most careful consideration has been given to each case. Suggested referrals to the Unit will come from teachers through the relevant Head of Year; a meeting will then be arranged by the Counsellor with the Unit teacher, Head of Year, relevant Deputy Head or Senior Master and the Headmaster to decide whether the student will benefit from being placed in the Unit. This admission procedure should help to prevent the Unit being used as a "sink" and limit the danger of staff feeling that the Unit will solve all their difficult problems.

Type of Student who will be placed in the Unit: At the moment it is felt that the students using the Unit will fall into three broad categories:-

1. The School-refuser.
2. The very disruptive/acting-out student.
3. Very withdrawn/depressed student.

Some will attend on a full-time, others on a part-time basis:

Curriculum: The curriculum will be individually and group based. The individual curriculum will be geared to the special needs and interests of each student. In the planning of individual programmes close links will be fostered

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the Remedial Department, the Educational Psychologist, the Counsellor, and relevant Heads of Department, i.e. Social Education and Humanities.

Group based curriculum: Emphasis will be placed on helping the student to gain confidence, insight and understanding through educational means.

Suggested topics and Projects:

1. Decision making processes.
2. Role playing.
3. Simulations.
4. Educational games.
5. Transactional analysis learning groups.
6. Structural auto-biographies.
7. Future scripts.
8. Family sculpturing.
9. The publication of a magazine half-ternly.

The students will be involved with the life of the community, some being placed in local hospitals, junior schools, voluntary agencies etc. Guestspeakers will be invited to be interviewed by the students, i.e. members of Camden Law Centre, Release Health Visitors. All projects in the Unit will be written up, evaluated, and will be available to the Headmaster.

Educational Benefits: The setting up of the Unit will help the school to implement the expressed desire of the Authority that schools should cater for Community needs and educate children in non-rual surroundings. It will also mean that some of the extremely disruptive children whom we cannot cater for at present can be cared for constructively within the school.

The Unit will be called the "Project Unit". As pupils make progress in the Unit they will be transferred gradually to normal subject classes, and close supervision will be exercised in monitoring their progress outside the Unit to ensure continuing improvement in attainment and attitude.

Departments will supply teachers' materials when necessary, but there will be an allocation of money in order to build up Unit based teaching materials.

THE WITHDRAWAL UNIT

- 1. Aims and Principles
- 2. Selection Processes
- 3. Treatment

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Broadly speaking, the concern of this school is to provide an environment which allows all children to flourish educationally while at the same time taking into account the fact that there is a sizeable minority of emotionally and socially under-privileged boys who find that they are unable to cope in ordinary classroom conditions. As I'm sure we are all aware, they react to pressures in different ways: some fail to attain the required educational standards, some become difficult and disrupt, some fail to turn up to or walk out of their lessons, while others display all these characteristics.

Now, the clinic serves four main purposes as far as these considerations are concerned.

- 1. If a child is consistently aggressive, abusive, violent and makes the life of the staff and his class a misery then we can relieve that pressure by withdrawing him.
- 2. The class from which the boy is withdrawn usually manages to progress since the atmosphere begins to relax without the constant interruption.
- 3. The introduction to a quiet, responsive relationship, more personal to the child in view of the large amount of attention he is likely to get, helps us to help that child become aware of his difficulties, in order than he can learn to cope with them. In short, therapy.
- 4. It is my contention that the incidence of disturbance in the school as a whole is reduced, with the concomitant that the tension in the school as a whole is reduced.

The criteria for withdrawal to the clinic would be therefore: if the child presents serious problems in his classes to a number of teachers, not simply a lack of educational attainment; and a serious inability to cope with the pressures and tensions in his class, or in the school generally on the part of the child.

I feel that we must always guard against the danger of solving our administrative problems by using the clinic as a dumping ground, and constantly bear in my mind the requirements of the children.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

At present the selection procedure runs something like as follows:

Class (subject) teacher contacts form tutor; form tutor sounds out other teachers (subject) and approaches housemaster; between the two they decide whether there are grounds for withdrawal.

Perhaps a more efficient way of arriving at this decision might be that firstly the subject teacher contacts the form tutor; secondly, the form tutor asks every class teacher responsible for the boy for a short written report indicating at the same time if they would object to the boy's removal from their lesson and the degree of difficulty experienced from their own, the class's and the boy's standpoint; the housemaster is now approached and offers his opinion; the referral is then taken to the meeting of house-masters, Head, Deputy and myself, where the final decision is made. The Head of the Remedial Department should also be consulted where a boy attends the Remedial Department. In addition, a decision should also be taken as to whether the boy should be referred to the educational psychologist.

During the course of his withdrawal there should also be a progress report to the form tutor and housemaster at regular intervals. Some boys may, of course, need only to be withdrawn from some lessons, or for quite short periods.

TREATMENT

This is a problematic area; a problem which is made more difficult because we have no educational psychologists to supervise, test, advise, etc. Nevertheless, I think that the most necessary attitude to cultivate among the staff is one which regards the clinic as a small part of every other department rather than as a separate entity. This is not an abstraction but a real prospect. All departments can offer their experience of difficult children and contribute their technical expertise. For instance the craft department may have a room and pottery equipment we could use. The Art department may allow us to use its painting facilities, and so on.

The clinic should not have too many boys in at one time - two or three would be ideal, four tolerable and five or more is becoming too many. The combination of boys together should be carefully chosen rather than being decided solely on the grounds of expediency.

If the corridor outside the clinic-room can be used, and also the small room beside the swimming pool, and especially if volunteer help from other teachers, parents and older boys continues to be possible, planned dispersal of a few boys can be envisaged.

What we want to achieve is a pleasant, creative, absorbing environment in which the pupils can move around and talk freely. It must be purposive and definite, moving from one structured situation to another, increasing security.

Inner London Education Authority

Education Committee
SCHOOLS SUB-COMMITTEE

Report (24.6.76) by
Education Officer

| | |
|---|----------|
| Item 7. | IIEA 294 |
| PROVISION FOR PERSISTENT NON-ATTENDERS | |

1. Although there is a small number of projects jointly administered and financed by the Authority and Social Services Departments to help truanting children to return to school, and a number of voluntary agencies are assisted in this work by grants from the Authority, provided certain criteria are met (IIEA 414 - 3.7.75), there is no project aimed specifically at the long-term truant who has rejected school, perhaps for as long as three years. The nearest equivalent is the Rosemary House project, set up under the Children with Special Difficulties scheme, and working closely with Silverthorne and Peckham Manor Schools.
2. A working group of officers and inspectors has been meeting to consider what fresh initiative might be taken to try to contact the long-term truant and entice him back into the education system, and has held discussions with teachers and divisional staff working in Hackney and Lewisham.
3. It is recognised that the work of reorientating children to school, when their previous school experience and home circumstances powerfully act as deterrents, is specialised, requires patience, and is unlikely to be met with early success. Nonetheless, such children are most especially at risk because of their lack of basic educational and social skills, and, in circumstances of reducing employment prospects, will generally have few life-chances. One of the main tenets of the philosophy behind this renewed attack upon persistent truancy is that the older pupil will refuse to return to school because of his depressingly poor mastery of the basic learning skills. Experience in further and adult education suggests that some of these young people are later, in a different environment, motivated to start learning again.
4. I therefore consider that there is a good case for experimenting now with another special unit approach to deal with this particular problem, despite the number of off-site units already established either by, or in support of, individual schools, or on an area basis, as well as those run by voluntary agencies with the help of an IIEA grant. In the case of some of the voluntary bodies concerned, there has always been some involvement with pupils who could be regarded as among those aimed at here. However the immediate need is seen to be for those not being helped by this or any other means. Although the proposed units would have carefully forged links with schools, youth centres, and colleges of further education, those links should not be overt. Informal surroundings and a welcoming presence of the right kind of personality are likely to be most effective in this process of repleasing the interests and trust of the adolescent.

voluntary bodies concerned, there has always been some involvement with pupils who could be regarded as among those aimed at here. However the immediate need is seen to be for those not being helped by this or any other means. Although the proposed units would have carefully forged links with schools, youth centres, and colleges of further education, those links should not be overt. Informal surroundings and a welcoming presence of the right kind of personality are likely to be most effective in this process of repleasing the interests and trust of the adolescent.

5. What is recommended is that two contrasting units should be set up, one based upon a single school with carefully devised arrangements for handling the casual truant, catering solely for the pupils of that school, and the other based upon a natural focus for young people in a particular area, though again relating to a school. The two projects proposed would be located at:

- a. Sprules Road, an annexe of Samuel Pepys School
- b. the Hackney Marsh Adventure Playground, in association with Upton House School

In both cases links with youth centres and local colleges of further education will be part of the arrangement.

6. The objective is to encourage regular, if not full time attendance at the unit of the especially long term and persistent truant, and thereby to develop in him a wish to start learning again and a belief that the education system as such has something valuable and relevant to offer.

7. Although in each group there would invariably be some young people other than what might be called the target group, it is intended that the maximum group size should be 12, and that the success of the projects be measured in terms of the numbers of long-term truants attracted by the project and encouraged into part or full-time education at school and/or college of further education.

8. There can be no blue print for the curriculum and activities in such units, but it can be expected that there will be such concentration as seems appropriate on those basic and practical skills necessary for survival.

It would be concerned with encouraging a positive approach to work, with bringing vocational advice to bear, and with fostering those skills that reduce dependence. Above all the units must be convincing, and they will only be so if what they offer appears marketable.

9. It is likely that such units could encourage some young people to enter the 15 to 19 programme which is being piloted (ILEA 67) and the choice of pilot areas is partly influenced by the availability of that type of opportunity.

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10. Pupils will be on the rolls of the two schools and a careful register of their attendance will be kept. Every effort will be made to ensure that attendance at the unit does not become a full-time alternative to attendance at school, but experience at Rosemary House and elsewhere in respect of the target group suggests that regular attendance at the unit will of itself be a considerable achievement by both teacher and pupil.
11. In both cases regular monitoring will be established, though the arrangements for this will be suggested and made by the local interests. The Sub-Committee will expect to receive interim reports on these projects after six months and I will provide these.
12. The financial commitment for each unit would be in respect of:

| | |
|--|-------|
| (a) Tutor in charge (scale 3) | £ |
| (b) General assistant | 5,732 |
| (c) Basic teaching materials and equipment | 2,800 |
| | 200 |
| | 8,732 |

(any additional support by way of teaching staff and materials would be provided by the associated schools and/or through the links with colleges of further education (City and East London College and South East London College)).

This expenditure could be met from a drawing on the amount of £30,000 earmarked in the revenue reserve for assistance with the truant and disruptive child. Of the total additional cost (£17,464) for the two units, (£10,187) would fall into charge in the current financial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS -

1. That subject to the approval of the Finance Sub-Committee to a drawing (No. 45) of £10,187, on the revenue reserve for developments foreseen from September 1976 two pilot projects for long-term truants be established - one based at Samuel Pepys School, the other based in the Hackney Marshes Adventure Playground, in association with Upton House School in accordance with the foregoing report.
2. That each unit be provided with:
 - (a) A Tutor-in-Charge (scale 3)
 - (b) A General Assistant
 - (c) An allowance for materials and equipment.
3. That both units be locally monitored, and that the Sub-Committee receive an interim report six months after their establishment.

AEO/Secondary/5637

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (24.6.76)

1. If the Sub-Committee agree to establish the pilot projects as proposed in the main report the cost in the current financial year (£10,187) can be met from the amount of £30,000 earmarked in the revenue reserve to provide assistance with the truant and disruptive child. £27,500 of this sum has already been drawn and £6,965 will be required for the proposals contained in a further report on today's agenda (Item 6, ILEA 293).

AEO/Secondary/5637

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2. Progress reports will be submitted six months after the establishment of the unit in September 1976. If they are continued in being, there would be an additional commitment from 1977/78 of some £7,300 over and above the cost in the current financial year.

CFO 270
ER/FL/6631

Inner London Education Authority

Education Committee
SCHOOLS SUB-COMMITTEE

Report (2.6.76) by

Education Officer

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|--|----------|
| Item 7 | ILEA 228 |
| GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE | |

1 The Schools Sub-Committee on 3 July 1975 reiterated the six conditions for grants to voluntary organisations working with children of school age as follows:-

- (1) The aim is to get children back to school as soon as possible.
- (2) The organisers of the project are willing to work in co-operation with one or more local secondary schools.
- (3) They have sufficient financial resources to provide and maintain suitable premises.
- (4) The Authority in conjunction with the project organisers select the teachers to work under the general oversight of the District Inspector.
- (5) There is sufficient financial provision in the estimates and a suitable teacher is available without depriving schools.
- (6) Any arrangements are subject to review after one year.

2 In my report (ILEA 414) there was one paragraph which really summed up the philosophy behind the payment of grants to voluntary bodies. It read as follows:-

'The Authority should bring support to the schools and put resources into them and not set out or incidentally help to establish and to grow a significant education provision outside the framework of the organisation and curriculum of the schools, yet meeting the statutory obligations placed on the parents and the Authority in educational terms. We should move towards a situation in which every voluntary organisation is linked very carefully and closely with schools which are fully committed to their work, and each organisation should be prepared as should linked schools to make the return to normal education a realisable aim. Children at such off-site centres should and could then be on the roll of a school and the school or schools should be expected out of the resources allocated to them to take on some financial responsibility for these children. In this way the very valuable contribution which many voluntary agencies at present make in this field could be continued and be integrated to a reasonable degree within the system (some freedom of style being a key to their success in many cases). It follows, of course, that some monitoring of the effectiveness of these arrangements will occur within the schools and must also be made centrally, especially to see how far children would be restored to the main stream of education.'

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3 Divisional Advisory Committees have now been set up and in consequence the process of supporting, monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of voluntary bodies has begun. As grants have been renewed over the past year, I have looked particularly at areas where better standards could be obtained and a general rationalization of aid achieved. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4 Teachers

The teachers in these units work in comparative isolation and with difficult children; they are expected to work in close association with schools, the Education Welfare Service, the Social Services Department and should be trying to keep abreast of developments in education particularly in their immediate field. Their work requires particular skills and aptitudes and is comparable with that of teachers in school sanctuaries who have, however, a large deal of support from the school itself. The grading of teachers in sanctuaries depends on the organisation at the school but most appeared to be paid on Scale 2 or above.

It would not seem inconsistent, therefore, for teachers in off-site centres run by voluntary bodies to be paid at Scale 2 providing that in each case the District Inspector is satisfied that this grading is appropriate for the work of that particular centre, and that the teacher warrants that grading by reason of skill and experience. It is, therefore, proposed that except when an existing organisation is employing a teacher on a higher scale and their grant has always been based on this, grants to voluntary bodies in respect of the salaries of teachers should be such as to enable the teachers to be paid at Scale 2 from 1 September 1976 with earlier implementation in particular instances at the request of the District Inspector.

5 Other Running Costs

Most voluntary bodies receive a grant towards equipment, materials, etc., but this has varied in size from organisation to organisation depending upon individual applications. It would clearly be helpful to all parties concerned to have some basic minimum grant which could be commonly applied, and I propose that this should be the figure agreed for the capitation grant in respect of a pupil at a secondary school (currently about £25 a year). Such a sum may well fall short of the expectations of some organizations which do not have the benefit of any other kind of support, but it is proposed that any additional resources should only be given on the positive recommendation of the District Inspector bearing in mind the special needs of the unit, the level and purpose of previous grants and any contribution made by the schools which benefit.

6 Work with Schools

The units currently in receipt of grants from the voluntary bodies fund have developed in a variety of ways and the extent to which schools have been associated with their aims and activities differs widely. However, the organisations have been and will continue to be encouraged to foster firm links with those schools whose pupils they are assisting - preferably aiming to support one or two specific schools only - and the schools will in turn be expected to make some appropriate contribution (e.g. with consumable materials and perhaps some regular staff involvement).

7 The Distribution of Off-Site Centres

There is a distinct unevenness of the spread of off-site centres run by voluntary bodies with a marked concentration on the Divisions north of the river. The £80,000 in this year's budget will permit existing projects to continue on the new basis discussed above with the possibility of additional help being given in one or two cases. In the event of any new projects being considered for grant from this fund, priority will be given to those areas - particularly south of the river - which have not so far had the benefit of such help.

8 Delegated Authority

If the Sub-Committee agrees the foregoing proposals they may agree to allow me delegated authority to renew grants to those voluntary agencies of which they have previously approved (see Appendix) and where the Divisional Advisory Committee recommends continued assistance. The concurrence of the Finance Officer would be required to any payment over £1,500. Committee authority would, however, continue to be sought to any proposal to cease a grant or to grant aid new projects. The Sub-Committee will also, no doubt, wish to receive a report annually on the grants made.

RECOMMENDATION -

- (a) That unless a specific case were made and accepted for payment at a higher scale, grants for voluntary agencies towards the cost of teachers' salaries should be awarded at the amount not exceeding the mean of a Scale 2 full-time teacher.
- (b) That a basic minimum grant to voluntary agencies towards the cost of equipment, materials, etc., should be per capita the figure currently adopted as the capitation allowance for a secondary school pupil.
- (c) That the Sub-Committee delegate to the Education Officer authority to renew grants on the lines of the foregoing report, including any additional resources for maintenance recommended by the District Inspector, and on the conditions laid down by the Schools Sub-Committee, subject to an annual informative report on the grants made.

Chief Financial Officer (3.6.76) -

The present full year cost of grants to voluntary agencies currently aided by the Authority is of the order of £52,500. The revised basis proposed in the main report, assuming that organizations only receive the basic minimum capitation grant, would lead to expenditure of £54,500 p.a. on these projects, an increase of £2,000 which can be contained within the provision in the 1976-7 revenue estimates.

CFO 211
TR/F1/6467

Chief Fin

The present Authority report, of grant, was of £2,000 estimates.

CFO 211
TR/F1/6467

Division Two

Grant

Inter-Action
(Talacre Tenancy
Project)

Grant from Voluntary Bodies' Fund to cover salaries of one full-time and one part-time teacher and maintenance costs.

Kilburn Workshop
(Kingsgrove Project)

Grant from Voluntary Bodies' Fund to cover salaries of one full-time and one part-time teacher and running costs.

Winchester Project

Grant from Voluntary Bodies' Fund to cover salary of one teacher and running costs.

Project Spark

A general maintenance grant of £625. Teacher's salary provided from Local Initiatives Fund and Hampstead School.

Freightliners

Instalment of grant from Voluntary Bodies' fund to cover salaries of two full-time teachers and maintenance costs.

Division Three

X Stopover Hostel

A general maintenance grant of £5000.

Division Five

Bethnal Green
Intermediate Education
Centre (The Crypt)

A general maintenance grant of £300. Teachers' salaries provided for in estimates.

Christchurch Gardens
Adventure Playground

A general maintenance grant of £250. Teacher's salary provided for in estimates.

The Basement
St. George's Town Hall

A general maintenance grant of £300. Teacher's salary provided for in estimates.

Division Seven

The Rainer Centre

Assistance of £3265 towards running costs provided by Grant from Voluntary Bodies' fund and contribution from Division's allocation of resources. Teachers' salaries provided for in estimates.

Division Eight

✓ Elephant House
(Inside-Outers)

Instalment of grant towards cost of teachers has been paid.

Several Divisions

Community Service
Volunteers

General grant of £4375.

X Street Aid

General grant of £6000.

General grant of £4375.

General grant of £6000.

Division Two
Division Three
Division Five
Division Seven
Division Eight
Several Divisions

Grant from Voluntary Bodies' Fund to cover salaries of one full-time and one part-time teacher and maintenance costs.
Grant from Voluntary Bodies' Fund to cover salaries of one full-time and one part-time teacher and running costs.
Grant from Voluntary Bodies' Fund to cover salary of one teacher and running costs.
A general maintenance grant of £625. Teacher's salary provided from Local Initiatives Fund and Hampstead School.
Instalment of grant from Voluntary Bodies' fund to cover salaries of two full-time teachers and maintenance costs.
A general maintenance grant of £5000.
A general maintenance grant of £300. Teachers' salaries provided for in estimates.
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Assistance of £3265 towards running costs provided by Grant from Voluntary Bodies' fund and contribution from Division's allocation of resources. Teachers' salaries provided for in estimates.
Instalment of grant towards cost of teachers has been paid.
General grant of £4375.
General grant of £6000.

paid.

Item 86.

Description of the Bexley Education Committee
Tutorial Unit.

Footnotes:
307, p.239

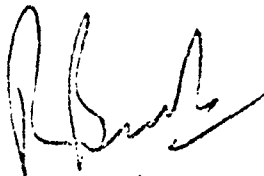
Dear Mr. [Name],

It is a pleasure to have you into the school and the
community, I find it very difficult to see the picture of the

the school does not have any more schools, so for the last
year, the school attendance problem are not solved. A few
days ago, the school board has a meeting and they have
decided to have a school board meeting on the 15th of
the month of the year in the school. I think that the
meeting will be a good one, and I hope that you will
be able to attend.

You may be interested in the report on the
state of our school system of the early school board, and
enclosed a paper written by Mr. Ferridge, the head teacher.

Yours sincerely,



R. Brook,
Deputy Chief Education Officer
for Chief Education Officer

BEXLEY TUTORIAL UNIT

In September, 1960, the Tutorial Unit was started in independent premises adjoining Upland C.P. School. There was one classroom with an adjoining kitchen and a small cloakroom.

Accommodation has been increased here and in other parts of the Borough as the need has arisen and, at the present time, consists of:-

Upland Tutorial Unit

Hutted accommodation. 3 classrooms, 1 small cloakroom, 1 kitchen, 1 cottage.

Sidcup Tutorial Unit (Houses 5 and 3 opened January, 1968)

Total of 9 teaching rooms, 1 office, 1 kitchen.

The Lodge Tutorial Unit (Opened September, 1971)

Hutted accommodation. 3 classrooms, 1 office, 1 cloakroom.

Sidcup Tutorial Unit (House 1 opened April, 1972)

Total of 4 teaching rooms, 1 small office, 1 kitchen.

(The work of this Unit is described in a separate report)

In September, 1975, a further Unit will be opened in the Borough.

Number of Pupils

The total number of pupils receiving treatment from the above Units is 456 (February, 1975).

Staffing

The total establishment for the Tutorial Units is:-

Organiser

Teachers - the equivalent of 15 full-time teachers (some full, some part-time).

With ancillary help at each of the Units.

Aims

The aim of the Unit is to provide help according to the child's needs. In Tutorial work there can be flexibility and there can be adaptation to individual growth. The Unit seeks to provide preventive help so that a child's difficulty does not become too severe.

The intention is for children to remain within their own school and attend the Unit for short periods - mainly one or two half-day sessions - to receive appropriate and intensive help for their problems. The provision originally was for Junior children of average and above average ability, but now children of all ages and ability are helped. The tendency in three of the Units is for the Infant and Junior children to be of average and above average ability and the older children to be average and below.

There is the whole range of behavioural patterns portrayed by:-

- (a) Nuisance symptoms of the hyper-active, restless, actively aggressive children; those with disregard for other people's property and those who take other people's property.
- (b) Passive symptoms of withdrawn children and those who, to a greater or lesser extent, have difficulty in making contact with other children and adults.
- (c) Evasive symptoms of school phobics and children having psychosomatic ailments.
- (d) Learning difficulties of those children who fail to acquire basic skills.

Referrals

Referrals are made by:-

Chief Education Officer

Head Teachers

Educational Psychologists

Psychiatrists (Child Guidance Clinic)

Area Health Authority

Director of Social Services through individual Social Workers.

All these agencies are able to make direct contact with the Organiser of the Unit.

Close liason is maintained with these agencies throughout the child's attendance at the Unit.

It is considered advisable that all children who are referred to the Unit should be assessed by an Educational Psychologist, although entry would not be precluded because assessment had not been made.

Psychiatric assessment and guidance is readily available.

Contact with Parents and Schools

Before a child is admitted to the Unit his problems are discussed with his Head Teacher. The Head is then requested to discuss the matter with the child's parents before they are invited to the Unit. A visit to the Unit is always arranged for the parents and child to meet the Head of the Unit and discuss the ways in which the child will be helped. Thereafter parents are always able to visit or contact the Unit for help, information and advice.

It may be a person from one of the other referring agencies who first talks to the parents about their child attending the Unit. In no circumstances does a letter go to the parents from the Unit, until the Head of the Unit is satisfied that parents are fully aware that their child is being considered for this special help.

The Head of each Unit visits the schools to discuss the problems and progress of the children, and teachers in the schools are encouraged to visit the Unit to see work in progress and to maintain a link between the Unit and the schools.

Since September, 1969, a course on the Teaching of Reading in the Junior School has been held every term at the Unit. This in-service training has been extended to include Remedial Reading in the Secondary School.

These courses were arranged and tutored by the Primary Adviser, the lectures being given by the Head of the Tutorial Unit. Not only has this enabled the knowledge gained at the Unit about 'Remedial Reading' to be spread to other teachers in the Borough, but it has also meant that teachers have become more familiar with the range of work of the Unit and have been able to make use of the ideas and apparatus.

Due to this close liason between the parents, the school and the Tutorial Unit, fewer difficulties have arisen from the children coming to the Unit than might be expected. They are enabled to cope with an additional environment between home and school by priority being given to the school timetable - school outings, etc. No truanting has occurred; it would seem the pupil is aware that the Unit is prepared to meet his needs, while at the same time there is close contact with schools regarding registration and attendance.

A transport service is provided for Infant and Junior children whose parents cannot bring them to the Unit, or for whom an unaccompanied journey would be inadvisable.

At the first meeting consideration is given to ways by which the child can gain help from the Unit.

There are two main areas of treatment:-

1. Remedial work
2. Non-directive Play Therapy.

The latter is not always appropriate for a child so that any medium which assists the child's personal growth is used - creative activities such as music, drama, art and craft.

Remedial Work

Assessment and classification

(i) Initial Interview

Discussion of child's own attitude to problems.

Reading test.

Reference to the Referring Agency's statement of child's problems.

Allocation of children to appropriate sessions based on needs:-

- i.e. a) Number of sessions to be spent in Unit.
- b) Individual or Group Tuition for Basic subjects.
- c) Appropriate additional therapeutic activities to help the child to come to terms with its emotional difficulties.

(ii) Progressive assessment continues throughout child's attendance by daily records and a thorough investigation twice a year, which includes a variety of tests. This continues until the child is ready to return to full-time school.

Scope of Work

Reading

Although full use is made of Reading Materials produced by Educational Publishers and Suppliers, the greater proportion of the apparatus in use is made at the Tutorial Unit. This enables the work to be fashioned according to each child's needs and ensures a variety of material designed to maintain interest, and create a personal programme for the child.

Written and Spoken Language

Children are encouraged and helped to become more confident with the hope that their standard of both written and spoken English will improve.

Number

Help is given if specifically requested by the School.

Non-Directive Play Therapy

Some rooms are equipped with play material suitable for all ages and for such activities as sand and water play, clay, painting and woodwork. In addition, as much cooking and eating is done as is possible since feeding and early learning are so closely related. The children eat and have their drink before a work period. Thus basic needs are satisfied. Aggressive play can take place safely. Invalid wheel chairs can be satisfactory as pram substitutes or mobile tanks. Uniforms, guns, mattresses, blankets, cardboard boxes make military warfare realistic. At times there are camps and the same play materials become quiet homes. There is a collection of junk which can be used for destruction or construction - this, and the opportunity for aggressive play, enables a child to come to terms with his own aggression and helps safeguard the rest of the equipment.

In the quiet play rooms there is a wealth of play material - forts, soldiers, army vehicles, toy animals, cars, garages, railway sets, dolls, a pram, puppets, dressing-up clothes and construction toys.

In the war play the children tend to play with others because they want two 'sides' and an enemy, but in the quiet play room there is much socialising and an elaborate interplay with the toys.

There is ample floor space in which to play and there is a comfortable area with a carpet, a table, a sideboard and easy chairs. The room suggests home and thus it becomes a meeting point of home and school. About forty-five minutes to an hour is given for play. We call this 'free time', a term which is more acceptable if a secondary pupil can make use of this form of treatment.

After free time it is necessary to have a transitional period during which the children may choose to draw, to do jigsaws or to look at books. This enables both the child and the adult to adjust from the non-directive play therapy to the remedial teaching situation.

Sessions

The number of sessions varies - mainly 1 or 2 half-day sessions; but the children not attending school have 4 to 7 half-day sessions. Recently it has been found that some children, whose problems are mainly emotional, do not need weekly sessions so they attend 3 - 4 times a term.

Another form of help is for a teacher from the Unit to undertake peripatetic work in the schools - sessions last for about 40 minutes.

- 6 -

Thus intensive help can be given to the pupils - both for emotional difficulties and with school work - because of flexibility of sessions, variety of treatment and smallness of groups (5 - 8 children) and individual tuition and attention is given when appropriate.

Some secondary pupils who should not miss school in the day time, may attend after-school sessions. The work done in these sessions is to improve their level of reading and English and more specifically spelling.

The Further Education class was set up for young people with reading difficulties - some having attended the Unit previously, and some having been referred from factories by Probation Officers and by the Youth Employment Service. Many adults (age range 21 - 50) also now attend; some of these have severe reading problems.

Summary

The work of the Unit can be summarised as follows:-

1) Prevention

To provide early help for children showing signals of distress.

2) Treatment

Concern and consideration for the individual and meeting his needs by:-

- a) Individual attention
- b) Grouping
- c) Flexibility of sessions
- d) Appropriate therapeutic activities

3) Continuous Care

As long as the individual needs help and support he may make use of the variety of provisions, i.e. Infant to Junior, Junior to Secondary, Secondary to Further Education or Employment.

4) Intensive Help

- a) To assist the individual to come to have a realistic awareness of himself and to be conscious of his own true worth. If an individual feels himself to be acceptable, he will be able to make genuine relationships with adults and peers.
- b) To help the child to tolerate events in his environment which may continue to cause anxiety.
- c) To give appropriate help with specific learning problems.

5) Follow-up

When the child is no longer actively involved at the Unit, he knows that he is welcome to come to visit at any time or to request further help should he so wish.

House 1 Sidcup (Opened April, 1972)

This Unit deals only with pupils of Secondary School age. It was specifically intended for those with emotional difficulties.

Accommodation

1 House - 4 rooms, 1 kitchen, 1 office.

Staffing

1 Teacher in charge, Houghton Scale 3.

1 Teacher, Houghton Scale 2.

1 Teacher, Special schools allowance.

The aim of the Unit is to provide help according to individual needs in an organisation allowing for flexibility and adaptation to personal growth.

There is the whole range of behavioural patterns portrayed by:-

- (a) Nuisance symptoms of the hyper-active, restless, actively aggressive children; those with disregard for other people's property and those who take other people's property.
- (b) Passive symptoms of withdrawn children and those who, to a greater or lesser extent, have difficulty in making contact with other children and adults.
- (c) Evasive symptoms of school refusal and children having psychosomatic ailments.
- (d) Learning difficulties of those children who fail to acquire basic skills.

In practice, the pupils attending the Unit fall into two broad categories:-

- (i) Those children whose symptoms have been recognised early enough for their problems to be contained within the school situation with supportive treatment from the Unit.
- (ii) Those who are unable to take their place in the normal school situation because of the extreme severity of their problems.

School Refusals

The school refusals are offered five to seven half-day sessions each week and are given education appropriate to their academic level.

The aim is for these children to return to school, but they usually need many months at the Unit before this comes about.

When it does, the re-entry into school is managed as a gradual, part-time process with supportive sessions at the Unit which will reduce at a pace deemed appropriate to each individual situation.

School Suspensions or Exclusions

These children are attending the Unit because they have been suspended or excluded from school for anti-social behaviour.

Again, education is given according to the individual's level of attainment and ability.

They are seen individually for as many sessions as seems advisable before they are absorbed into a group. They should attend from 5 - 7 half-day sessions and the aim is, if at all possible, that they return to school eventually - either to their own school - or have a change of school if this is thought advisable.

When a pupil returns to school, this is managed as a part-time process with supportive sessions at the Unit. It has been found that these need to continue for a long period, either weekly or of an occasional nature.

Referral and Admission

Referrals are made by:-

Chief Education Officer

Head Teachers

Educational Psychologists

Psychiatrists (Child Guidance Clinic)

Area Health Authority

Director of Social Services - through individual Social Workers.

All these agencies are able to contact the Head of the Unit direct, but if the pupil is to attend the Tutorial Unit instead of going to school, the admission must be confirmed by the Education Officer.

It is considered advisable that all children who are referred should be assessed by the Educational Psychologist, although entry is not precluded because the assessment has not been made.

In no circumstances does a letter go to the parents from the Unit until the Head of the Unit is satisfied that parents are fully aware that their child is being considered for this special help - normally this will have been done by the referring agency.

A visit to the Unit is always arranged for the parent/s and child to meet Staff and discuss ways in which the child will be helped: also, when a Social Worker is involved with the child where the problems are severe, he or she is invited to the initial interview. Thereafter, parents are encouraged to visit or contact the Unit for help, information and advice.

Close liaison is maintained with all those concerned for the child; this involves an exchange of visits and information with appropriate case conferences.

At the initial interview, an attempt is made to assess the attitudes of the child and parents to their present situation.

Reference will, of course, already have been made to any information received concerning the child but the emphasis from this point on must be on future need.

Before the child actually starts at the Unit, an introductory programme will have been arranged as to the number of sessions thought advisable and to the nature of the treatment considered appropriate.

Therapeutic activities helping the child to come to terms with its emotional difficulties form the basic content of the work of the Unit and include:-

- (a) Activities ensuring "instant success" to build confidence and improve a possible poor self-image.
- (b) Help is given, if necessary, with basic learning difficulties, e.g. in written and spoken English, number, etc., to remove the embarrassment which so often accompanies poor achievement in these areas.
- (c) A continuation of education appropriate to the child's academic level - including C.S.E. and 'O'-level work.
- (d) Opportunities for quietness to ease tensions.
- (e) Opportunities for children to be alone or to be part of a verbally communicating group.
- (f) Opportunities to work through emotional difficulties stemming from unresolved problems from an earlier age.
- (g) Time made available for choice from a range of activities of a creative and constructional nature, including the use of games such as "Connect", draughts and chess - together with appropriate play material.
The choice is made in a group situation and the collective participating so often assists inner-growing and the ability to relate to others.
- (h) Opportunities are taken, as they arise, to help children work through their emotional difficulties by talking with an adult - uninvolved in the situation from which the difficulties stem - but prepared to listen and help the child towards an awareness of the reality situation.

Thus intensive help can be given for emotional difficulties, and with school work, because of the flexibility and variety of the sessions, the smallness of the groups (3 to 7 children) and, in appropriate situations, individual attention and/or tuition.

Daily records, objective tests and detailed investigation twice a year provide continuing assessment of the child's progress.

Summary

The work of the Unit can be summarised as follows:-

1. Prevention

To provide early help for children showing signals of distress.

2. Treatment

Concern and consideration for the individual and meeting his needs by:-

- a) Individual attention.
- b) Grouping.
- c) Flexibility of session.
- d) Appropriate therapeutic activities.

3. Intensive Help

- a) To assist the individual to arrive at a realistic awareness of himself and to be conscious of his own true worth. If an individual has self-regard, he will be more able to make positive relationships with peers and adults.
- b) To help the individual to tolerate events in his environment which may continue to cause anxiety.
- c) To give appropriate educational help.

4. Continuous Care

As long as the individual needs help and support, he may make use of the facilities offered from the Unit.

Even after leaving school, he knows he is welcome to visit the Unit at any time or to request further help.

An occasional invitation is sent to those who have attended this particular Unit to meet socially on a specific evening.

Item 87.

Nash, Roy. "A Free School Inside the State
System", Where? No. 61, September, 1971.

Footnotes:
309, p.244

A FREE SCHOOL INSIDE THE STATE SYSTEM

Roy Nash

A school for tough kids in the East End. Alex Bloom becomes head and adopts 'soft' methods. No exams, no caning, no marks. He survives there for 10 years. On the eve of the publication of a special issue of *WHERE* devoted to the work and ideas of A. S. Neill, we look at how much freedom our ordinary state schools have to adopt the experimental methods that can flourish in the private sector. This is the story of just one attempt at radical change - at St George's in Stepney.

When they buried Alex Bloom, state school headmaster, weeping families lined the streets to watch the funeral procession. It was an incredible thing to happen, absolutely unique in state education history. In my time I've reported funerals of prominent people, but I've never seen such genuine grief as on that day in the East End. It showed the humanity of true education. I talked to a lot of people and they genuinely felt personally deprived . . . that their kids had lost someone who was *necessary* to them.

That extraordinary tribute marked the end of one man's story that had been, by turns, courageous, revolutionary and tragic. Among the official mourners were some who felt they were following the remains of a saint. There were others, if the truth had been told, who were not sorry to see him go. There were still more, even in the emotional crowds on the dockland pavements, who nourished a genuine sense of affection for the man, despite their lack of enthusiasm for his work as a teacher.

Alex Bloom - born 1 March 1895, died

after in state education, who attempted to run what is sometimes called a 'freedom' school in an unpromising, slumland area.

I remember him clearly as a small, slightly hunchbacked man, a red-blooded, attractive personality, despite his disability, and deeply attached to the East End kids he found at the bottom of the post-war social ladder.

St George in the East, the central mixed secondary school in Cable Street, Stepney, of which Bloom became head in October 1945, was an overpowering gloomy building put up in 1899. The surrounding area, already seedy and run-down before the war, had been gnawed at and shaken apart by German bombers. There were streets of mean terraced houses where bearded-over windows were common. Yet families, sometimes three or four to a small house, existed there.

Many of these families were at the mere subsistence level of life. Fathers, some of them skilled dockworkers but most of them unskilled manual workers, had been away in the forces. Many of Bloom's children had been evacuated, earlier in the war, to the alien countryside. Families that had survived to reform as complete units did so, in many cases, because of the efforts of the mothers.

Alex Bloom was acutely conscious of the social situation that pressed upon his school. But he was also very much aware that beyond the worst immediate streets there were enough families with improving prospects and children with potential talent to whom he could offer opportunity.

By accounts of colleagues who knew him well, Alex Bloom had been an orthodox teacher, with authoritarian views, before the war. He 'always walked around with a cane under his arm', according to one of them.

Curiously, and because he was something of a loner - he was a bachelor who lived most of his working life in a boarding house in the Lea Valley and had few inter-

actions with his colleagues - he was not certain of what led to his change of attitude.

But there is plenty of evidence to suggest that when he took over St George in the East, and decided on his policy of a 'free' school, he was given warm and active support by J. C. Hill, the London County Council's local divisional inspector.

Hill, it seems, helped him to secure a highly experienced, imaginative staff of seven teachers. Their ages ranged from around 30 to the late 50s. Most have since died or are living in retirement, but it is remarkable that present teachers, who met that original staff during school-practice days, speak of Bloom's men and women with real admiration.

'They were among the finest teachers I have met,' said one headmaster who, as a newly demobbed RAF man, was a junior member of the St George's staff for a time.

That original staff undoubtedly made it possible for Bloom to put his ideas into practice so successfully. And it was the eventual break-up of that staff, through retirement, death or promotion, that led to the decline of the educational and social strength Bloom engendered.

No prefects, no prizes

Bloom set out to build in his school a fully co-operative community. There were no prefects, no prizes, no uniforms, no competition and no corporal punishment. A. S. Neill had clearly been an influence with his ideas of 'child-orientated education' and 'self-regulating' children.

Bloom did this because he believed that, in his kind of East London area, a 'freedom' school might well be the only place where children could be given the chance to mature socially and emotionally. He abandoned the cane basically because he saw it was a mark of a tyranny of adults over children. But he was also astute enough to realise that the cane is more often used by teachers as a hallmark of a supposedly proper authority rather than an aid to 'improving' the child.

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'Corporal punishment is a symbol of middle-class authority. It's a hangover from the Victorian idea of the "heavy father". Push father too far and the ultimate disgrace is a beating. But many of our children know already that heavy fatherhood starts with a clout or a belting. The fatherly advice, if any, comes after, or even during the physical punishment.' For those children, he believed, a school caning had no prospect of being regarded by the victims as a 'deterrent'.

Affection of children

In terms of the affection in which his children held him he clearly won on this issue. Not that juvenile crime disappeared from the ranks of his 240 pupils. There were several cases of theft in the area by his children and one boy even stole a couple of suits that Bloom had left hanging in his office. Such incidents were, of course, picked on by some local magistrates, who gave the impression that the school, by its refusal to cane, was turning itself into a nursery for criminals. And the LCC clearly disliked the whole situation intensely. If they could have got rid of Bloom they certainly would have done so.

They talked about kids smashing up the school, and ignored the fact that they didn't do so. For even veteran teachers who were by no means 'sold' on Bloom's attitude to education generally agree that only about one in 10 of the pupils took advantage of the no-caning policy.

'To them,' said one, 'Alex Bloom was clearly a "soft touch". You could get away with almost anything, they seemed to think, because the headmaster would still go on loving you.'

The support of the other nine out of every 10 children was shown by the way they accepted the community spirit which Alex Bloom strove to build. One afternoon a week they were allowed to choose what lessons or projects to do. And they enjoyed the sense of responsibility that this conferred on them.

St George in the East built up a good reputation for its interest in art, poetry, music and drama. Often Bloom would take parties of pupils to Sunday morning concerts. Every year the head and his staff took around 180 children away to camp - a high proportion of children in the Stoney circumstances.

Miss Leila Berg recalls in her contribution to the symposium *Children's Rights* (Elek Books, 1971, £2.50), they delighted and surprised the respectable citizens of Chichester by the absorbed interest they showed in their town while staying at a nearby camp. They found out about the place in the way Alex Bloom had taught them - stopping people in the street, 'What's that clock tower, Mister.'

Far from beating up the place they went about asking questions of its history and geography and architecture in their blunt but enthusiastic Cockney voices. Children from many other, better endowed neighbourhoods do that kind of thing all the time. But these children were doing so because Bloom had shown them that they, too, were entitled to benefit from some worthwhile adventure.

The miserable school 'yard'

The miserable school 'yard' was too much for Bloom to accept as a suitable recreation centre for his children. He organised dances in the school hall at lunchtimes and encouraged his staff to join in. He joined in himself as he often did at physical education sessions. It was, indeed, characteristic that he spent most of his time moving around the school, involved in its daily work, trying to know each of his pupils personally.

When he spoke to the school at morning assembly a recurring theme was the word 'kindness'. It was his favourite word. Later some people came to see that as an expression of his naivety. But he believed in it and he believed that schools ought to be places of light and warm human relationships where people accept that the greatest

value in real freedom is that it leads to self-discipline, tolerance and respect.

Given that kind of basis, as he saw it, young people would mature as well-rounded creatures and learn how to learn. Exams, competition and rigid authority he saw simply as man-made barriers to proper growth. He wanted, he said, 'to have a school that contains no divisive element'.

But his plans never came to full fruition. In the normal course of events he began to lose the staff that had, with few exceptions, been won over to his view of life and learning. The new recruits were less enthusiastic, some were positively hostile. And, outside the school, parental feelings were beginning to harden against him. The growing national competition of post-war education, a rising standard of material ambition in many families, made parents more anxious about examination success.

The children remained on his side but that, some people said, was only because 'they get away with it instead of working'. Eventually, many parents who had the opportunity began to send their children to other schools. The 'upper end' quality of St George's intake began to decline and Alex Bloom became, as Michael Duane of Rivinghill School was later to become, a thorn in the side of the narrowly bureaucratic LCC.

One September morning in 1955, just after morning assembly, Alex Bloom was struck down by a brain haemorrhage, and died a few days later without regaining consciousness.

'Alex Bloom,' said an East London teacher, 'cared about children. But perhaps he got a bit carried away by his own ideas.'

Maybe. But Alex Bloom wanted to help children who might otherwise have been ground down by the educational system. He needed time and he needed support. In the end he was denied both.

Roy Nash was Fleet Street's first educational correspondent. Formerly with the 'Daily Mail', he now freelances.

Item 88.

Midwinter, E. "Stick With The System",
Times Educational Supplement, October 19,
1971, p.2.

Footnotes:

311, p.245

Stick with the system

Eric Midwinter

In a recent leader *The Times Educational Supplement* spoke sadly of the Liverpool I.e.a. "missing an opportunity to support the kind of unorthodox innovation which only an independent venture can launch". In the specific case under review—a gallant and inventive attempt to establish a "free school" in an unpropitious area of Liverpool—the I.e.a. have now generously consented to give limited support.

This in itself is interesting, as the free school movement aims at the "fragmentation of the state system". Beyond the rather bewildering logic of an avowedly private venture wishing for public support, there is a mild amusement in the I.e.a. cheerfully volunteering this first step towards walking the plank. None the less, there may well be occasional worthy objects of public assistance of this kind. What is less believable is the bald statement that private enterprise is the sole mode of innovative action.

Historically, the record of innovation from within the state system is a sound one, particularly since the war. It has increasingly been pointed out that a process of osmosis has been a principal factor in overall reform, with teachers actually seeing reforms succeed and with courses, in-service and student training, advisers, inspectors and so on acting as agents of change. Let me say at once that I am unimpressed by the speed of these alterations and that—progressive primary method is one illustration—the quantitative assessment of such change has been exaggerated. It is, however, on the acceleration of this solid gradual process that the radical restructuring of the education system depends.

Progressive independent schools have had less influence than some commentators have indicated. Teachers often regard such experiments as hothouse plants which blossom exotically and wither prematurely; they rarely see them as transferable to the more mundane allotments of the normal set-up. Indeed, they have sometimes proved counterproductive as teachers argue, with some validity, that they would not "work" in real life.

It is the right wing of independent education that has had much more impact in, for instance, its influence on the stamp and character of the state grammar school. Private education has tended towards a deadening and elitist conformity, even when its original intentions have been charitable and humanitarian; many "public" schools testify to this.

Conversely, there can be few educational structures more flexible than the English state system. This has disadvantages (such as the difficulty of altering "bad" schools) but lack of opportunity for innovation is not one of these. A colourful and variegated pattern of innovation is being attempted across the nation at all times and in everyday situations.

One sometimes wonders whether the progenitors of private experiments have fully canvassed the possibilities of the public sector. This is not a dewy-eyed, naive view of public education. In practice, the main course of action for those of us who wish to see a fundamental change in the state system is to operate purposefully within it.

To opt out of the public sector is to run a grave risk, if the aim of pilot experiment is to produce a broader response. It is not only a question of throwing out the baby with the bathwater, it is the hazard of throwing out the bath as well. The capital investment in our massive educational fabric is overwhelmingly huge—to turn one's back on this, as opposed to trying to change it from within, can be eccentric and wholly-headed.

It is an arduous task, but because of the versatility of the system, not impossible. Witness Priority, a national centre for urban education to be established in Liverpool next January. It will sustain and extend the Liverpool educational priority area project and attempt to act as a window for urban community education throughout the country. It will operate at base with some 35 schools, 30 playgroups, 250 teacher-students and 20 or so adult groups. It will be in touch with I.e.a.s, colleges and other agencies up and down the country.

Such is the flexibility of the state

system that the Liverpool is able to provide housing and office services and perhaps much other assistance to enable a composite agency including existing elements from the Area Centre for Education, Co-ordinating the Workers' Educational Association, the Liverpool Council of Social Service, the John Moores Foundation, the Oxford University Evaluation Unit and so on.

Paradoxically, it is where innovation is most fundamental, the imperative need to provide within the state system is most acute. In our own field of community education we are anxious to "centralize" the schools; we know there exists a "we" and "our" image of educational organization as of most other social institutions so much so that commentators speak pejoratively of an establishment-oriented, bureaucratic system far removed from the citizenry.

Nevertheless, the state is a conglomeration of individuals, not a monolith. Even if they rate or tax payers, not just them parents and children, but them with a stake in the schools. If the system is wrong, it needs to be changed, not abandoned. In fact, the state system is the public system, and it is the task of those interested in community education to render this genuine in practice.

My own radicalism is not so fashioned enough for me to be an unrepentant devotee of the public system and a fervent proponent of the view that all available energy should be pressed into changing it. Its many weak points and needs. Equally, I am a suspicious opponent of private education in all its faces.

Although, of course, one recognizes how tempting it is to expect the indulgence of going it alone one mourns the loss of talent and energetic educators who attempt to establish independent "models", for these are too often dead-ends rather than shortcuts. My contention is that, not only is the state system capable of comprehending innovation, it is, effectively, the best and the necessary focus for it.

Eric Midwinter is director of Liverpool educational priority project.



one of 276 2000

It is difficult enough of communication specialisms without multiplying the concerned. Conurbation word, but the places and a reformed local system must be approached with them and not the towns which spawned authority need not mean faceless bureaucrats. should provide the back local diversity. have been successful with high street information accessible to the providing advice about services: all authorities service places of this kind. help with parents' and school problems. But for the education meet and listen to particularly at primary cooperation with to the success of the the school itself. And large authority, determine home-school co-ordinating courses and providing courses and position to improve than a small one.

can go ahead the have both to allocate nursery education circular 8/60 which progering up of nursery priority areas unless that married women return to work as a

nursery education was release women for during the war and when teachers were in but now that nursery central part of most programmes, the in-school education of the individual clearly recognised by The principle extended to cover ups of children, in well as towns. A senening the provision children would be to or 8/60 and to en new primary school

Item 89.

Cameron, S. "The Liverpool Beat",
Teacher, March 3, 1972. p.3.

Footnotes:
312, p.205

The Teacher

that some children in inferior schools just being and building costs in

of Environment al- erential cost limit for why the Department Science should pursue

To pretend that the inadequacies of the first year of the second cycle can be remedied in the second year is therefore just humbug, or if not humbug, dangerously naive. Indeed, the whole of the James philosophy is exposed if you talk of two semicycles, and then examine the straps and bandages needed to hold them together.

The arguments put forward by the NUT closely complement those of the Universities Council, for the Union has spent a great deal of time exposing the inadequacies and dangers of the proposals for this revamped probationary year.

The council is also strongly critical of the fact that the James proposals would actually reduce the period of initial training for the growing number of students who at present do a four-year BED course.

The council endorses the NUT's view that the need is for a genuine graduate qualification for all teachers.

They think nothing of the proposed EA(Ed) and very little of the Dip HE unless it were offered much more widely than just in the colleges.

Inevitably, there are considerable differences of approach between the UCET commentary and that of the NUT, which will be published next week, but it is remarkable how closely the conclusions of the two organisations agree on many of the major points.



Half the English under-18 side to tour America next month comes from two Manchester schools.

What is surprising though, is the secondary modern contribution. Three of the touring side are still under 16—and all from the Broadway school at Cheshire.

The soccer and cricket and that's all image of the secondary modern has long been banished at this school. Golf, cycle speedway, orienteering are all options on the sporting curriculum.

nine years ago

The great dress question has cropped up at Swinton, though in this case it is the eyes of the teachers.

LIVERPOOL is waging war on the idea of education as some kind of sacred duty that must never be sullied by contact with the workaday world.

In the best of the Merseyside schools there is a determination to make the work of the classroom relevant to everyday living.

The point of departure is the child's own experience, his culture, his values and his community.

At Netherley, a big new estate on the outskirts of Liverpool, the city has built its first community school. Every evening at four o'clock the families and neighbours of pupils can join the children for football, drama, films, chess and dancing and music lessons. There are adult education classes and a play-group in the afternoons which the older girls help to run.

Attendance figures are soaring and vandalism, in school or on the estate, is almost unknown. The gap between the classroom and the home is being closed and with more

THE LIVERPOOL BEAT

by Sue Cameron

than pleasant theories and an occasional open day.

Eric Midwinter, who gave his name to the city's educational priorities project, is following up his work in this field. He wants not academic classroom exclusion but inclusion with the community, close involvement of parents with schools and a curriculum that prepares children for their future roles as voters, consumers and neighbours.

This conviction that it's a child's own community and culture that count, and not that of his teachers, is shared by the radical Liverpool Free school, though the methods

of the two are quite different.

It's the things that children can actually see and find out about for themselves that are important, Dr Midwinter said.

Children see electric light everyday, and instead of waiting until pupils reach secondary age before discussing the mysteries of an electric circuit, some of Liverpool's infant and junior schools are teaching elementary science.

It is based on children's own experience. At another junior school there is not an art department but a department of visual education. This is not just a trendy change in terminology. The children are helped to

From despair came the kaleidoscopic world of a Free school

MENTION the Liverpool Free school and local teachers react in one of two ways: either they label it a wrongheaded but courageous experiment or they raise their eyes to heaven and change the subject.

At first glance it is not hard to see why.

Everton Heights, where the school is situated, looks like an urban wilderness. The old slum terraced houses have been flattened and tower block flats rise gauntly out of the surrounding rubble. Here and there an original pub or corner shop has been left standing in a huge patch of empty ground. Everywhere, the earth has been churned into small regular mounds to keep the gypsies away, or so the children said.

The school itself is housed in a church hall. Upstairs, a handful of boys are playing with a football. Below, in the dark basement, there are a few tables covered with trays of powder paint, and some chairs. There are no desks, blackboards, pictures or bookshelves. The only brightness is the electric light coming through the hatch of the kitchen in the corner.

In another room off the main basement, Rhona, a drop-out undergraduate, is helping a younger girl to make a dragon with a table, cushions and a roll of gold foil. Two of the girls say they are going to put on a play after lunch.

• ICERINK

Everyone goes upstairs and the two come on to the stage in dressing up clothes and start to sing. But by this time some children are trying to raise money for a trip to the icerink and a few boys have started playing football again. The small but eager group who are concentrating on the performance can hear nothing

drawn from Scotland Road, once the most notorious area of Liverpool.

'A few years ago it wasn't safe to walk down Scotland Road unless you came from the district,' said one girl who comes in each morning to help at the school.

'It's different now of course.'

The school was founded by John Ord and Bill Murphy. Both had taught in State schools in the area and both were convinced that the needs of the children and of the community were not being met.

• ALIEN

An alien middle class culture was being fed to children who already had a perfectly good culture of their own, and the subjects taught were largely irrelevant to the lives they would lead.

Truancy was rife and parents, whose own schooling had done little for them, were more likely than not to reinforce their children's negative attitude to school.

So the Free school aims to improve itself with the community and help the children learn the practical things that will be useful to them in later life.

That was why some pupils had been off chopping wood which they had then taken round to local pensioners.

That was why the teachers had taken some children on a demonstration a few days before for a better pedestrian crossing in Scotland Road.

'Education should be about relating to other people in a social context,' Marilyn, one teacher, said.

In the ordinary schools round here middle class teachers come into the area from outside and teach the children history and geography inside the four walls of a classroom. Middle class children succeed with a system like this. Lower class children don't.

sense of the word, is not ignored altogether. On their afternoon expeditions the children are taken to museums and art galleries as well as to the factories and power stations that are part of their own community.

And as at Summerhill, pupils can learn formal school subjects if they are interested and ask for lessons.

The teachers point out that experiments in America have shown that adults can learn in one year something that will take a child a number of years of formal schooling. They argue that if someone needs to take an exam he will get through the syllabus far more quickly when he is grown up. School years can, therefore, be put to better use.

Nonetheless, there are plenty of books at the Free school and the pupils are encouraged to take them home.

As for discipline, or rather the

total lack of it, the idea is that the children will learn self-regulation. There are in fact some rules—the rules agreed by the children themselves at school meetings.

'We tell them they can behave as they like but they know that sooner or later they are going to have to work something out,' Marilyn said.

• SMOKING

Decisions made by the school meeting include a ban on smoking, which is blatantly ignored by the children, and a ban on visitors to the school except on Fridays.

The school diary records that at one meeting the children agreed to have the cane back to stop bullying. They were told by John Ord that if they wanted the cane there was no point in coming to the Free school.

The dedication of the staff and the enthusiasm of the children is

express themselves visually and so things in visual terms. And this is something that all children can learn to do, which of using our own drawings for pointing on the wall, the art irrelevant to all but the talented few.

At secondary level Liverpool has its own curriculum development projects for 14 year-old school leavers. Working with parents, and not with a group of researchers working in isolation, teachers have come up with Design for Living, which is just what it is called. It covers subjects like budgeting and water, relationships with parents and marriage.

Meanwhile, in one school, older boys are building their own boats and learning craft skills, geography and maths at the same time. Some of them don't realise that the calculations needed for navigation and the blackboard equations in ordinary classrooms are all aspects of one subject.

But practical maths is just one way of taking schools out of the educational box-house.

undoubtedly. There are now over 40 pupils aged from 9 upwards and there is a waiting list of nearly 50. A register is kept and attendance is good.

When they were at State schools many of the children showed their contempt by not bothering to turn up. The naggin' rate was almost 50 per cent.

The school is trying to move from its dingy church hall basement. There are a number of empty school buildings in the area and the school is trying to get permission to use one of them, so far without success.

The Free school is an honest attempt to take education out of its ivory tower and make it relevant to working class life.

It should at least be given chance to succeed.

Decent buildings would help.

...and another that went into the community

LIVERPOOL'S first community school has met antagonism on all sides.

Neighbouring night schools fear their students will be lured. Mothers keep their children away because they dislike the rough element in some of the youth and community activities. Nearby households complain of the noise.

Yet the huge community school that serves the Netherley estate at the city's edge is not only surviving the attacks but extending its work.

Now in its second year, Netherley is the only community school that is set in a working class urban society. When it opened it had no blueprint to follow and it is still feeling its way and forging links

community is still growing and it was this that attracted her to the job.

No one spoke

One young mother who had moved to the estate burst into tears the first evening she came to the school. She said that she had spoken to no one, except her husband and children, for five months.

Other local people with few real interests of their own, have thrown themselves into the organisation of groups and activities and the number who come every week is rising rapidly.

For although Lyn Jenkinson helps and advises on setting up new groups, and links with Netherley's headmistress, Mr W. A. Blair, the aim is that the community should organise the things it wants for itself.

Traffic is not all one way. The school has just acquired a caravan to tour the area and make as everyone knows what is happening at the school, both before and after 4 pm.

Not surprisingly the parents' isolation is very strong.

Sometimes school and community activities clash. The most popular evening groups apart from film shows are sports dancing, a local Morris with girls not being car, transience and food. These can put heavy pressure on facilities, especially the school grounds and the gym. But the girls always have first call.

First and foremost, Netherley is a school, one that will eventually house over 1,100 children. But involvement with the community means that the old distinction

Item 90.

Goldman, J. "San Francisco's Education Switchboard",
Times Educational Supplement, July 21, 1972.

Footnotes:

313, p.245

"Hello. Is this education switchboard?"

"Yes."

"I'm looking for a school for my daughter."

"How old is she?"

"Nine. We're very dissatisfied with the state school she's going to now and we want something like a free school. Are there any in San Francisco?"

This is the start of one of the many telephone calls which come into the Education Switchboard daily. During the conversation which follows we try to elicit from the parent details of their dissatisfaction, as well as what kind of school they want.

These include such things as age, neighbourhood, financial background, types of alternative schools the parent has heard about and what they think about these, and general ideas about education.

When we have enough information, we present the names and telephone numbers of schools from a list of alternatives compiled by the Education Switchboard staff and continually updated with new schools and changed telephone numbers. At present there are 30 schools on the list for San Francisco (and more than 90 for the whole Bay area).

"Hello. I'm a teacher from New York and I've just arrived in the Bay area. I want a job in a free school. Are there any jobs available?"

Again we have to get details of background and experience; university degrees and formal teaching experience are of less importance than values, life style, hobbies, informal contact with children and just plain-enthusiasm.

However, jobs in alternative schools are difficult to get as there are few full-time paid positions. But we still suggest a list of schools to visit; and we encourage them to combine with others to start their own schools. If they are interested we send them a manual on how to start a school in California which covers the legal aspects and gives some basic details like accounting and taxation.

Education Switchboard also receives letters from people all over the United States.

I'm a high school student in need of your help. Public education has filled me with so much garbage I'm almost smothered by it. I'm going to drop out (essential to survival) soon, but would like to continue my education in a free school.

PS. Please hurry, I'm sinking fast.

(Michigan)

dear people.

I am 13 years old and looking for a boarding school. I was last in 6th grade and since I have been to 2 free schools, the first of which was like nothing I've been to before, very close (California).

"I'm a fifteen year old prisoner of the state school system. On top of not liking it, I'm not learning too much (just how to make a grade)"

(Florida)

For all these the Education Switchboard provides information and encouragement or refers them to someone who knows more, such as the New Schools Exchange in Santa Barbara, the national clearing house of information on free and alternative schools.

concert. This move has caused us at Education Switchboard to reevaluate our work, especially in relation to the schools.

So far this has been as a kind of "public relations firm" for free and alternative schools. Now it will need to play a new role, perhaps a more supportive one.

This experiment will not be too difficult as the Education Switchboard is part of ONE, a large collection of individuals and culture change groups who share a six-story former sweet factory. Artists, craftsmen, professionals and groups are all trying to see if very different people can work and live together, sharing the responsibilities associated with being at the building: rent, cleaning, construction and contributing to solutions of the problems.

With this increased activity we may have to pay staff, in which case the finances of the Switchboard will have to change from contributions from well wishers and subscriptions to Switched On, the occasional newsletter, to some more regular financial backing.

Item 91.

Richmond, W.K. "The Scotland Road Free School",
Scottish Educational Journal, September 1, 1972.

Footnotes:
315, p.246

THE SCOTLAND ROAD FREE SCHOOL

In this second of three articles on the deschooling movement, **KENNETH RICHMOND** of the Department of Education, Glasgow University, says he sees little prospect of the Liverpool venture surviving, but feels it will have blazed a trail for those who want 'to go it alone, come what may'.

cost house removals and collecting unwanted furniture for distribution to those in need. The trust was, and remains, entirely dependent on voluntary subscriptions, most of them raised in the locality.

The Scotland Road Free School opened its doors in June-July, 1971, beginning with five children and ending the session with 16. It reopened in the following September with 30 pupils, housed in the Everton Red Triangle Club belonging to the YMCA and later in a church hall. The venture immediately attracted the interest and attention of the news media; understandably, too, for here at long last was a break-away movement which seemed singularly bold, not to say defiant, to British ways of thinking.

That the upper and middle classes could assert their rights to organise schools had always been taken for granted, but for an impoverished sub-culture to opt out of the statutory system was, to say the least of it, unexpected.

The prospectus of the Free School was at once uncompromising and decidedly sketchy. "The school will be a community school which will be totally involved with its environment", it announced in the preamble. "The nature of this involvement will be such that the school will be in the vanguard of social change in the area. By accepting this rôle, the school will not seek to impose its own values, but will have as its premise a total acceptance of the people and the area.

"It is felt that the organisation of education is insensitive, unaware and, in content, largely irrelevant (sic) to the needs of the children and their future rôles as adults in the society. Particularly in the Scotland Road-Vauxhall area, it has not provided for the aspirations, life and culture of the people, who have a social heritage worthy of

and expression of its own. We do not seek to alienate people from their back grounds, but seek to enrich and intensify their lives."

For those who were curious to know how the school was to be organised, the prospectus, such as it was, gave some forthright answers:

Q—What is a free school?

A—A free school is a different kind of school which is controlled by parents, children and teachers together.

Q—What is meant by "free"?

A—Of course you do not have to pay, but free means here that the community controls the school and not the education authority.

Q—What are the advantages of a free school?

A—Some of the advantages are as follows: due to its small size the school can cater more directly for the needs of each child; the school will be all-age and family groups will be able to attend together; the school can adapt itself to the needs of the community. This means that the school and its equipment can be used during holiday periods for play groups etc, and in the evenings by any local association.

Q—Can I send my children to the school?

A—Yes.

Q—Will religion be taught in the school?

A—Facilities will be offered to any priest wishing to come into the school.

Q—Can my children do examinations at the school?

A—Yes. Provision will be made for any child wishing to sit external examinations such as CSE or GCE.

Q—When enrolled will attendance be compulsory?

A—Yes. The law requires that children will attend.

Q—Will lessons be compulsory?

A—No. We believe that children learn best when stimulated through interest.

Q—Will the school have a headmaster?

A—No. In the school everyone has an equal voice in the school

be true that necessity is the mother of invention, what shall be the mother of adversity? That it dulls the ordinary man and sharpens the sword of saint and genius? If it was an unlikely birthplace religion of the western world, it is surprising that many of the significant departures in the history of education have been made in inauspicious settings.

Scotland Road-Vauxhall district in Liverpool is a classic example of an inner-industrial community which, for all its faults, or wrongly, considers that it has been served by an education system which appears to be insensitive to its needs.

Exhibits all the characteristic features of an educational priority area: poverty, congestion, bad housing, high rates of unemployment, truancy, juvenile delinquency, low levels of parental involvement and expectation; and it is in this background that the initiative of the Scotland Road Community School was formed in the late autumn of 1970.

It is only a kitchen-sink novelist who could write "Love on the Dole" dramatist who could do full justice to the tragedy of the trust's earliest efforts. It is a triumph on a shoestring budget, it is organising five-a-side football between the frequenters of the pub and followed up by arranging camping holidays for young-summer, providing food for old-age pensioners and shelter for homeless and lonely people at Christmas.

It acquired a battered old van which was used for low-



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A sneaking sympathy for the underdog

It will be noted that the reasons given for wanting to establish a free school are broadly the same as in Denmark, and to that extent they may be admitted sound. Some of the other assertions may seem to be more far-fetched than realistic, so bombastically phrased as to give an impression of blustering in the dark.

At least some of the alleged advantages—eg. that the school and its equipment can be used during holiday periods for play groups etc—if they are not altogether spurious, can be claimed with equal or better justification by many local education authority schools. As for the assurance that pupils who intend to become candidates for leaving certificate will not be handicapped, it sounds so hollow that sceptics may query whether it means anything at all.

Indeed, it is difficult to see these proposals having any great appeal to the average working-class parent who may be forgiven for thinking that they are too equivocal to be very convincing. When they are addressed, obviously, to a selected minority.

The consensus of informed opinion, goes without saying, will be inclined to dismiss them as the fulminations of a lunatic fringe. Without adequate financial backing, without official recognition and without any of the safeguards that are usually thought necessary for the organisation and maintenance of schools, the new venture could hardly have got off to a more precarious start.

Still less than six months old, the school against its succeeding seem excessively heavy, yet the very fact that it has aroused such widespread comment and speculation is one indication of a latent goodwill which may eventually rally to its support. If the school has caught the public interest it has because of a sneaking sympathy for the under-dog. Bizarre happening or opening scene in an educational the like of which we have not seen in our lifetime—which is it to

At the end of its first term, the Free School had enrolled 40 pupils whose number ranged from six to 16. The original plan of a 50-pupil intake had been based on the belief that the school would be over-subscribed, but to date the response from parents and children has been understandably cautious.

Although chronically short of cash, the school has ambitious plans for renting a larger and more suitable building at an annual cost of £5,000, but, for the time being, these are necessarily in abeyance. It cannot afford to pay its

full-time workers, most of whom draw social security. The teachers live in the area, five of them on the premises, dosing down in sleeping bags on the floorboards.

"We never close" is one of their proudest boasts. Several of them are graduates who say that they have tried teaching in local authority schools and found it either a distasteful experience or otherwise unrewarding. Roughing it, mucking in and not standing on ceremony is expected of everyone who offers to lend a hand. As in other communes, the group is non-hierarchical and recognises no authority.

"It is a bit difficult to put into words and the theory is ahead of the practice", writes Andrew Churchill, one of the members.

"What happens is that no one has just one rôle. If someone arrives to join us they are not given any specific duties and so do not have a 'comfortable' rôle, as with almost all other jobs.

"Instead, each person finds out what needs to be done and what possibilities there are and then goes ahead with whatever tasks he thinks he wants to do. We make very little distinction between work and leisure—we just live. This brings a great many benefits and also some problems. One of the benefits is the sheer enjoyment in what we are doing (although this is tied up with the fact that we are doing what we want to do). Another is that a great deal more seems to get done."

Sorely puzzled

Inevitably, the ménage seems slightly Micawberish. Not so much a school, more a play centre, most casual observers would say. The school is provisionally registered as an independent school with the Department of Education and Science, and was barely into its stride before it came under the scrutiny of HM Inspectors. What they saw must have left them sorely puzzled.

Arriving at 9.30 am to find that none of the pupils had bothered to turn up was hardly the kind of reception to which they were accustomed; and what were they to think on being informed that no one went to the trouble of

keeping a register? Who, then, was in charge? No one in particular, apparently.

Could they see the library? Sorry, there was none. Luncheon? None. Schemes of work? None. Some examples of work done by the children, perhaps? Only a scattering of lurid water-colours on the walls. If not exactly a non-event, the visitation seems to have been faintly embarrassing on both sides: a case of cross-cultural shock and no mistake. The usual civilities were observed and there was a "useful exchange of views", as the politicians say in their communiqués, after which the inspectors made a discreet withdrawal. What they made of it all is easily conjectured.

As an "alternative school for Liverpool", the Free School is nothing if not unconventional. Although its organisation is informal to the point of being non-existent, it stands for principles which its supporters see as high-minded and its critics as merely fanatical. That the former are fully dedicated is not in doubt. But how, in practice, do "total involvement" and "total acceptance" interpret themselves in the day-to-day affairs of a school in which parents, teachers and pupils (in that order) have an equal say?

As things are, the Free School's curriculum, if it can be called that, leaves itself open to the charge of being more therapeutic than educational. Drifting in and out as the spirit moves them, the children's approach to learning tends to be so happy-go-lucky as to amount to little more than splashing about with poster paints interspersed with occasional visits to places of interest like Chester Zoo.

As an attempt to exploit the resources for learning in a great city, the Scotland Road experiment cannot hold a candle to the Parkway Program (Philadelphia's "School without Walls"). How could it, after all? Some of its pupils are so hard-bitten as to be completely out of control, the kind who refuse point-blank to comply with compulsory attendance regulations.

For them, if for no one else, the come-and-go-as-you-please atmosphere of a centre which keeps open house to all comers, where play is work and work is "just living" may have its attractions. For the waifs and strays and rejectees there is something to be said for it, if only as a place to come in from the cold. Total acceptance may be a tall order, but how else is the drop-out's deep-rooted fear of failure to be removed?

When the greatest of all problems is to persuade hostile teenagers to set

FESTIVAL ART NEEDS PLANNING POLICY

A positive, forward-looking policy, embracing the visual arts, is required by the Festival Society, writes RUSSELL THOMSON, our art critic, in his second article on the Edinburgh International Festival.

and a change of heart by the Festival Society about the necessity of planning for the future, are urgently required.

Atelier 72

If the Festival Society are lacking in ideas as to how they might restore their slightly tattered international image, they could do worse than consult Richard Demarco, the dynamic young director of Demarco Galleries. For the past seven years, Demarco's choice of work, and showmanship, has given festival visitors their only chance to see the best of contemporary art from various parts of the world.

His vigorous policy of making art exhibitions at his Melville Crescent Galleries truly international has won him world-wide acclaim — and grudging admiration from the Festival Society. He has shown the cream of British, French and Canadian art in Edinburgh.

His 1969 "Strategy. Get Arts" from Dusseldorf brought him into international reckoning as a gallery director of flair and outstanding ability. Last year he introduced the idea of bringing artists, as well as their art, to the festival, with his Rumanian Exhibition.

This year he continues in the same vein, with an even larger contingent of creative people from Poland. There are painters, actors, singers and filmmakers. For Scottish artists and art students it is a unique opportunity to indulge in a little cross-fertilisation. Atelier 72 is a living example of what a good international art exhibition should be all about.

It is sad to relate that while Demarco has had the blessing of the Festival Society for his endeavours he receives very little financial subsidy. This year's art exhibition should have been housed in a main city gallery. The College of Art would have made an ideal setting, but it stands empty during this festival.

Atelier 72 has overflowed into the neighbouring apartment of Demarco's Melville Crescent Gallery. It is well displayed within the limitations of the

THERE is little doubt that the exhibition of "17th Century Italian Drawings from British Collections" will be the major non-event of the 1972 Edinburgh International Festival. The general public will not flock to see second-string Italian drawings. The art student will regard them with boring disdain. The artist-teacher will hesitate to pay the entrance fee at Merchant's Hall. Only the art historian, or the specialist art collector, will find time to browse through such an esoteric collection.

It is not difficult to deduce why the Festival Committee sponsored this show as their sole and major contribution to the 26th Festival. Three reasons come easily to mind. The plastic arts have never been dear to the committee's heart; theirs is a festival of music and drama. A drawing exhibition, collected from British sources, is relatively cheap to finance. The sub-committee, detailed to select artists (or themes) for festival shows, has always had a hankering for the safe art of the past.

There is no reason why "17th Century Italian Drawings" should not have been chosen as one of the fringe exhibitions. It contains a few fine works from the "sciento" of interest to the connoisseur. It is nicely hung in the Hanover Street gallery. It should have been sponsored by a university fine art department in conjunction with the Scottish Italian societies.

The main responsibility of a festival sub-committee dealing with the fine arts is to provide the public with an annual international show of repute, one which would appeal to public and artist. It should be such a significant exhibition that it will draw visitors from abroad, as well as providing home Scots with a unique insight into the dynamic culture of another land. Over the past 25 years Edinburgh has seen some outstanding art shows, but the Festival Society cannot claim that those were the result of their original thinking. Future policy, as far as one can ascertain, is equally arid. More cash,

but inside a school of any sort, formal studies are best kept hidden beneath a welcome mat.

It is claimed that all the pupils can read and write, and presumably as the goes on more attention will be paid to this side of the work. Not surprisingly, no one has asked the trust to make good its offer to provide courses for GCE candidates, which is perhaps as well seeing that at present it would find it next to impossible to do anything of the kind. Quite apart from the daily and weekly worries of trying to make ends meet, the Free School has more pressing problems to contend with, other priorities.

If its activities seem to be largely unstructured, at times even pointless, it is because the immediate aim is to foster a sense of belonging—the Liverpudlian version of Dewey's shared experience—without which any attempt at formal instruction is a farce and a mockery.

Like squatters who have been served with an eviction order, these good communions are cheered by the conviction theirs is a just cause. Freedom fighters or misguided rebels? Only the un-mindful will wish to pronounce one way or the other.

As a test case, the Scotland Road School has all-too-few prospects surviving in the long run. In setting an precedent, nevertheless, it has blazed a trail for others who may decide to alone, come what may. Living obviously may not suit a tame, villa-life, but it can be catching.

It would be untrue to say that the Free School movement is spreading wildfire, there are plans afoot—

hours of plans—for similar ventures in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and other cities. Given anything and inducements offered in Denmark, indeed, given half a chance and of encouragement—there is little that this underground movement surface in a big way. Anyone wishes to fathom the motivation gives rise to the "idea" of the School might do worse than read description at the foot of the Statue of Liberty. That monument, it will be was erected to salute refugees turned their backs for ever Old World.



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Item 92.

Brown, D. "Free Schools: A Theoretical Approach",
New Era, March, 1973.

Footnotes:
316, p.246

3. Free School: A Theoretical Approach

Dave Brown, Manchester, UK

The term 'free school' has been applied to a number of widely differing institutions. In this article, however, it will be confined to 'projects' of the kind that has been set up in Scotland Road, Liverpool. This article is really an attempt to define 'free school' in this deliberately restricted sense.

In some ways it is easier to say what the free school is not. This is mainly because most people have a very definite image of what 'school' means and usually it is a very limited image. A school is a kind of building, a school is just for children, a school is where children are sent between 9.30 am and 4.00 pm five days of the week; a school is a system in which certain kinds of formalised relationships are set up between a group of people called 'teachers' and another group called 'pupils'. The free school is none of these. The free school is, among other things, an attempt to break down the barriers that have been set up between 'school time' and 'leisure time', between 'children' and 'adults', between 'teachers' and 'pupils', between 'teachers' and other adult members of the community. This is a recognition of the fact that education in its widest sense, takes place much more outside of school than inside it, that people educate themselves through experience and especially the experience of relationships with other people, that education continues throughout life.

A number of writers recently have shown how 'child' is an artificial category which has been invented comparatively recently in the history of the human race. Previously a child was simply considered as a young adult. Now he is a different kind of human being, who is given special treatment, often oppressive. A barrier is erected and the child must cross this both formally and actually, before he can enjoy the full privileges of being a person. The schools are one of the main instruments by which the older section of the population oppresses the younger and keeps it in its place.

This is done in a number of different ways. School tends to separate a child from the adult world and so to restrict his experience and retard his emotional maturing. The rigid stratification of schools into classes by age also tends to isolate the child from those older (and younger) than himself, again restricting his experience. Children just do not have the same opportunities to communicate with and learn from their elders as they do in, say, a peasant society. The oppression of children is formalised in such practices as school uniforms and corporal punishment.

Free School = Community

The free school permeates far outside the walls of any building and attempts to involve everyone in the community. Ultimately the free school is the community. A child learns his values from his family and from the community of which his family is part, as well as from 'school'. Hence to liberate the child, it is necessary to liberate the community. The free school, in its widest sense, is any activity which tends to liberate the community and its children. This might include, for example, providing play facilities for children and setting up a 'school' (in the conventional sense) or a library or a residents' association or a free shop or a community transport system or anything which increases peoples' awareness and gives them more control over their own lives. The long term aim of the free school is complete social change in the community. Viewed politically, the free school is essentially reformist rather than revolutionary, in the sense that it is not concerned with the means of production. Obviously, upheaval in the educational system cannot, of itself and without parallel economic changes, bring about revolution, although it may help to prepare the way for it.

Thus the free school is concerned with all the cultural and leisure-time activities of the community, in fact, all activities outside the place of work. Anyone who contributes to the development of these activities is part of the free school. Ultimately, again, the free school involves the whole community. Still perhaps the most important single activity of a community is to educate its children. There is a

tendency today for people to shelve responsibility for this on to the state and its various institutions. This is particularly true among families experiencing hardships like poverty and overcrowding. People have neither the money, the space, the time or the energy to be with their children and relate to them and provide them with what they need. They are glad to be able to send their children out to school. Outside school hours they can only turn them out on to the street. The activities that they engage in are often considered by adults to be anti-social. Children are given the impression that they are in the way and a nuisance. The free school is an opportunity to feel that there are some adults who are really interested in them and to whom they can relate on a basis of equality. As the free school expands and permeates the community, so also does this circle of adults, till eventually the children have a sense of being accepted and respected by society as a whole.

The school (in the conventional sense) within the free school is essentially a neighbourhood school. The children gather in a place and in conditions that are close to their normal environment. The adults in the school are people who share that environment with them. The school belongs to the people in the neighbourhood. It is not any particular features of the 'curriculum' or the lack of it which makes a school 'free'. It is even conceivable that in certain communities the school curriculum could be of a thoroughly traditional kind. This would not necessarily be inconsistent with the idea of a free school, because the 'freedom' of a free school really consists in its relation to the community, not in the nature of its 'curriculum'.

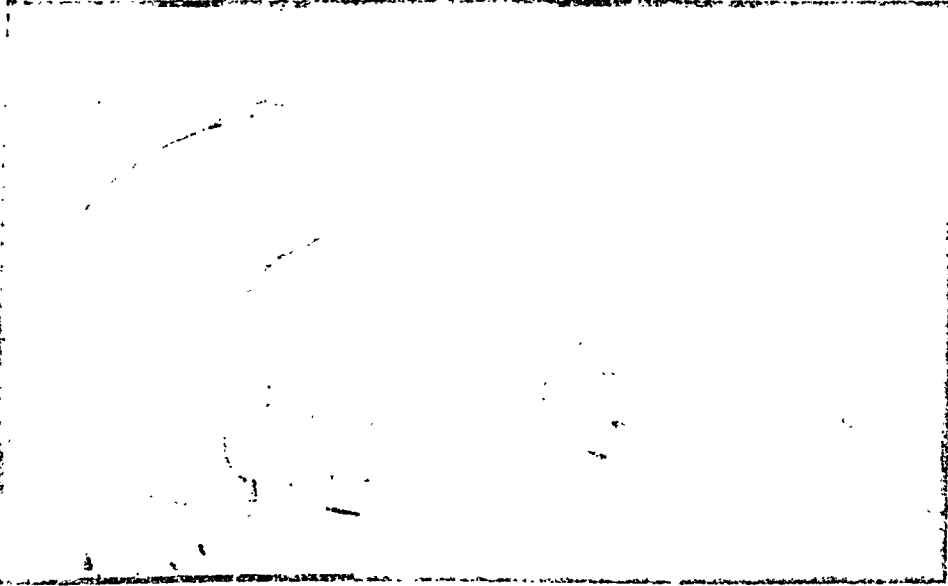
This contribution was first published in 'Roadrunner' April 1972. It was offered by the author as one attempt to answer some of the questions raised in our August/September issue as to the defining characteristics of 'Free Schools'. Further contributions on this question will be most welcome. (Ed.)

Item 93.

Moorsom, S. "Alternatives: Free Schools and Others",
Where? No. 120, September, 1976.

Footnotes:

318, p.246



ALTERNATIVES: FREE SCHOOLS AND OTHERS

Sasha Moorsom

WHERE takes a fresh look at the alternative developments in how we educate our children. What has happened to the free-school movement? What new alternatives are being developed? Sasha Moorsom reports.

ONCE YOU START talking about free schools and other alternatives you are 'entering a jungle, a hotch-potch of different set-ups'. Since I first wrote about the free-school movement three years ago (WHERE 80), there has certainly been a proliferation of what I can only describe as small scale learning units both inside and outside the state system. It is this jungle I will attempt to map out.

First of all the free schools themselves, or community schools as some prefer to be called. In 1973 I listed eight ventures, mentioning one other in Birmingham that did not want its address known for fear it might be crushed by the tramp of too many visitors' feet. Three of those are still going: The Leeds free school, the White Lion Street free school in Islington, and the St Paul's community

school in Birmingham. The future of Freightliner's in North London is uncertain. Liverpool free school closed down soon after the article appeared. The strain of being outside the system with continual chasing after money to meet basic costs proved too much for the people involved. Brighton had a much shorter life and folded for similar reasons — lack of money and local authority support.

The three schools that have survived and flourished, though they differ widely in their approaches to education, have all managed to secure some financial backing from their local authority, if not always from the education purse.

A better bet seems to be social services departments on whom the burden of providing welfare support for deprived, delinquent or otherwise troubled children usually falls. They are not just schools but community centres where many other things besides teaching go on. They have nursery groups for pre-school children, discos for local teenagers, evening film shows for

everyone, holiday projects. The 'school' overlaps and intermingles with all these other activities so that it seems an inappropriate word to use, smacking as it does of an 'institution' and arousing all kinds of expectations about formal structures, hierarchies and time-tables that may not be acceptable to the people working there.

White Lion Street

The workers at the White Lion Street free school wish they had never taken on that label. But faced with the need to establish themselves as a legally acceptable base for over 30 children, they had no choice but to register as an independent school with charitable status. Only then could they receive money from the various trusts that have supported them — mainly Wates, Gulbenkian and the City Parochial Foundation.

However, half their money now comes from the Islington social services department — nearly £11,000 a year. Social services are able to fund them because they are offering both pre-school and post-school activities for the local community. The department's recognition of the value of what they are providing is a great achievement for White Lion Street and it means they are now able to pay their nine full-time workers a weekly wage. When I last wrote none of them were paid. Two years ago they were able to start paying £17 a week after tax. They have recently voted to raise it to £20. It says a great deal for the commitment of the workers that six of them are the same people I met three years ago. To keep going, at a time of raging inflation, on such a low salary over a long period must be an immense strain. They are only able to do it by finding cheap accommodation not too far away. They also have a number of helpers who work there voluntarily, offering such skills as painting or pottery, with only their fares paid.

White Lion Street has been the most active base within the free-school movement for providing advice on setting up alternative education. They still have a regular open evening and they have produced an enlarged edition of their excellent handbook *How to set up a free school* (40p), which covers every

problem both from the point of view of teachers and of parents. But, in spite of their vast knowledge of alternative schools and their ramifications, they have failed to find a way out of the paradoxical relationship in which they are now stuck with the Inner London Education Authority.

Alternatives

The minimum definition of free schools suggested by Andrew Mann of the Schools Workshop, is as follows:

Schools are small, have a flexible organisational structure, and are housed in independent premises: they cater for a small number of children – never more than 30 – and practice a high ratio of adults to children.

Schools have a child-centred approach to learning and child-care, and ensure maximum access to choice in the curriculum.

Schools are urban and serve inner-city areas.

Schools have been set up as clear alternatives to the state-controlled education system.

Over the next four years I would like to see schools which are optimistic enough to think that in the next few years, local education authorities will themselves increasingly see the need to provide genuine small-scale alternatives, while having real autonomy to decide how they do it in the way they and the local community think appropriate, are needed throughout the state. The same is true of the schools based in the White Lion Street area.

Schools should be financed through government grants... but this does not imply the centralisation of accountability. In other words, it has to be possible for government agencies, such as the Department of Education, to finance local groups without imposing on them the constraints they do now. Our hope is therefore that local education authorities should manage to establish the concept of local group accountability for local schools.

The White Lion Street area has failed to persuade the local authority to finance them. Their applications were rejected last year and a petition was signed by most of the local

parents, ILEA schools and officials and all local councillors and community organisations, went unacknowledged.

Don Vennell, ILEA's assistant education officer for secondary schools (and author of the 'jungle' quote at the beginning of this article), put the ILEA point of view to me. He said that ILEA policy towards voluntary organisations working with children of school age was unchanged. They had to undertake to return children back to ordinary schools as soon as possible. This requirement hinges on the philosophy that:

The authority should bring support to the (existing) schools and put resources into them and not set out, or incidentally help to establish and to grow, a significant education provision outside the framework of the organisation and curriculum of the schools.

In other words, they are not going to grant money to set up an alternative system. This is where the confusion starts – the hotch-potch Vennell referred to. The LEAs cannot, after the DES directive in 1974, finance independent schools. Quite right. But what if a school does not want to be independent, has chosen that label only because no other status is open to them, and would much prefer to be funded by ILEA as an 'alternative' school within the state system, serving the local community? Nothing doing – even if it has the support of the borough council's representative on ILEA – unless it meets this unacceptable and unrealistic requirement of having to aim at returning children to existing schools.

But side by side with this declared policy of ILEA runs their own increasing provision of small units within existing schools and the funding of as many as 30 units outside schools to cope with children who have 'put themselves outside the school system'. In this ILEA is following the pattern of many other authorities in order to cope with the increasing problem of children who are either too disruptive in ordinary classrooms (and are often suspended), or refuse to enter the school premises.

An off-site truancy centre

I will describe one ILEA 'off-site' experiment

run by Nick Peacey, an experienced teacher who has worked both in large comprehensives and at White Lion Street. Nick and another part-time teacher, Mike Parsons, work with 10 boys of 14 and over. The impetus for setting it up came after a murder was committed among teenagers on a notorious local housing estate. Nick offered to start a unit offering opportunities to the boys who had long ceased to attend school and were wandering around during the day getting into trouble. He emphasises that the unit is a learning base, not a therapy centre for psychological problems, and he regards himself strictly as a teacher. All the boys are 'referred' to the unit by the LEA.

The procedures he follows in organising learning for the boys are much the same as those a lot of free schools follow. The difference is that he is funded directly from ILEA at the rate of £200 a term. This doesn't cover salaries (also paid by ILEA) or school meals which arrive in tin cans daily, or the rent of the two rooms he has been given in an old disused primary school. It has to cover all outside activities, paper and books. He sees it as a reasonable cost when you compare it to the expense of the social work and psychiatric help many of his students have been receiving for years. After a month with the unit most of them seem to require far less help from these agencies. He also thinks he may be saving the Home Office money in the long run.

For learning purposes they use everything they can get their hands on – the photographer next door, printers in the neighbourhood, adult education institutes for daytime classes in languages, pottery and bookbinding, and they pay £2 an hour to local craftsmen for teaching metalwork and woodwork. Plumbing, which a lot of boys want to learn, has been more difficult to arrange. Good plumbers are pretty busy.

At the moment they hardly use any secondary schools because the boys are too alienated from the teachers in the craft workshops at school to consent to go back to them, though there are one or two exceptions to this. They use the National Extension College correspondence courses for subjects Nick and Mike can't teach, and Grapevine

for sex-education. The boys go riding every week in Epping forest and one has started to sell the silverwork he is becoming skilful in.

Nick and other teachers who work in this way, using learning resources in the wider community instead of trying to provide them within one building, consider this one of the most fruitful ways for education to develop over the next 10 years. Huge institutions are inappropriate, alienating, inflexible. But where education officials differ from people in the alternative education movement is in their insistence that everything a normal child could need is available within the established system of schools. Where they have set up alternatives they present them as another form of 'special' education, like schools for the educationally sub-normal or physically handicapped, suitable only for 'special' children — the psychically handicapped?

The danger of this is that small units are seen by teachers as dumping grounds for miscreants, troublemakers, neurotics and that ever-increasing number of children who vote with their feet by walking out of school. Truancy figures are no real indication of the size of the problem. Schools do the register twice a day but that doesn't mean children stay for the rest of the afternoon (see *WHERE?* 33). Some teachers freely admit that the absence of certain faces from their class is a state most devoutly to be wished, and it is assumed the fault lies not in our schools but in our children for not fitting in to the system.

The names by which small-scale units are known indicate the attitude that underlies the funding of them. Some, for example, often with social services' involvement, are called intermediate treatment centres, implying that the children who attend them are in some way sick or deviant; those on school premises are referred to as 'refuges' or 'sanctuaries'. If schools are providing all that is needed, why do increasing numbers of children need to take refuge from them or seek sanctuary? Another, unofficial, name is 'sinbins'.

It is understandable that education authorities should be very defensive about any implied criticisms of the system they have built up with such care over the last 100 years. And the setting up of alternatives does imply criticism, above all of size and

organisational structure. There is a case for saying that the controls an authority exercises are now too stringent and too centralised; the requirements, in material terms of buildings and equipment, too tight; the institutions too large. What is needed is less paternalism, however well-intentioned, and more flexibility towards small-scale experiments funded by the state. Above all we need the recognition that parents should be offered the explicit choice of opting for a small, community-based learning unit for their children where an individualised programme is possible.

Community schools in Australia

Such an experiment has been tried in the state of Victoria in Australia with enthusiastic parental support. There, a qualified senior teacher can set up a small community school (not more than 100 pupils) providing he or she can get the backing of an existing secondary head who will be prepared to sponsor the new school and act as an administrative umbrella through whom state funds are channelled. The schools are mostly housed in old churches or halls, and use a variety of learning resources including their patron secondary schools. The six schools now flourishing have the autonomy to decide their own learning programme, teaching methods and when they close for holidays. They are zoned as are all schools in Victoria.

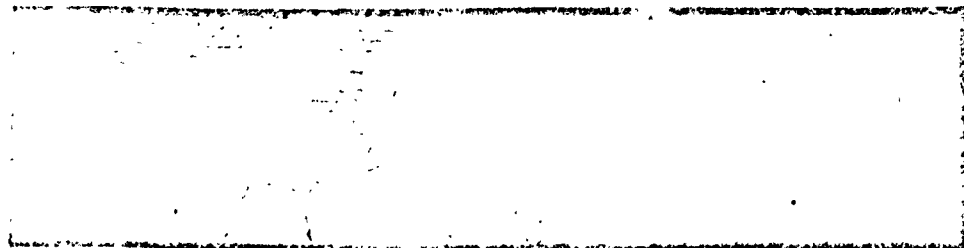
Margaret Mortimer, an educational psychologist employed by the Victoria Department of Education, sees it as vital that such schools should not be regarded as 'dumping grounds for delinquents or psychological problems'. In areas where community schools exist they are presented to parents as one of the choices open to their children at 11.

An LEA to take the lead

I can see no reason why such a choice should not be offered within our state system. At the moment your child has to be a delinquent or a truant to get into a small unit. Small community schools do not, according to the Australian experience and White Lion Street, work out more expensive. Their maintenance costs for buildings are far lower. They share existing resources for science, pottery, swimming, games.

If, as Don Vennell suggests, the trend over the next five years in large cities will be for schools to see themselves as only part of the educational provision in an area, not necessarily trying to supply every option within their own campus, then there is no reason why our present large comprehensives should not become more nuclear, spawning small, autonomous learning units that could fall into Andrew Mann's tentative definition.

Some boroughs (Haringey is one) have dropped the insistence that alternative units must aim to return children to conventional schools. They have recognised the hypocrisy it embodies. This is the first step towards accepting that alternatives may be a perfectly valid way of educating ordinary children, if their parents and they so choose. I hope some education authority will be bold enough to take the next step of encouraging the experiment of a small community secondary school open to any child in the immediate locality. There are now 12 free schools and up to 100 other alternative projects struggling to survive in a cold economic climate. The Inner London Education Authority has White Lion Street school knocking on its door with a proven record over four years of full community support. Why doesn't ILA let them in?



Item 94.

Boxall, P. "The School Where They Kiss
and Cuddle", Daily Mirror, July 2, 1959.

Footnotes:

321, p.248

THE SNAKE

THEY DO

AN OUNCE

A STREAM of swear words echoed across the playing fields and I knew I was in one of Britain's most amazing schools.

It is the school where its forty-five pupils can smoke and swear and kiss and cuddle and generally do as they please as part of a happy-go-lucky training which, in theory, should make them Britain's happiest, most conscientious citizens.

Summerhill School in Lewton, Suffolk, and its seventy-four-year-old headmaster and founder, Alexander Neill, have been attacked and praised, threatened with extinction and fervently supported.

NOW, AFTER THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS MR. NEILL IS TURNING TO HIS EX-PUPILS TO PROVE THAT HIS STYLE OF EDUCATION IS A SUCCESS.

He points to a former pupil who took advantage of the rule which allows children to stay away from classes if they wish. This boy skipped lessons for twelve years. He left school semi-literate but became a successful mechanical engineer.

Another pupil voluntarily strapped himself with learning and became a university lecturer with a string of degrees.

A third boy who was expelled from another school for persistent stealing is now a home-loving, law-abiding citizen with a prosperous business.

"I am sure our percentage of failures is a lot lower than many orthodox schools," said Mr. Neill, who proudly admits that he has absolutely no authority in his school.

MY methods can straighten out delinquents and lead children to follow careers and jobs which they really enjoy. That way they live a full life.

"It doesn't matter to me if pupils fail their exams or miss them altogether, for every child has a natural talent or interest and if he is left alone he will find out what it is.

"I do not know of any pupil who has left my school and

by
PATRICIA BOXALL

been unhappy in his work. Many pupils have been successful in well-paid positions BUT I WOULD BE JUST AS PROUD OF A BOY WHO HAD FOUND CONTENTMENT AS A DUSTMAN.

"Children must be allowed to express all their emotions. I let them swear if they want to because swearing is merely a phase in a child's life.

"When I explain the meaning of some of the more advanced words they realise that they really don't make sense when used in everyday conversation."

The system at Summerhill is

simple. Children are admitted at three and can stay as long as the £240-a-year boarding fees are paid. Usually they leave at sixteen.

They can do precisely as they like. Lessons are organised from 9.30 until 1.30, but pupils are not obliged to attend. They walk in and out of classes as they please.

The staff of seven teachers, who are so enthusiastic about the school that they work for only sixteen pounds a month,

estimate that attendance in class averages fifty per cent.

"It is up to the teachers to make their lessons interesting," said Mr. Neill. "At Summerhill we want pupils to attend lessons only when they are eager to learn."

Teachers who have failed to impress pupils have suffered. One was doused with paint. Another had bricks thrown at his windows in the early hours of the morning and was warned that he was "too sticky."

"But as a rule the children are polite," said Mr. Neill. "I remember one teacher who succeeded in coaxing only one girl to his lessons. She told me she went because she didn't like to offend him. I thought she was rather nice.

"If a teacher becomes really unpopular the pupils can vote to have him dismissed. I have to do as they say."

In their spare time the children can amuse themselves as they fancy, and there are no hard and fast standards of conduct.

Nobody minds if they read sappy novels, eat their food with their fingers or pair off and disappear to some quiet corner in the grounds.

RULES for the school, affecting both pupils and staff, are made by the pupils' council at a special meeting every Saturday night.

These rules must be obeyed. Offenders are punished by fines or loss of privileges.

The council recently objected to drawings made on a wall by a ten-year-old. He was ordered to rub them off. The pupils' objection to the drawings was not that they were offensive but that they were inaccurate and badly done.

Because his pupils have so much freedom, Mr. Neill is certain he has stamped out smugness about sex in his school. If they wish, boys and girls can use the same bathrooms and can kiss and cuddle openly.

Ex-pupils support Mr. Neill's theories wholeheartedly. Wendy Clifford, now a beautiful nineteen-year-old model, attended Summerhill for four years until she was sixteen and claims

that her training there gave her wonderful confidence.

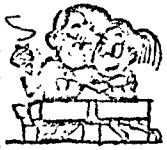
"When I left school I wasn't shy or frightened in the outside world," she told me. "None of the boys of my age at the school was my type, so I wasn't interested. AND AS NOBODY TOLD ME NOT TO KISS THEM, I WASN'T CURIOUS TO TRY."

University lecturer David Barton, who attended the school until he was sixteen, was just as enthusiastic.

"If I could afford it, I would certainly send my sons to Summerhill," he said.

"The freedom helps children to develop their personalities and achieve a sense of responsibility.

"Though it often appears that the children are allowed to run wild they must, in fact, keep rules. Because they make them themselves, they obey them readily."



Item 95.

"Neill Is Coming", Daily Mirror,
January 11, 1961.

Footnotes:
322, p.248

Neill is coming

NEIL comes to London this week. To hundreds of thousands of people interested in education there is no need for initials. Mr. Alexander Sutherland Neill, 77-year-old Scot, has run the "free-for-all" school, Summerfield, since 1921.

Neill is coming up from Leiston in Suffolk for the school's 40th anniversary dinner and expects about 150 guests. "No household names," he said

briskly yesterday, "we don't breed Top People."

Numbers in his school have been falling but the basic principle of the children making their own laws, attending class when they feel like it and swearing or smoking at will—these remain.

"I don't expect the Establishment to like me," he said, "and as about 99 per cent. of the people seem to belong to the Establishment nowadays, I can't expect much support."

Neill has been called an eccentric and a madman but no one has ever doubted his courage. The paradox of his life is that while modern education has borrowed some of his revolutionary ideas, no other school has been founded on quite the same principles.

Item 96.

Untitled article, Daily Mirror, August 2, 1962.

Footnotes:

323, p.248

D. HD. 2

EDUCATIONAL SUNDAY

WENT down this week to Summerhill, best-known, I suppose, as the "freedom school."

Look what I find—for the first time in its 41 years all 50 places at the school are filled.

(Actually there was a short time in the war when the school was full, but it wasn't an outbreak of that dangerous disease called progressiveness. Just that Summerhill's bit of East Suffolk, near Aldeborough, was safe from the bombing.)

So—success at last? (At £200 to £300 a year, boarding of course.)

Perhaps, but I think that is probably a bit of a dirty word to the founder and headmaster, A. S. Neill.

He has always known he was on the right tracks by the amount of abuse heaped on him.

"That dreadful school," one of the more entrenched authoritarians called Summerhill, and Neill (as all the boys and girls call him) gladly adopted the description.

How "dreadful" in 1962?

Well, I went round with Neill and his wife (all the kids call her Ena).

Neill is a splendid man of

78 who would look imposingly patrician in a toga but happens instead to wear the baggiest corduroy garments that were ever tailored.

Swearing? Of course, he said, you hear four-letter words here.

Smoking? Used to be tolerated, but is now banned because of the cancer report.

All this mixing of the sexes and the open discussions? Yes, but today it seems a normal, intelligent approach.

CLOTHES

The sloppy clothes? I must say the jeans and shirts look pretty normal on Summerhill children. Which is more than I can say for the tails of the Eton boys.

There is an atmosphere of happiness about the place that I have never come across before at a school.

One of the key elements in the Summerhill system is the weekly meeting, where the children meet under the chairmanship of one of the pupils.

On Saturday I heard them discuss bedtimes, a bully who was getting too much of the other children's grub, two bruisers who won't keep out of the kitchen.

The system is catching. A friend who came along with me had brought his three children with a view to sending them there.

He phoned me later to say they had been to see him.

"We have been discussing things," said the spokesman, aged eight, "and we decided to protest about the jam in this house"

Item 97.

"Modest Boom for free schools", Daily Mirror,
April 6, 1962.

Footnotes:

324, p.248

D. HD. 6 APR 62

1962

MODEST BOOM

FOR 'FREEDOM'

SCHOOLS

John S. Neill
AS a nation we seem to be rather fond of discipline.

Doubtless lots of people will mutter "damned good thing" at the news that Burgess Hill, one of the progressive schools, has suffered financial collapse.

But although lack of pupils has killed Burgess Hill—which was a particularly anti-authoritarian co-ed school—the movement which it represented has never been healthier.

A. S. Neill's pioneering Summerhill, in Suffolk, not unlike Burgess Hill in attitude, is enjoying a modest boom. After going through a difficult time, the school has 43 of its 50 places filled.

Neill, aged 78, tells me his latest book, recently published in America, has attracted some American pupils.

COST

Few of the co-educational boarding schools which are lumped together under the name "progressive" give their pupils the complete freedom that Neill believes in.

The boys and girls of Summerhill decide for themselves when lessons begin and end, whether they shall smoke, whether to work or play.

The price of freedom is more than most people can afford: Neill charges 240 to 300 guineas a year. (Although, of course, this is no dearer than the average public school.)

The bigger schools like Bedales, in Hampshire (400), and Frensham Heights, in Surrey (210), shy away from the name progressive. As Stephen Hogg, head of Frensham, says drily, it has acquired unfortunate associations.

But the Advisory Centre for Education tells me that this group of perhaps a dozen schools is quite popular.

Bedales has to turn away two or three children for each one it takes.

John Vaizey, of London University's education institute thinks Summerhill the best school in the country and reckons that progressive schools have largely defeated the grim, public-school idea of education.

"And they have had their greatest influence in places

like the LCC primary schools, which have followed their ideas of freedom and happiness."

What about academic success? One reply is to point to famous ex-pupils like Dr. Michael Young, the sociologist (Dartington Hall) or Sir John Rothenstein, head of the Tate Gallery (Bedales).

I prefer A. S. Neill's reply: "Freedom doesn't produce people who want to devote their lives to making money or lording it over others. It produces people who have humanism, reason and love."

Item 98.

Fielding, Henry. "Portrait of the Rebel as an
Old Man", Daily Mirror, October 22, 1965.

Footnotes:

325, p.248

HENRY FIELDING

FRIDAY DIARY

SUN 22 OCT 1955

Portrait of *Emu* Schools the rebel as an old man

I HAVE BEEN to pass on birthday greetings to one of the magnificent rebels of our time. A. S. Neill, founder of "that dreadful school" Summerhill, in Suffolk, is all of 82 today. A little slower perhaps, than he was when he introduced his revolutionary educational ideas, but no less the visionary.

Neill, the children call him. No Mr., no Sir. "I don't think I could ever bring myself to ask people to call me sir."

What strikes you about him instantly is that the lifelong battle against prejudice, blindness, ignorance and even cruelty in orthodox educational opinion has left him unscarred. Indeed he has emerged with an almost oriental calm.

The peace of the man is certainly one of the measures of his remarkableness—after all, the basic idea of Summerhill is that the screaming, jumping, howling mob should be allowed to behave like children, not like conformist machinery.

He makes surviving that sound simple: "With children you need patience. I've had the patience.

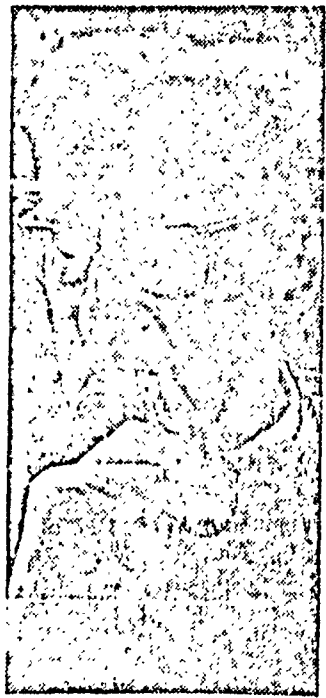
Wild success

After 40 years at Summerhill, has Neill managed to persuade anybody that in teaching "the emotions are more important than the intellect and that children haven't to be worked like machines but need nurturing as human beings"?

He thinks he has had some influence. In Scandinavia and more recently in Japan and America. In fact it is to American support that Summerhill owes its continued existence. Not many years ago Neill was badly in the red and then one of his books became a wild success in the States and the flow of American children to the school began.

Today more than half the children at Summerhill are American.

What about influence at home? Well, naturally the



A. S. NEILL
A party tonight

the children take all decisions, outside the actual teaching, themselves at community meetings. They even vote on the punishment of malefactors.

This self-government is more effective than any teacher's authority, he says, although, of course, anybody can rule by fear.

That Neill continues to be loved by his old pupils is perfectly clear. Tonight they are giving him a party in London, as usual on his birthday (on his 80th birth-

...persuade anybody that in teaching "the emotions are more important than the intellect and that children haven't to be worked like machines but need nurturing as human beings"?

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Today more than half the children at Summerhill are American.

What about influence at home? Well, naturally the little band of progressive thinkers have an enormous respect for Neill. And naturally the deathly assembly of orthodoxy have looked on in superciliousness.

But this much can be said: Neill has been tolerated. The school is registered by the Inspectors. In spite of the fact that the children are not forced to go to lessons if they don't want to, the Ministry will not close Summerhill down.

Old labels

"Britain is still the freest country I know. Couldn't get away with anything like this in the States, you know, or anywhere else in Europe," says Neill.

If he is disappointed at all it is because the old labels have stuck and diverted attention away from what Summerhill is really all about. There is that early one about its being "a dreadful school," which was enough of a challenge to Neill for him to use it as the title of a book he did on Summerhill.

There is also that label about its being "the school where children can smoke and swear."

Actually, smoking is discouraged now a days on health grounds and the swearing is as frequent, says Neill, as it is at any other school, "except that it is done openly." It certainly is. "Off my bloody bike," said an American tiddler, standing at the door as I arrived. "All right, have the bloody thing," said his mate.

His faith

"Let me tell you a story," said Neill. "When the school was evacuated to Festinog during the war I explained to the children that Wales was a religious country and swearing was likely to cause offence. We agreed that there would be no swearing and then I came across a boy reeling off a mouthful. When I

A. S. NEILL
A party tonight

the children take all decisions, outside the actual teaching, themselves at community meetings. They even vote on the punishment of malefactors.

This self-government is more effective than any teacher's authority, he says, although, of course, anybody can rule by fear.

That Neill continues to be loved by his old pupils is perfectly clear. Tonight they are giving him a party in London, as usual on his birthday (on his 80th birthday they gave him a new car).

"I shall go on until I drop," says Neill. And he will, of course.

Item 99.

Wolfe, W. "Do-As-You-Like school Gets a
Warning", Daily Mirror, December 21, 1969.

Footnotes:

326, p.248

8.11.21 DEC 21

Do-as-you-like gets a warning

*Edna Selous
of
Summerhill*
By WILLIAM WOLFF

ONE of Britain's most famous progressive schools has been ordered to improve standards or face the threat of closure.

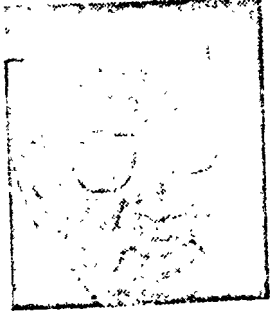
Pupils at the school — Summerhill, in Lelston, Lincoln — can please themselves whether they go to lessons or not.

The controversial headmaster, A. S. Neill, who is 86, founded it nearly 50 years ago.

He received the warning from Education Ministry inspectors, who told him they will make a major inspection of his school in the spring.

This will be decisive for the future of the school, which is as famous abroad as Eton.

The Ministry's move is part of a nationwide drive to enforce minimum standards on independent schools. This has cost 1,229 schools



The founder A. S. Neill

their official recognition in the past two years.

Mrs. Edna Neill, the headmaster's 59-year-old wife, confirmed last night that extensive work, "at a cost running into five figures," is now in hand.

"We have renovated the inside of the house entirely," she said. "We have brought the kitchens up to date, as well as the living quarters."

"We are putting up two new buildings for the 10-12 year old boys, and one for those over thirteen."

The work is being done in consultation with the Ministry inspectors.

Mrs. Neill said that the work would take another year to complete, because

it could be done only in school holidays.

"The Friends of Summerhill [an organisation of parents and well-wishers] have rallied round and helped us with the cost," she declared.

Neill's school, based on the principle that left alone, a child will work hard at whatever subject it is interested, is visited by educationists from all over the world.

Basic fees are £150 a term for those under twelve, and £200 for 12-year-olds and over.

A Ministry spokesman confirmed that the full inspection for Summerhill has been fixed for the spring.

If further improvements are thought desirable, the school will be given another two years to carry them out.

Item 100.

"Continuing To Make Progress", Daily Mirror,
September 26, 1973.

Footnotes:
327, p.248

Continuing to make progress

THE DEATH of A. S. Neill, founder of Summerhill, Britain's most controversial progressive school, will not prevent his unorthodox teaching methods from making their own progress.

For his widow Ena told inside Page 1 last night: "I am taking over the

Educ. Schools
school and it will be run in exactly the way he wanted."

Alexander Sutherland Neill, who died this week aged 89, was a kindly Scotsman who believed school children should do their own thing.

So fifty years ago he started Summerhill, where pupils could please themselves whether they attended lessons, were on first name terms with teachers and governed and disciplined themselves.

His ideas caused a storm at the time and he

was regarded as a crank.

But now, thousands of successful pupils later, Neill's ideas are accepted by education authorities.

Indeed it is due to Neill that in Britain the cane is largely a threat of the past, discarded in favour of letting pupils have their own head.

The school is a roomy Victorian mansion at Leiston, Suffolk, with adjoining peat-built dormitories and classrooms.

It takes sixty-five boys and girls paying fees between £225 and £275 a term.

MIN NS 26 SEP 73

Item 101.

Articles by ILEA director, E. Briault,
published in The London Evening News,
March 30 - April 5, 1974.

Footnotes:
330, p.249.

Britain can be bread

THE National Institute for Research in Dairying, Shinfield, has announced that the British Staff, following its report...

There are bound to be many of these in the future, and it is not surprising that the staff of the institute is working in the way of research.

But these are problems that must be solved for an efficient and a satisfactory life for the people of this country, and a sound and sensible way for a nation to be able to produce its own bread.

The country can be proud of what has been achieved since the second world war.

Shocking

It is not much of a compliment to say that the case of the woman who died at Kew Gardens was a shocking one.

She died eight days later, and the inquest was held that she had crawled for a mile before she died.

It was a shocking and distressing incident that should bring some to the notice of the public.

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

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...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

Missing

The missing person...

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

Is your child one of London's 10,000 truants?



by CAREN MEYER

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

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Incredible

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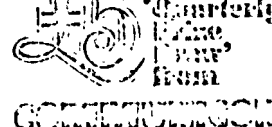
With a little bit of luck...

Communicator already runs several schemes offering rewards and this opportunity to compete for a wide range of grants, awards and prizes.

Now we've introduced another new scheme: the Communicator 'Quarterly Prize Draw'. This gives prizes, money and gifts to one of the ten lucky prize winners in the Prize Draws during 1974. All they will need is a new agent's recommendation - and a little bit of luck.

The new 'Quarterly Prize Draw' will be on 1st May, 1974.

If your son or daughter would like to join Communicator as the first step to winning one of these prizes or other Communicator grants or awards - talk to your newsagent.



COMMUNICATOR GOLD

NO WINNER IS THERE...

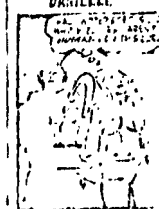
SPRING GARDEN

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

...the staff of the institute is working in the way of research...

The truth about the hoodlums in London's schools.

6 Letters are on Page 8 today



COMMUNICATOR GOLD

The extortion gangs that are haunting playgrounds

A SCHOOL can exploit a trouble-some child... in theory. But in practice this does not work.

You have to find him or her another school. It is not good that an all-impotent, ultra-rad school has to do a "No. 1" Power. You can't have your finger in the pie if it is a dirty playground. After all, it's the teacher that's the boss.

So you are a fourth and a right hand of the team. You're a teacher. You're a parent. You're a child. You're a student. You're a teacher. You're a parent. You're a child. You're a student.

The school is a place where children learn. It is a place where they are taught to read, to write, to think, and to live. It is a place where they are given the tools they need to succeed in life. It is a place where they are encouraged to explore, to discover, and to grow.

SPRING GARDEN

It is a time of year when the earth is waking up. The seeds are planted, and the sun is shining. It is a time of hope and renewal. It is a time when we can see the future and work to make it a better one.



The Classroom Jungle by CAREN MEYER

EXTORTION, bullying and pranks are rife in the playgrounds of schools. The world of children are either crying out of education or turning their backs on it. Today the extortion gangs look at the bottom line and money from other schoolchildren.

A head and a tail he said... I'll be back in two days... I'll be back in two days... I'll be back in two days...

Vandalism

That's what it is... I don't accept... I don't accept... I don't accept...

A very fine... I'll be back in two days... I'll be back in two days... I'll be back in two days...

Damaged

"That's fine," said a teacher... I don't accept... I don't accept... I don't accept...

It is a time of year when the earth is waking up... I don't accept... I don't accept... I don't accept...

Can teachers really cope?

"It can be done by gangs of three or four... I don't accept... I don't accept... I don't accept...

Fosby



ating all London talking

Who can we blame for the pupils' revolt?

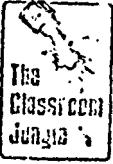
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by Caren Meyer

So what is to be done? The answer is not to be found in the usual educational suggestions for the children up to the age of 11.

They are going to find it a little odd in a child's hands to be a rough-hewn and uncivilized creature.

But now, the cycle of depression is being found in the school system. The children are being taught to be obedient and to follow the teacher's lead.

But the teacher is not the only one who is being taught to be obedient. The children are being taught to be obedient and to follow the teacher's lead.

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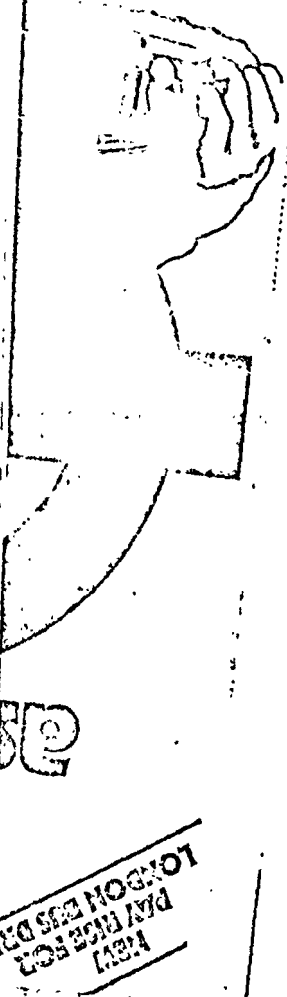
Stress

Recently, the ILEA has been asked to help in the study of stress in the classroom. The ILEA has been asked to help in the study of stress in the classroom.

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The ILEA give their reply.

STRESS
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| CLASSIFIED INDEX | |
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| PREGNANCY TESTING | Accommodation HOLIDAY IN SCOTLAND ... SILVER SANDS ... Tours and Travel ESTER IN SWITZERLAND ... SOPIAN TRAVEL LTD ... ESTER BREAK ... Corpsanning & Camping ... Dogs & Pets ... CAT HOTEL ... Loans ... Public Notices ... | ORDERLIES ... MESSENGER / CLERK ... General Vacancies ELECTRICIAN ... H.G.V. DRIVERS CLASS II AND III ... |

How to give our London children a chance...



Truancy, violence, vandalism, extortion, indiscipline and chaos... these were the problems in London's schools highlighted in the Evening News... by Doran Meyer. Today the Inner London Education Authority have their say about the past, the present—and the future—of education in London.



I DO not in any way underestimate the difficulties we face. At this moment we are impressing them yet again on the Government in the hope that our teachers can be given a quickly a greatly increased London allowance which they so richly deserve.

The fact is that your teachers do think that the problems you describe affect all the schools all the time and this is far from being the case.

I take your letter very seriously with a statement of just what we are doing. The Government are reluctant to face the situation.

The Government are not only on the side of the teachers but also on the side of the parents. The Government are not only on the side of the teachers but also on the side of the parents.

by
Dr. ERIC BRIAULT
 CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER OF THE IEA

What parents can do to help

HERE is one particularly important point. Essential to not just about teachers and children—it is also about parents. My message to teachers who have children of a hard life is:

Take the fullest possible interest in your child's school. Find out what goes on there. Get the problems over and over and over again.

The quality of education is not determined by the effort of teachers alone. It is determined by the effort of parents too. We are able to meet the needs of our children which is the only way to help them.

The work of the Education Trust is to help the Government to face the situation. The Government are not only on the side of the teachers but also on the side of the parents.

There was a school in London where the children were in a state of chaos. The children were in a state of chaos. The children were in a state of chaos.

6

LUGGAGE BARGAINS

at lower than last years prices

Come to your Co-op for your luggage. We have a wide range of luggage at special prices.

Item 102.

"Go-as-you-please rule for lessons",
Yorkshire Evening Post, January 1, 1976.

Footnotes:
331, p.250

GO AS YOU PLEASE RULE FOR LESSONS

The unofficial Leeds Free School, set up in a disused chapel in Woodhouse Lane to provide an alternative to the State Education system in the city, will let the children choose what they want to learn, and when they want to learn it, said one of the teachers.

The school has already attracted about 20 boys and girls aged from five to 13 from State schools in the area. Mrs. Joan Mollett, head of Blenheim Middle School, says five of her pupils had left to join the Free School.

Eldon Chapel, where the school has been set up, was dilapidated, but is being given a complete restoration by the young teachers. They are re-wiring the electrical circuits, and the rest of the building is being cleaned and repainted.

QUALIFIED

Teachers interviewed asked that their names should not be revealed.

They said three of the six full-time staff were fully qualified, two of them having worked at some time for Leeds Education Authority. There were also a number of part-time helpers.

They did not want to discuss the principles of what they were trying to do, but said that none of them had any political affiliation.

"This is a community school," said one. "all the teachers and pupils come from this area. The kids will be able to choose what they want to learn, and when they want to learn it."

The Free School is financed by the Leeds Free School and Community Trust, which raises money by holding raffles, jumble sales, and so on.

It also has received money and equipment from individuals and businesses.

SCHOOL MEALS

The School's Sub-Committee of Leeds Education committee has agreed to supply about 20 school meals, but has not yet begun to do so, and at present children are taking their own lunch, or going home at midday.

The Sub-Committee chairman, Councillor William Stafford, said education inspectors would have to be satisfied that children were receiving a proper education at the school.

"Otherwise, they will be regarded as truants, and the appropriate measures will be taken," he said.

LEEDS EDUCATION AUTHORITY
LEEDS
1971

Item 103.

Three brief accounts of the dispute between
the Leeds Free School and the City of Leeds
concerning fire hazards at the school.

The Yorkshire Evening Post.

Footnotes:

331, p.250.

SCHOOL PASSES ANTI-FIRE EXAM

Leeds Free School, Woodhouse Lane, whose fire precautions were criticized last September, has not done more than enough to comply with five regulations, Mr. F. Scott, Chief Fire Officer, told the City Council Licensing and Fire Brigade Committee.

The school authorities had also asked for a talk on fire prevention to be given at the school.

In September, a complaint about fire precautions at the school was discussed by Leeds magistrates.

has not yet been published.

Alderman Alfred Tallant, the chairman of Leeds Education Committee said that since there were places in local authority schools for children at the Free School he doubted the Committee would support the appeal.

He said: "We sent one of our inspectors to look at the school, and his report was not particularly favourable, although we have not taken steps to do anything."

Alderman St. John Binns, the committee chairman said: "The local authority had little control over the situation, and has no authority itself to close the premises.

"But the chief fire officer is convinced that there are serious fire dangers to children at the school.

APPEAL BY FREE SCHOOL

Leeds Free School and Community Trust has launched an appeal to improve facilities at its premises in Woodhouse Lane.

But there is unlikely to be any support from Leeds Corporation.

Free School treasurer Judith Weymont said: "A lot of the children qualify for free school meals, and the local authority has said that if our kitchen is properly tiled and hygenic, it will provide, it will provide free meals for the children here who qualify, and economically-priced meals for the others.

"It would cost about E500 to bring the kitchen up to standard."

VOLUNTARY

As a registered charity the free school relies on voluntary contributions and teachers.

With appeal funds they hope to be able to pay full-time teachers and repair Eldon Chapel, the school's home, which is rented from the council.

The school is not recognized by Leeds Education Committee, although it is registered with the Department of Education.

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors recently visited the school but the report has not yet been published.

Alderman Alfred Tallant, the chairman of Leeds Education Committee said that since there were places in local authority schools for children at the Free School he doubted the Committee would support the appeal.

He said: "We sent one of our inspectors to look at the school, and his report was not particularly favourable, although we have not taken steps to do anything."

CLOSE THIS SCHOOL SAYS FIRE CHIEF

Children attending the independent Leeds Free School were being exposed to "extreme danger by fire". Mr. Clifford D. Forrest, Chief Fire Officer for Leeds told members of the city council's Licensing and Fire Brigade Committee.

Now the Committee is to complain to the Leeds City Magistrates that the school premises presents a fire hazard, and should be closed.

The courts have power to prohibit or restrict the use of premises until fire risks to people are reduced.

The school opened at the beginning of this year in a 19th Century Disused chapel in Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

It is run privately by Leeds Free School and Community Trust, a registered charity, to provide an alternative to the State Education system in the city, with pupils deciding what they want to learn, and when they want to learn it.

CONCERN

Mr. Forrest said that as a result of complaints since the school opened, numerous visits had been made to it by fire officers who found "the fire precautions and safety arrangements were entirely unsatisfactory."

Reports were made on means of escape, and fire precautions and a final warning was sent to Miss B. Robson, who runs the school, stressing the city council's concern for the safety of the children.

A further visit was made at noon on August 21 by the fire officer who, said Mr. Forrest, found the school occupied by children aged from 2-14 and there was no adult supervision.

LOCKED UP

Mr. Forrest said there was only one method of escape from the school - through an entrance door that was open. All the other exits were secured. The fire alarm system was not working, and there was no primary lighting.

The fire extinguisher in the main hall had already been used and was not in a working condition. The remaining fire equipment could not be checked because it was locked up.

There was a large amount of combustible material on the balcony.

Alderman St. John Binns, the committee chairman said: "The local authority had little control over the situation, and has no authority itself to close the premises.

"But the chief fire officer is convinced that there are serious fire dangers to children at the school.

"Students Withdraw Free School Support",
Yorkshire Evening Post, February 27, 1974.

Footnotes:
333, p.250

STUDENTS WITHDRAW FREE SCHOOL SUPPORT

Leeds Polytechnic Students' Union has decided to withdraw its support of the Leeds Free School.

The decision was taken at a general meeting attended by about 100 students from the Polytechnic. A resolution proposing withdrawal of all support for the Free School was passed by a majority of three.

The Free School was formed about two years ago and caters for about 40 children, aged from five to 15, who are unable to "fit in" at State schools.

Helpers

It is run by two qualified teachers and student helpers and uses a former Methodist chapel opposite Leeds University.

Financial, moral and physical support has been given to the Free School by the Polytechnic Students' Union since the school was founded.

The school is based on a "self-discipline" principle and pupils are allowed to do what work they like, when they like.

Resolution

The resolution withdrawing union support was proposed by Mr. Nigel Putko (23), a quantity surveying student, of Harehills Leeds.

He said today: "I do not think the Free School does a good job. The pupils should be able to work within the constraints of the State education system.

"If Free Schools are considered necessary it should be the job of the Department of Education to provide them."

There was strong opposition to the move from union vice-president Linda Vaughan.

"The Free School children are not able to settle in an ordinary classroom," she said. At Free School they are able to learn from experience

rather than books.

The union paid about £60 towards running a discotheque in aid of the school and there have been collections at the Polytechnic," she said. "I am disgusted at the way the decision to withdraw support was bulldozed through."

Progress

"The school may not be a good example of free schools generally, but it can not progress without financial support. I am sorry people who have not even visited the school can put forward a motion like this."

Mr. Putko admitted he had not visited the school.

Miss Vaughan said she hoped the decision would be reversed at the union's next general meeting at the end of March.

Item 105. .

"Pupils quit to join free school",
Yorkshire Evening Post, January 11, 1973.

Footnotes:
334, p.251

PUPILS QUIT THE 'FREE' SCHOOL

A Leeds headmistress revealed, today, that five pupils, aged 11 and 12, have left her school to join the new unofficial Leeds Free School.

Mrs. Joan Mallett, head of Blenheim Middle School said that the five, boys and girls, had left during the last week.

The Free School, run privately by the Leeds Free School and Community Trust, has been set up in premises at the old Eldon Chapel, and has about 20 pupils.

Mrs. Mallett said: "I understand the principle of the school is to allow working-class parents the same freedom of choice in schools as wealthy families have, who can send their children to fee-paying schools.

Qualified Teachers

"Two of its teachers have worked for the Leeds Education department, and one has been a lecturer at the Bingley College of Education, so at least there are qualified teachers on the staff.

"At the moment, I am keeping a watching brief obviously our only concern is for the welfare of the childre," she added.

Last week Coun. William Stafford, chairman of Leeds Education Committee, said that education inspectors would have to be satisfied that the children were receiving a proper education.

"Otherwise they will be regarded as truants and the appropriate measures taken," he added.

Item 106.

"Watchdogs and the New Free School",
The Yorkshire Evening Post, January 11, 1973.

Footnotes:
335, p.251

WATCHDOGS and the NEW FREE SCHOOL

A close inspection will be made by Leeds Education Authority to make sure the new Leeds Free School has full and satisfactory services for its pupils.

The school, being operated by the Leeds Free School and Community Trust, is to be housed in premises at the old Eldon Chapel in Woodhouse Lane.

Leeds University used to use the building for chemistry lectures.

But Coun. William Stafford, chairman of Leeds Education Committee's schools sub-committee, said the building is now in a bad state of disrepair.

The sub-committee has agreed, however, to provide school dinners for 10-20 children.

Coun. Stafford explained the education inspectors would have to be satisfied that the children were receiving a proper education.

"Otherwise, they will be regarded as truants and the appropriate measures taken," he warned.

Other Set-up

A free school was being run in Liverpool, said Coun. Stafford, without interference from the local education authority.

Their system of free education was for deprived children and those unlikely to benefit most from a Staterun system. But he understood this was not entirely the case with the Leeds school.

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Item 107.

Endersby, J. "The School Where Children Smoke and Swear", Yorkshire Evening Post, March 2, 1973.

Footnotes:

336, p.251

SCHOOL WHERE THE CHILDREN SMOKE AND SWEAR

To begin to understand how the Liverpool Free School operates, you have to forget about normal schools.

Forget about smart, clean buildings and modern furniture. Think instead, of patched-up walls and windows and litter on the floor.

Forget about discipline and conventional teacher-pupil relationship. Think instead of children being allowed to choose when they want to attend lessons and what they want to learn, of a situation where respect for Sir is replaced by first-name terms and where deference is practically unnoticeable.

My conversation at the school with John Ord, co-founder and one of the teachers, was frequently interrupted by pupils and we were narrowly missed by snowballs hurling through the open window from children outside.

Swearing

If you go along with the thinking of the Liverpool Free School, you have to accept staff and pupils who swear and smoke in the classroom.

Not that there are any classrooms, just areas where the kids congregate, depending on what they want to do.

John Ord is a quietly-spoken, courteous man, a former secondary school teacher who became disillusioned with the state system when he taught at Everton.

"The school I worked in wasn't part of the community. It wasn't run by people from the district and it seemed wrong to me to have a building which was only used by children during the day and not open to the rest of the community."

John Ord also objected to the way the children were being taught.

"The school was imposing its own set of values on the children without thinking that they might have a set of values of their own.

"You have a situation where the teachers are called sir and

the children wear a uniform and set punishments are devised. This sort of culture doesn't exist in the child's home or his own play groups and therefore I felt that children were leading an unreal life from nine to four."

Nursery

... goes home - they have a disco session three times a week, so sometimes it's nearly midnight when the lights go out.

The Free School's relationship with the Liverpool Education Department is an uneasy one, and has caused plenty of public debate and private argument, but the centre has been provisionally registered by the Government as an independent school and they hope the registration will be made permanent in the autumn.

The school runs on the basis that the children are free to do as they wish. They start and finish when they want; they don't even have to turn up at all, though most of them do and there has been no trouble yet over official school attendance requirements.

What the kids do once they get there is up to them. When the snow came the other week, they spent most of the day sledging. Those who want to play all day can do so. The same applies to those who want to work and some of the students are studying for C.S.E.

Screaming

But can children cope with such freedom.

"Not all of them are mature enough," admits John Ord. "Some don't want to do anything but run around screaming. But after about three weeks or so that becomes boring and they look round for something to do." There are four state qualified teachers at the school, three of them with degrees or teaching diplomas. John is vague about the rest of the staff.

"It varies day to day. Someone might come in to talk about their particular subject for instance."

What advantages does a free school have over the state system?

"For one thing," says John, "it's cheaper. I don't mean that facetiously. People think that the answer to better and better education is to pour in more and more money and they become more and more baffled when it doesn't work out.

"Too much money is spent on pretentious buildings instead of giving direct benefit to the children and to the community."

A lot of the cash that comes the school's way goes on providing trips and holidays for the children.

Many people agree with ... wear. His sons followed her to the free school.

He also helps at the school, doing most of the administration work and he has no complaints about his children's education.

But the school has many critics and the lack of discipline is the most popular area of attack.

"There is a definite lack of external discipline. We don't have rules and regulations. We want to develop the children's own sense of responsibility and maturity," says the co-founder.

"I could spend hours organising punishments, but I don't need to. If anything goes wrong here, the children sort it out themselves through meetings and arguments."

If a decision has to be made - about a school holiday or day out for example - the teachers and pupils meet to thrash out a plan.

Dedicated

"Whatever adults may believe, kids usually rise to the occasion."

John is certainly dedicated - nobody works for two years without pay unless they believe strongly in what they are doing (he doesn't get any dole money because he is not available for work). The same applies to the other teachers.

Free schools are starting up in other cities and the Liverpool group help with advice. But many questions are still to be answered.

What happens when the pupils leave? How do they get jobs when they have had no formal schooling?

John Ord answers that by pointing out that from the first batch of 14 who left last year, 12 of them found jobs, or rather had jobs found

for them, mainly in factories and engineering works by the staff who went around inquiring about vacancies.

It is perhaps too soon to judge what effect the lack of "rules" and respect for authority will have in due course but I would have had fewer doubts about the pupils' sense of responsibility and maturity if it hadn't been for an incident as I left the school.

A group of about half-a-dozen pupils threw chunks of hard-packed snow and ice at me and my car because I refused to give them a ride.

This could, of course, happen at many a state school but would it, as was the case this time

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"The school was imposing its own set of values on the children without thinking that they might have a set of values of their own."

"You have a situation where the teachers are called sir and the children wear a uniform and get punishment, are devalued. This sort of culture doesn't exist in the child's home or his own play groups and therefore I felt that children were leading an unreal life from nine to four."

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Item 108.

Various articles written about the Scotland
Free School, by the Liverpool papers, The Echo,
The Daily Post and The Weekly News.

Footnotes:

337, p.251

Free school chief quits

Echo
19 Sept 73

Mr. John Ord, the founder of Liverpool's controversial free school, has resigned.

And to-day he hit out at people who had supported the principle of the school, but had failed "to put their money where their mouth is."

"The school is in dire financial straits and unless it gets immediate help it faces almost certain closure," he said.

Behind his decision to resign are debts totalling over £500... and a new addition to his family.

Staff at the school receive no wages, and Mr. Ord said to-day: "I simply couldn't afford to carry on working there any longer.

"It was a difficult decision to make, but my first duty must be to my family. I am now looking for a job which will bring in a regular wage."

His resignation is the latest in a series of blows to hit the school in recent months.

In July, the school was given notice to quit its present home in Major

Street by Liverpool Corporation.

More recently, it was the subject of a "largely unfavourable" report by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.

Mr. Ord's final comment to-day was: "It will be tragic if the school does close down, but if it does I think we will still have proved our point."

In the meantime staff at the school are awaiting the results of a circular letter sent to local charities and trusts asking for money to keep the school going.

J. Deacon, Editor, Echo

Rethink on
free school's

The education committee is to think again about its decision to evict the experimental Scotland Road Free School from the Corporation's former Stanley School building in Major Street.

Councillor John Hamilton, chairman of the committee, said that if the free school could sign the tenancy agreement and pay their rates, he would not evict them at the end of August, and would take the matter once more to the education committee.

ty's free
school
may get
eviction
reprieve

Daily Post

24 Aug 73

The experimental Scotland Road free school, threatened by Liverpool Corporation with eviction at the end of this month, may be reprieved.

Councillor John Hamilton (Lab), the chairman of the education committee told the council yesterday that it had been intended to ask the organisers to leave the Corporation's former school in Major Street because they had not signed their tenancy agreement or paid their rates.

If they could do these things he would not operate the decision and hold the whole matter over until the next meeting of the education committee.

The matter would then be discussed in the light of any action which had been taken, said Councillor Hamilton.

'Let tenants group run free school' plea turned down

"Kill the Scotland Road Free School project now and do the children a favour."

This was an attempt to pass sentence on the local educational experiment, the future of which has hung in the balance in recent months.

The man donning the black cap at a meeting of the Corporation's Education Committee was Everton Councillor Roy Hughes in a debate on whether or not steps should be taken to put the school's premises in Major Street in the Corporation's hands.

"I've heard that many people can't wait to see the Free School close. It has failed, so can we kill this myth of the free school?" asked Councillor Hughes.

A row was sparked off when Low Hill Councillor David Alton opposed the proposed eviction of the school and revealed that he had attended a meeting the night before with 11 tenants' groups working with the Free School in the same area.

At the meeting the associations — the Scotland Road People's Centre — asked to be given control of the school, and Councillor Alton urged the councillors to agree to having the tenancy transferred to the associations.

CONCERN

He said orthodox education in the area had failed and recognition should be given to the 51-pupil school for the sincerity, enthusiasm and tenacity of those who run it.

He was backed by Councillor Trevor Jones, who said a great deal of criticism on the way the school was run was undeserved and it caused concern among council members.

He asked for those running the school to be given credit "for their tenacity in the face of all adversity."

Councillor Alton's suggestion was defeated by 17 votes to 3 and a further proposal to have the matter discussed again by a sub-committee was also turned down.

In calling on committee members to vote against the change of tenancy, Councillor Hughes said a party could quite easily rescind the project.

But for the moment, he said, he was willing to accept the decision of a party which had given birth to the idea and which now wanted to administer the pill to kill it.

Also giving the project the

thumbs-down was Councillor Mrs. Myra Fitzsimmons, who said some of the tenants' associations earlier listed by Councillor Alton had shown their lack of confidence in it. She called the project "an irresponsible venture."

The chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor John Hamilton, expressed his concern at the way the committee was asked to agree to something involving a group of people unknown to most members of the committee.

SUPPORT

He said a proper statement presented in black and white would have been a better move, and such a statement would be considered.

Councillor Hamilton added that the transfer of the tenancy could easily be carried out amicably between the present tenants and the various community groups without legal problems.

Councillor Frank Gaier, chairman of the sub-committee dealing with the issue, pledged his personal support to any move to go into the matter sympathetically.

He pointed out that the principles of the school were never in doubt and that only the efficiency in carrying out these principles was in question.

Echo 16/4/74

New move to find school for pupils

There are still more than 50 children without a school after the failure of the Scotland Road free school experiment, and Liverpool Education Committee may sign on special teachers to solve the problem.

Seventy-seven children associated with the free school were left without places at the beginning of this year's spring term. Some have gone back to traditional school since, leaving 53 pupils still without classrooms at the last count.

The schools' sub-committee, considering the problem, have recom-

mended that a special unit should be set up for those free school children who are left.

To attract a teacher to take charge as quickly as possible it is suggested that a good salary should be offered.

The decision to open the special unit was taken after the Director of Education, Mr. C. P. R. Clarke, had reported that most of the 12 schools in the area—many of them with empty places—agreed in principle to readmit the children provided parents agreed to "reasonable conditions."

Item 109.

"The School Where Pupils Smoke and Swear",
Sunday Post, Glasgow, December 13, 1974.

Footnotes:

338, p.252

The School Where Pupils Smoke And Swear!

By A Sunday Post Man

EVEN as I climbed the stairs, I could see Barrowfield Community School is no ordinary school. It's on an old building in a derelict area of Glasgow's East End.

Weird, psychedelic posters and paintings decorated walls and doors. The names of various pop groups were scrawled across tables and walls. Of four pupils in one classroom, one was painting, one reading, two were playing snakes and ladders.

Cigarette ends littered the floors. The pupils are allowed to wander about as they like. There are only two teachers. Brian Addison, a 29-year-old who used to work at a school in Maryhill, and 21-year-old Stella Cumbis, a psychology graduate of Stirling University.

Officially, the school opens at 9.30 a.m. But the pupils can wander in whenever they feel like it. There's no timetable. Although the three R's are compulsory, the pupils are allowed to do whatever they feel like doing.

There's no discipline. The boys swear openly. It's believed pupils should have freedom of expression.

No Exams

BARROWFIELD is an experiment in education. Some of the children were recommended by Children's Panels.

Others have a record of truancy from previous schools. Parents and teachers could do nothing with them.

The Scottish International Education Trust—Sean Connery and Jackie Stewart are founder members—financed the school. It depends on charity, as it does not have the approval of Glasgow Corporation.

I'm not surprised. As I talked to teachers, a 14-year-old boy walked in, lit a cigarette and lounged feet up on a desk.

The emphasis at Barrowfield is not on formal teaching. There are no examinations. Most of the work done in the school is concerned with the local community.

The pupils have made toys for local children and helped to set up playgrounds and adventure playgrounds. They've also done work helping O.A.P.s.

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The pupils have made toys for local children and helped to set up playgrounds and adventure playgrounds. They've also done work helping O.A.P.s.

Every month, the pupils produce "The 5p B nanza" — their own magazine.

Some issues are freely scattered with swear words.

If a pupil wants to study a particular subject he's given all the help the teachers can provide.

While I was there, one 15-year-old girl had her nose stuck into an English book, while her fellow pupils cavorted about the corridors.

A Monopoly board was spread out on one table. It's popular with pupils.

They do receive regular instruction on politics and are encouraged to take an interest in the local Tenants' Association.

There are frequent discussions on everything from religion to the facts of life.

Recently, the school was promised a total of £14,000 from three different charities — the Wates Foundation, the Scottish International Education Trust and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

That should keep Barrowfield open for about three years.

Baffling

WHAT do the parents think of Barrowfield?

Well, it baffles them a bit. But they do say the children don't play truant so often.

Certainly, Barrowfield gives the pupils plenty to keep them occupied. That way they don't hang about street corners.

The age of the pupils at Barrowfield at the moment ranges from 12 to 18. All those I spoke to think the school is "great."

There was another visitor the Scottish International Education Trust and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

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while I was there — a Mr Potter, of Victoria University, British Columbia. He is over here observing schools like Barrowfield, which are quite common in Australia, Canada and the U.S.A.

Of all the schools he's visited, he says Barrowfield is unique. That's true. It was still early afternoon. But the pupils had decided they'd had enough teaching for one day. So one by one, they just drifted out of the door.

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Item 110.

Description of a conversation between the
author and Nora Goddard of I.L.E.A.

April 22, 1974.

Footnotes:

348, p.262

Notes on a conversation with Nora Goddard of I.L.E.A.,

April 22nd. 1974.

First, Miss Goddard reminded me of the colossal size of London, and the implications that had for the management (or mismanagement) of schools.

She pointed out that a considerable number of deprived children, often living under incredibly bad conditions, cannot handle the freedom and open-ness of their primary schools. Many of the children coming to school, come from cramped and very highly-controlled - often violent - homes.

She said that time is needed to help the children adjust to the freer ways of their schools. This is particularly necessary for West Indian children, whose parents seem to dote on them until they are about four or five years old, at which time they can get very tough with the children -almost cruel, in the interests of simple survival.

Secondly, she pointed out that there needs to be a far greater understanding of the tremendous influence that home-life has upon children.

She felt that the term "free school" means something different in Britain from what it means in North America. Whereas many North American free schools seem to be middle-class, independent places, or ghetto storefront schools, British free schools seem to be less independent and are continually approaching education authorities for funding. Furthermore, there are both rigid and free schools within the British system.

Item 111.

A.S. Neill Trust Newsletter, June, 1974.

p.1.

Footnotes:

357, p.268

THE A. S. NEILL TRUST

Early this year the A.S. Neill Trust was formed in memory of the man whose writings and whose school, Summerhill, have become focal points for teachers through out the world.

The objectives of the Trust have been provisionally defined as follows:

To promote the freedom of children, irrespective of age, race, colour, creed or sex, to live as they choose, subject only to the right of others to a similar freedom.

To provide help and advice (legal or other) training, encouragement and finance to individuals, groups or organisations whose work and aims seek to foster freedom for children.

To seek to persuade people in other countries to work towards these ends and to cooperate with them.

To launch appeals for funds as and when necessary and to administer these funds through the Trustees appointed for the purpose.

At present the Trust comprises six Trustees (Gerry Blood, Dr John Daniels, Mike Duane, Fiona Green, May Heddings and Peter Nowell) about 100 members and a number of sponsors including Maurice Ash, Lord Boyle, Sir Alec Clegg Bishop Trevor Huddleston and Dr Robin Pedley. The Trust is registered as a charity and is in the process of working out a Constitution. It has arranged some meetings and is about to launch a world-wide appeal for funds.

This report is the result of a weekend conference held recently at the Terrace in Conisbrough attended by 33 members of the Trust representing state school teachers, independent school teachers and a number of people working in free schools and 'alternative' projects.

Membership of the Trust costs only 50p per annum and entitles members to attend national and regional meetings, to have a voice in the setting up of the Constitution and structure of the Trust and to receive forthcoming and subsequent newsletters. A membership form is attached and should be sent to Dr John Daniels at the address given.

Item 112.

A.S. Neill Trust Newsletter, No.6, p.9.

Footnotes:

362, p.272

Notes from the Secretary - contd.

The proposed Constitution for the Trust was not passed by the AGM because it did not provide proper democratic control (including periodic elections) of the Trustees, and we were asked to re-draft this. The lines we are working on would establish two organizations to work in tandem - the Trust and an Association. The Trust would be controlled as at present by a more or less permanent body of trustees (as required legally) and would be responsible for the administration of funds which were donated to it. The Association would have an elected committee which would be responsible for all the other activities which we are beginning to get involved in - setting up meetings, producing the Newsletter, providing an information exchange and so on. We can build into the constitution the intention that the Trustees should pay attention to the expressed wishes of the membership but it seems legally necessary that this body should be personally responsible and thus not subject to the democratic control which we would all like. So what is being suggested is that the functions of this body should be limited just to the administration of those funds (donations, not subscriptions to the Association), so that as wide a range of responsibility as possible would be vested in the democratically controlled committee. Nevertheless, one would want the two bodies to be working very closely together and to encourage this I personally favour the idea that the Trustees and the Committee should share the same secretary. It would still be necessary however to empower the Committee to appoint a different Secretary for itself if things began to go wrong.

The Trustees cannot immediately present their re-drafted Constitution because there are still some legal checks to be made, but I thought it would be useful to sketch the lines along which we are thinking so that people might write in if they have any particular reactions to these ideas.

The Trustees have had regretfully to accept the retirement from trusteeship of two of its members - John Daniels and Peter Nowell. We would not like them to leave us without recording our gratitude for the work they have done for us over the past ten months. And of course we are particularly indebted to John because he was the prime mover in getting the Trust established in the first place.

Although they find it necessary to retire as Trustees, we are glad that neither

Item 113.

A.S. Neill Trust Newsletter, No. 3, 1974.

Footnotes:

364, p.273

TRUST FUNDS

At the last meeting of the Association, the Trustees were asked to publish information about applications they had received for financial help. It was accepted that compiling a full list would involve an unnecessary amount of work and we are therefore listing below just those to whom we have responded positively. But first we want to explain the grounds on which some others may have been rejected.

We are bound by our Trust Deed to support only projects whose work is directly concerned with children or adolescents, and is conducted in ways which are consonant with the principles of A.S.Noill. The projects also have to be charities or at least 'conducted on charitable lines'. These in short are our legal constraints. Added to this we have tended to favour projects which are operating in areas of extreme need and which have some community support and involvement. (Life Span is a possible exception to this, but it is making its facilities available to Free Schools from the cities.) We are not giving money to projects which already receive support from public funds, or which charge fees. And a project which gets a substantial grant from some other Trust will probably not then qualify for additional help from our very slender resources. We make it a rule always to make personal contact with the people involved in a project we are considering and we try to assess the relative urgencies of the various applications. When we have made one grant, to a project we rely on the people involved keeping in touch with us to tell us of their needs and progress - we try particularly to help if and when some very urgent need arises, and we are trying to keep a small reserve of money in hand so that we can respond quickly in such a case.

FUNDS SO FAR DISTRIBUTED

We have handed money on to the following projects in the quantities indicated:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Leeds Free School: | £30 @ £50 |
| Barnoldsey Lamp Post: | £50 @ £60 @ £50 @ £100 |
| Delta F.S. Southampton: | £40 @ £100 |
| N.Kensington Community School: | £40 @ £60 |
| Kirkby House: | £30 @ £50 @ £50 |
| Life Span: | £50 |
| Basement Writers: | £30 |

FUND RAISING

In a little less than a year we have collected about £1200. (We have a reserve of a little over £200 and have had expenses - mainly printing our appeal leaflet - of about £150)

£500 pounds of this came from a single (anonymous) donor and the rest from over 100 individuals each contributing from £1 to £50. We are naturally very grateful to all these contributors. At the same time we cannot lock on