

**COTSWOLD COMMUNITY**

**WORKING NOTE NO. 3**

**by**

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#### **Introduction**

This report is based on four visits to the Cotswold Community covering 7 days in all. During these visits most of the time was spent in discussion with the senior staff, Mr. Balbernie, Mr. Trevor Blewett, Mr. Douglas, Miss Drew and to a smaller extent with Mr. Jinks. I also had both lengthy, and sometimes repeated interviews with six members of the Group Living Staff and also had a good deal of informal talk with some dozen others and spent two evenings observing the work in the Cottage and talking with staff and boys there. I have had only a little informal contact with other Polytechnic staff.

Besides contact with Community staff I had a lengthy interview with Mrs. Dockar-Drysdale and saw Miss Joan Cooper at the Home Office, Mr. Ronald Howell of the Rainer Foundation and Mr. Edward Brown, Children's Officer of the Wiltshire County Council. I have kept in close contact with Dr. P Turquet of the Tavistock Clinic who has also been seeing M.r Balbernie.

The information I have gathered puts me in a position to discuss the present overall management position in the Community and the work of the Group Living Unit and consider their future development, and to commit in detail on the Polytechnic and on the use of educational staff in Group Living, or of Group Living staff in the Polytechnic. I hope to be able to do this after my next visit to the Community on July 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Internal Matters**

Very considerable progress has been made in developing a therapeutic milieu for the boys since Dr. Rice's second Working Note (May 1968), in the process of which considerable changes have been made in the basic models he suggested for the Community which at several points proved impracticable.

#### **Group Living**

I shall start with this area of work since changes that have taken place there have implications for overall management which make it more appropriate, therefore, to discuss that later.

Dr. Rice's proposals in his first Working Note (February 1968) to have fairly large houses in which would live three groups of 5 to 12 boys has not been implemented; instead smaller houses have been developed each with only one group of boys. This was partly a matter of the accommodation available, but in fact, these smaller houses facilitate

the growth of a stronger group of boys and the development of more intimate contact between boys and staff and seem therapeutically more effective. Plans now being implemented will concentrate as much of the 'ordinary living' of the boys in these houses as possible, which will further strengthen the group situation in the house and the therapeutic influence of staff-boy interaction. The boys will live in the house in a way very much like the way other boys live in their homes, with concentration of living activities in the house. Essential to this is the plan now implemented to a considerable extent to de-centralise meal arrangements – all meals except the mid-day meal to be eaten in the house. Cooking is also being gradually de-centralised. There is great gain in the additional informal group work which can be done as staff and boys prepare, eat and tidy up after meals together.

Further, the demands that running a house make on the Head of the house make it impossible for him to take on any other major work commitment, as Dr. Rice suggested he might. He cannot, therefore, present his boys with a direct model of a man going out from the house as from a home to do a man's job outside, a model with which boys might identify. In fact, he could present alternatively a model of a man leaving his own home to do a job in his house. This reflects the reality of his position, in fact. Very important in his presentation of himself as a masculine model is the way he behaves when he is actually running his house the way the rest of his life impinges on that, for example, his demonstrating genuine masculine concern for his own family and home and participating in masculine leisure-time pursuits with or without boys. The same goes for other male full-time Group Living staff. Unmarried staff must likewise show concern for having satisfactory relationships and interests outside their work in the Community.

Returning to the point about the importance for male identification of the on-going behaviour of male staff in the house, much thought has been given to developing roles in the house to this end. As regards the head of the house, it is important to recognise the reality that he is not the substitute-father of an unreal family, but the manager of a sub-institution within the Community with a staff to assist him. An important aspect of masculinity then emerges as the need for him to function effectively in this role and to be demonstrably accepted by his staff as a manager to whom they are responsible. He would not, of course, be autocratic but he must be authoritative and his authority accepted by staff. As an aspect of this development, all house staff are now formally responsible to the heads of their houses for their work there. Female staff are no longer responsible to the Matron as formerly.

The managerial component in the role of the head of a house must be backed by a highly developed professionalism. Considerable progress is also being made in this respect as staff feel their way effectively into their roles and benefit from the training and support activities of senior staff and consultants, particularly Mrs. Dockar-Drysdale. The masculine model thus becomes one of a man doing a serious, difficult and responsible job within his own house.

Also important for the establishment of masculine models by male staff is their relationship with female staff, since an important aspect of mature masculinity is to be

able to develop a secure, concerned, respectful and confident relationship with woman. This relationship could then be supported by clear differentiation of male and female roles and tasks and proper delegation of responsibility for them to male and female staff. Here it is important to distinguish between responsibility for tasks and actual task performance. In the running of a house, as of a family, male staff and also boys might do what are conventionally feminine tasks and female staff what are conventionally masculine. In a family these matters tend to be worked out implicitly and operated according to the idiosyncrasies of the personalities concerned. In a working unit they need to be clarified and operated more explicitly although still within the limits of the personalities deployed. The clarification of the overall management model and making it explicit to boys as well as staff and the operation of authority within it, would be useful to boys in helping them to develop more effective ego-boundaries and in accepting and identifying with authority.

In staffing the house the Community has had to come to terms with certain difficulties, very important among which is the difficulty in finding older professional women as house mothers, what Miss Cooper described graphically as 'young grannies'. Only young female professional workers can be found. They cannot, therefore, be substitute 'mothers' since they are too close in age to the boys. They cannot even operate too much in a motherly way without causing some generation confusion that would not be helpful to the boys. Their youth makes for certain difficulties in terms of both aggressive and sexual acting-out by boys and a great deal of teasing which adds considerably to the emotional stress of their role. The particular difficulties of their situation stress the need for them to develop a high degree of professionalism and skill in their role, to develop a mode of inter-acting with boys which is neither motherly nor akin to a girlfriend, as a protection for themselves and for the benefit of the boys. Progress is being made in this direction. It seems also important that male staff develop the habit of making interventions to protect female staff, recognise the professionalism of young female staff and indeed C.S.V's, and support it, do not themselves get entangled in fantasy relationships with female staff, so that they give to the boys an appropriate model of professional masculine behaviour towards professional women.

The importance of having older women in the house who can take a motherly role is being met by the older domestic worker, the domestic organiser.

The typical staff of a house is now as follows:-

- Head of the house, male, fulltime
- Two other professional workers, male, fulltime
- One professional worker, female, fulltime
- One teacher on E.D.A. part-time
- A.C.S.V. (if available) female, fulltime
- A domestic organiser, female, part-time
- A cook, fulltime
- A cleaner, part-time

The hierarchical structure is suggested for this staff as follows:

That one male fulltime worker would be deputy of a house responsible to the Head and acting for him in his absence. All other staff whose primary task is the maintenance of the therapeutic environment, that is the other fulltime male worker, the female professional worker, the teacher and the C.S.V. would be primarily responsible to the head of the house and when on duty in his absence immediately to his deputy.

The female professional worker would not only be responsible to the head of house for her professional work, but also, and in a sense as a component of this, for the domestic organisation of the house, although delegating as much as possible on her more specialised tasks. The cook and cleaner would be responsible to the domestic organiser, but in her absence directly to the female professional worker.

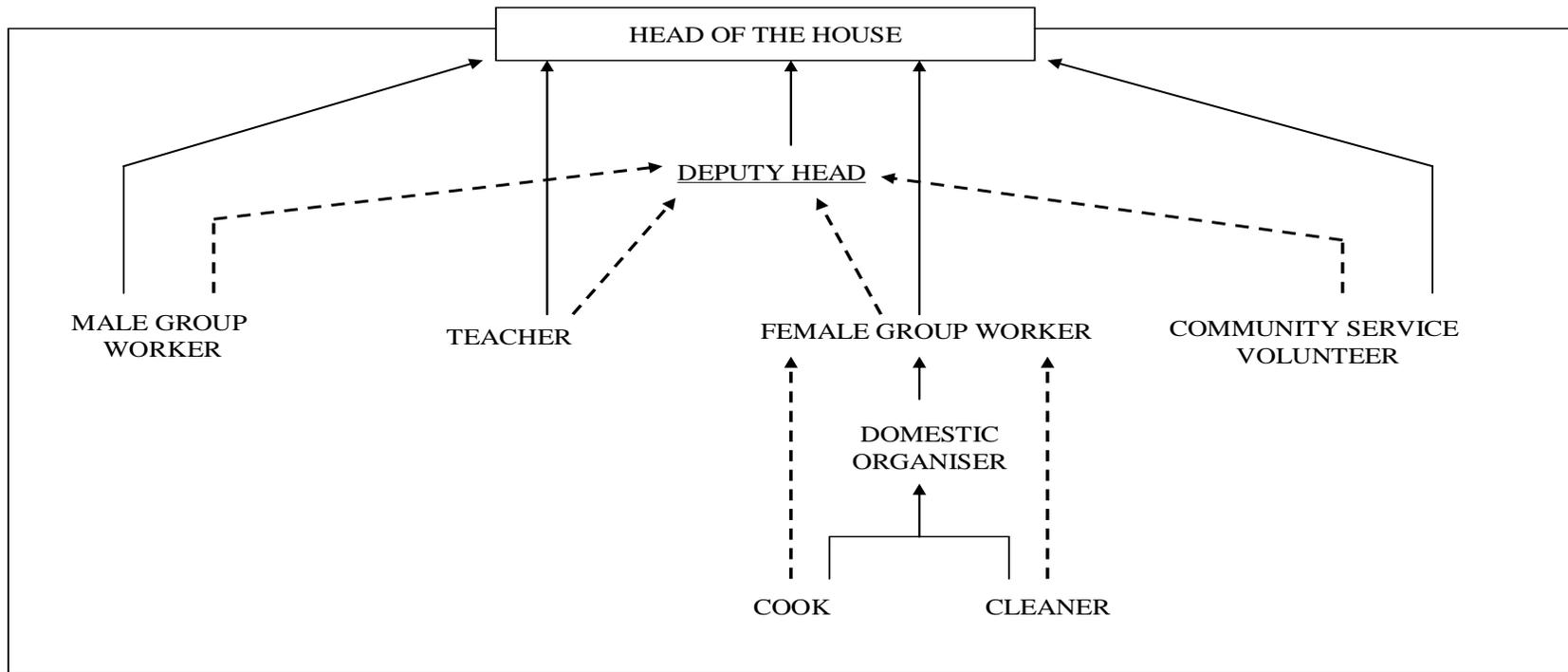
Some changes in titles also seem desirable, but appropriate ones do not seem easy to find. The original ones suggested by Dr. Rice no longer serve. Head or Warden and Deputy Head or Warden suggested for the heads of the house. For the other professional fulltime workers and the teacher it is more difficult. One cannot call them child-care workers since that would deny the adolescence of the boys. Their primary role is therapy, but therapists is not a suitable title. Group worker is probably the best one.

The house hierarchical structure would then appear as follows:-

Solid lines represent primary hierarchical authority and responsibility.

Broken lines represent deputing authority and responsibility.

See following chart: "Head of the House"



The structure, although small, is complex, because of staff being on and off duty at different times and because of the need for all the staff to share in all tasks to some degree. Even the cook and the cleaner inevitably inter-act with and influence boys. Professional staff have to do domestic work at times. There will, therefore, be a need for staff to inter-act flexibly with each other, within the limits of their formal authority and responsibility for, and the performance of, tasks, e.g. the female group worker would call on male workers and boys to help with domestic tasks when necessary. The houses have made some progress in sorting these matters out, but it seems likely that staff will need to have frequent discussions in order to clarify their roles and role-relationships within the new setting and to deal with the inevitable frictions.

### **Matron's Role**

The changes in structure within Group Living have certain implications for Matron's role.

1. Since female professional staff and a considerable number of domestic staff are now, from the managerial point of view, within Group Living, the Matron is now directly responsible for appreciably fewer staff which implies a diminution in her role and responsibilities.

There is a need for female group workers and other female staff to have an older, more experienced professional woman, with whom they could discuss their special problems as women working in the Cotswold Community. The present Matron has been highly involved in the past in training and supporting female workers, but there is now less of that for her to do, some of the training function being taken on by senior house staff and some by Mrs. Dockar-Drysdale, who also carries some of the supportive tasks. It is probably more appropriate, in fact, that such problems be taken to someone not involved in day-to-day management. So Matron's role is further diminished in this respect.

2. The assumption by the houses of increasing responsibility for their domestic affairs has transferred a considerable amount of Matron's responsibility for domestic organisation to the head of Group Living, with a further diminution in her role and responsibility.

In short, Matron has in the past made a significant contribution to the development of new methods of working in the Community, but, in so doing, has at the same time been involved in the de-grading of her own job. It seems unlikely that in the future there will be a Matron's role giving sufficient status and responsibility to attract a woman of the seniority and competence the Community needs in its top-management.

Two questions then arise;

1. Whether what remains of the domestic side of the Matron's role could, or should be, transferred with appropriate staff to the Bursar's Department? This question has not been investigated in detail, but it seems as though it would be a possibility.

2. Whether another viable role can be developed which would attract a senior, professional woman of the right calibre to be a member of top management? Mr. Balbernie feels that it is important to have a woman in top management and I would in many ways support this view. Her presence could support the status of woman in the Community and reflect back into male/female relationship model development. She would also be an important support to the less experienced professional and the non-professional woman. Mr. Balbernie suggests employing a senior case worker whose primary task would be to work with the boys' families. I have not yet had the opportunity to explore fully the possibilities of this role. If it should prove that there is enough appropriate work, I would support the suggestion. The senior female role would then change from Matron to Social Worker.

### **The Bursar's Role**

The Bursar is heavily engaged in transactions across the Community boundary and there must be considerable uncertainty about this aspect of the role until the question of external management is settled.

The only significant change proposed in his role for the present is that mentioned above, i.e. the possibility that he take over responsibility for the domestic side of the Matron's present role.

I have not become clear in my own mind about the relation between the Bursar and the Group Living staff, but am not certain whether this reflects lack of definition in the situation itself, in particular I am not sure whether the Bursar or the Head of Group Living collates requests for supplies from houses and makes decisions when there are conflicting demands. I shall try to clarify this further on my next visit.

### **Internal Management Structure**

At present top management group consists of the Principal, the Head of Group Living, the Head of the Polytechnic, the Bursar and the Matron. As has already been discussed, the question is now being considered of abolishing the Matron's role and creating a role for a Social Worker.

Although there has been no change in the formal hierarchy in top management, there has been considerable clarification of the boundaries between the roles and the responsibilities and authority that each management member appropriately carries, notably, as described above, the tightening of the responsibility lines of the Group Living Unit and clarification of authority channels between Group Living and Matron. Progress

has also been made in separating out managerial responsibility and internal consultancy and advisory work particularly as mentioned in terms of female group workers being now managed within Group Living, but using Matron in an advisory role.

As regards the boundaries between the Polytechnic and Group Living, staff seem to be clear about the authority channels when working in either area. However, there is a problem between these two activities that is still in process of being clarified, namely, the precise commitment required and possible for education staff in Group Living and the possible employment of Group Living staff in the Polytechnic. On the whole, I support the view put forward by Mr. Jinks that staff should be deployed as far as possible in the roles for which they are basically trained and where their skills are highest, particularly, that the Polytechnic should not be impoverished by too much withdrawal of staff during school days. There appears to be genuine difficulty for teaching staff to give as much extra time to Group Living as they need to provide adequate off-duty for Group Living staff. I am, therefore, raising the question as to whether it would not be a more workable solution for Group Living itself to have a peripatetic staff member, or members, who would relieve in all Houses; this would be a tough assignment and would accordingly need a fairly experienced man, or men, well supported.

As I read my notes and the latest internal management reports, it occurs to me that there is little or no provision in the formal structure for deputies, except in the suggested new house structure. There may be an informal system about which I am not fully informed and people cope reasonably well. It is my feeling, however, that this may put unnecessary stress into the situation, by leaving gaps in the formal structure of authority and responsibility when the head of a function is off-duty, gaps which may cause considerable difficulty if some unforeseen situation arises. In addition, lack of an effective deputy must make it more difficult for staff to feel really free when off-duty or on leave. It seems to me there is something to be said for a formal clarification of deputising at all levels and trying, as far as possible, to arrange duty rotas in accordance with this. In particular, it might be considered whether the peripatetic Group Living staff member, or one of them, could also deputise for the Head of Group Living.

The management and through them, other staff, have access to a number of consultants in various roles, Mrs. Dockar-Drysdale, Mr. Ronald Dare, Dr. P. Turquet and myself. There is, in addition, a proposed psychiatric consultant who would give some kind of medical cover, be available for consultation with staff and boys and make links with psychiatric institutions when necessary.

These consultants have different tasks, but there is inevitably a great deal of overlap since the boundaries between their roles are not fully clarified and there is a risk of confusion and of their possibly unwittingly interfering with each others' work and giving mutually contradictory advice or directives to staff. In any case, their work inevitably inter-acts. Some of these consultants can and do meet informally, but I think it is now worth considering whether the consultants should not meet formally at intervals, by themselves and with the management to exchange information and work over their tasks together.

This, it appears to me, would increase the total contribution of the available consultant time and skills.

### **External Management**

This is where the Community is at present facing its greatest difficulties and uncertainties and a satisfactory resolution is becoming increasingly urgent if the work of the Community is not to be affected by increasing uncertainty. It is difficult for the staff to continue to function securely with boys while they are very insecure about their own futures.

The Community is engaged in the difficult task of trying to convert a traditional approved school into a therapeutic community, and is having some success in doing so. This model-building task implies certain specific needs in relation to external management. It needs protection from undue external pressures and freedom to experiment without uninformed interference in the short run in order to continue the work. Special status seems very desirable to allow the experiment to continue effectively.

There are also, however, longer term issues about such therapeutic communities. They may need to have some special status and protection in perpetuity within the total system of institutions caring for children and adolescents who, for one reason or another, have to be placed in institutions. It seems to be very debatable whether there will ever be adequate resources to operate all such institutions as full therapeutic communities, or whether the majority must concentrate mainly on care while the therapeutic communities provide a specialised service only for the selected few. There is a danger that no effective therapy will be done at all if scarce therapeutic resources are spread thinly over all who are in need.

If this is so, then therapeutic communities will need to be able to claim special resources particularly in the number and skill of their professional staff. Further, they will need to be able to operate effective control over the boundary for the intake of children and their discharge, so that their intake has a good prognosis and, in particular, is likely to benefit from the particular form of treatment available. This might very well mean, in turn, a fairly wide catchment area.

Further, any successes of this experiment either in terms of its being a model for other therapeutic communities or in terms of a more general contribution of the work of institutions providing care for children can probably best be capitalised and disseminated from the relatively independent position that is also optimal in terms of giving freedom for experimentation and development.

These considerations suggest a management link either nationally, presumably with the Home Office, or with an independent body. Discussion with the Home Office and the Rainer Foundation suggests that both are now too heavily involved in other preoccupations to feel able to offer such external management. The Wiltshire County

Council are willing to take over external management and have the necessary finance available. No easy alternative to this presents itself. An immediate task, therefore, appears to be to explore the nature of management which would be provided by the Wiltshire County Council and the degree of experimental freedom that would be left to the Community under such management. Management and its consultant will, therefore, explore more fully with the Children's Officer and his Committee a possible future collaboration. However, they will also wish to explore with the Home Office whether, in fact, some link could be maintained directly with the Home Office, especially with relation to the experimental component and its financing.

The Community has also given considerable thought to the question of its site and has come to the conclusion that the present site has a great deal to recommend it, such as the situation which gives it enough, but not too great, isolation with the 'cordon sanitaire' effect of its size and the water parks, and the growth of Swindon both as a source of boys and a resource to the Community among staff and they feel it to be very desirable that they be given a minimum of three years' security to continue their work on the present site.

**Isabel E.P. Menzies**

**July 1970**

## **COTSWOLD COMMUNITY**

### **Addendum to Working Note 3**

#### **Introduction**

This note elaborates some points in Working Note 3 which were discussed further on my visit to the Community on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 1970, when I had discussions with Mr Balbernie, Mr Blewett, Mr Douglas, Miss Drew and Mr Jinks.

#### **1. Future Top Management Structure: The Roles of Bursar, Matron and Social Worker**

Further discussions with the people concerned seemed to strengthen the view that the following changes might be appropriate:

##### **(a) Matron and Domestic Bursar:**

That responsibility for the overall domestic organisation of the Community might well be included within the Bursar's department, and be delegated to him by a woman Domestic Bursar. There would be two main components of the new role:

- (i) Direct responsibility for all central domestic organisation including, for example, all meals still provided centrally, cleaning of all public parts of the building, purchasing of supplies for such central domestic functions.
- (ii) An advisory role to house staffs with regards to the internal domestic affairs of houses, for example, on purchasing furniture and other supplies, planning food supplies and meals in houses.

The person to fill this role would need a high degree of skill, experience and imagination in planning domestic arrangements to provide optimum living conditions for boys on small budgets. Mr. Douglas would be available to assist her in exercising adequate financial control.

##### **(b) Matron and Social Worker:**

The above arrangement would remove all the domestic side of Matron's function from a top management role, and would leave a vacancy there for the development of a different role for a woman in top management.

Mr. Douglas feels it is no longer really appropriate for him to continue to be responsible for the after-care of boys for two main reasons:

(i) That the Bursar's role has become a heavy one and leaves him insufficient time to carry out after-care effectively. The increase in the Bursar's responsibility if the Domestic Bursar's role were taken into his department might make it virtually impossible.

(ii) Changes in the way the Community operates, in particular changes in the role of Chaplain, mean that Mr. Douglas is no longer closely in touch with the majority of the boys, and he feels he no longer knows them well enough to be fully effective in after-care.

It seems, therefore, that after-care could well be transferred to someone else. Further, if that other person had time and appropriate professional skill, the work of after-care could be considerably extended to include more work with families and local professional workers and close liaison with Community staff concerned with individual boys. In particular, such work could improve the chance of boys settling effectively into their own communities after discharge. In other words, a greater professional component could be added to statutory requirements.

This strengthens the argument for a senior woman social worker in top management who would take on and develop after-care, and also give help and support to younger female professional staff and to other women staff when necessary.

## **2. The Relation between Group Living and the Polytechnic**

A remaining area of confusion and doubt between Group Living and Polytechnic staff seems to be the focus of 'therapy' for boys. Thinking later about my discussions on this point, I began to feel that there is a danger of false dichotomy – a possible anti-task rivalry between the two areas. I find myself stressing again that the overall and primary task of the whole Community is to provide a therapeutic experience for boys: all staff have equal responsibility for this. Different departments then take over sub-tasks essential to the overall therapeutic experience and development of boys, these departments having the responsibility for carrying out their sub-tasks efficiently as well as providing effective therapy. Thus, the Polytechnic has a responsibility to promote education as effectively as possible within the overall therapeutic framework. Group Living units have the responsibility to provide as effective living conditions as possible and to promote a boy's capacity for living with others within the overall therapeutic tasks. Neither group of staff is, or should be, more therapeutic than the other. Both need to carry out their appropriate sub-tasks in a therapeutic way. In this sense there is in theory no opposition between their tasks.

In practice, however, the situation may not be quite so simple or clear, and one would suppose that from time to time difficulties might arise that need clarification, for example, a decision about where a boy should be at any given moment for his own good, in the Polytechnic or in a house, and staff might differ on this point. Or again conflicts may arise over staff location, for example, a boy in trouble might seek out a teacher

during school hours and so threaten the teacher's commitment to his work in the Polytechnic. My own view, which I put forward for examination, is that a teacher's primary commitment during school hours is to his work in the Polytechnic, and that available house staff should help a boy in trouble. I put this view forward both because absence from teaching duties would disrupt the primary task of the Polytechnic and potentially deprive other boys, and because of the importance of presenting realistic task-orientated behaviour of boys.

I reiterate also the view I previously expressed that both types of staff should be primarily deployed in their areas of maximum skill. That is, teachers full-time in the Polytechnic with only E.D.A. work in houses, and house staff in work in their houses although they could make occasional sorties into the educational area if they had particular skills or interests not otherwise available. I gather that boys who are beginning to develop a need for more formal education may ask for help firstly from house staff. There seems no reason why house staff should not initially meet such needs, acting in this case as a concerned parent would with Polytechnic staff perhaps acting as advisors to them. But it is also important for house staff to feed educational needs back into the Polytechnic as soon as possible, both to make use of the specialist teaching skills there and to set up a more orthodox teaching situation in line with the community outside.

It also seems appropriate that the task of co-ordinating the different facets of a boy's life inside the community and across the boundaries should fall on a member of Group Living staff, again acting rather like a good and concerned parent. Group Living staff would, of course, call upon the help and guidance of Polytechnic or other staff as they felt it useful. From time to time case conferences are necessary and the question was raised as to who should convene or chair such meetings – the head of Group Living or the head of the Polytechnic? I suggested that the most appropriate person might be the boy's 'co-ordinator' with Mr. Blewett, Mr. Jinks and other people with specialist knowledge and advice attending.

Both Group Living and the Polytechnic seemed in some conflict about the nature and extent of activities that should formally be provided for boys outside the houses and after school hours. It is tempting to feel that considerable provision should be made. However, I suggested that this question might be given further consideration in relation to a particular need of boys, that is, to have their propensity for action diminished and their propensity for contemplation, quietness and thought developed; and I linked this with the need to develop their capacity to enjoy and value 'home'. I suggested, therefore, that it might be undesirable to distract them too much away from their houses which potentially provide the best opportunities for talk, home-based games, domestic activities and all the other things that make for relaxation in the home and learning to live at home.

**Isabel E. P. Menzies**

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