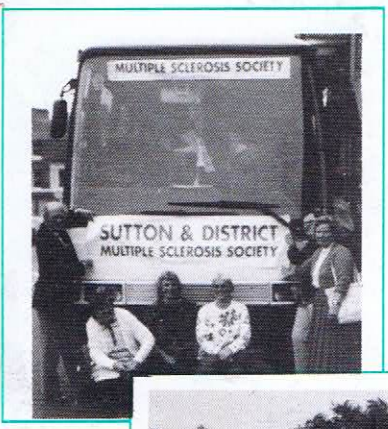

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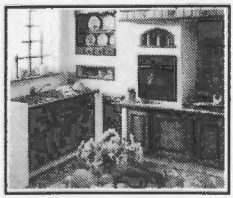

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34 Silverdale Road, Erdington, Birmingham B24 0SH. Tel: 021-350 3833

Welfare and Transport Officer:
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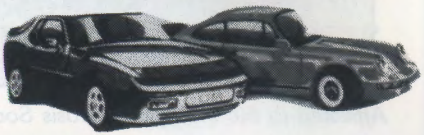

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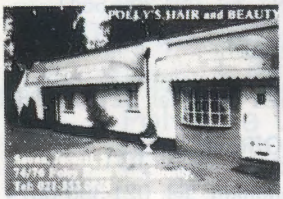

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Events for 1993/4

Branch Meets First Wednesday of Every Month at
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at 7.30 p.m. where an informal evening is held

August	4th	Mrs. Davies Flower Arranging.
September	1st	Fish and Chip Supper.
September	5th	Coach Trip to Granada Studios.
September	11th	**Flag Day.**
September	22nd	Trip, Walsall Illuminations.
October	6th	Talk by Keith Gabb.
November	3rd	B and B Auction.
December	1st	Christmas Party.
1994		
January	5th	Quiz Night.
January	9th	Annual Dinner (Westfield Court).
February	2nd	J.P. Slide Show (Events of 93).
March	2nd	Annual General Meeting.
April	6th	Cheese and Wine Evening.
April	16th	Jumble Sale (Station Road, Erdington).
May	4th	Open
June	1st	Natter Night
June	11th	Coffee Morning (Station Road, Erdington)
June	12th	Coach Trip to Rhyl
July	6th	Strawberries and Cream
July	17th	Summer Barbecue
September	4th	Coach Trip to Chester

The Committee

The club is yours, not ours. If members have any new ideas or complaints do not hesitate to contact any of the above.

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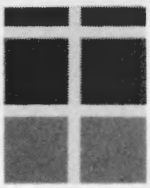

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Chairman's Communique

Mrs. Mollie Bird

We have approximately 170 members in our branch, of these 93 actually have MS, the remainder are husbands, wives, friends, or just people who come along to help, we always need helpers, so much depends on the volunteers in the community.

The comradeship and friendship established between members of the branch are greatly valued and appreciated.

Anyone in our area is welcome to join our happy band, not only people with MS. If you would like to help us to raise the funds that run the branch we will be more than pleased to have your assistance.

Apart from money raised by our own efforts (we hold various fund raising events during the year) we also receive donations from many different sources. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who have donated sums during the past year.

We spend money on research, welfare and providing social activities. This is an ongoing process and we are always on the look out for ideas and help at our fund raising events.

It seems that each year I thank all the people who make the work of the branch possible, kind people who raise money for us, officers and members who work so hard to ensure the success of the branch, my thanks are no less sincere for this repetition.

MOLLIE BIRD
Chairman

All photographs in this publication are by John Palmer.

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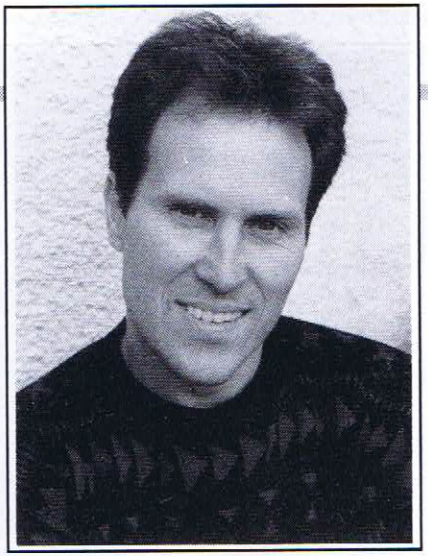
Secretary's Spiel



Robert Pitts

Able to be Able

As a sufferer of M.S. myself with physical limitations, to be able to carry out the duties of Secretary and helping out at fundraising events would be an impossibility without the help of the more able bodied. Such a person who is able to be able is our Chairman Mollie Bird, who I must hail thanks and praise to for all her hard work and dedication throughout the years which has kept the branch going and made it so successful to date.

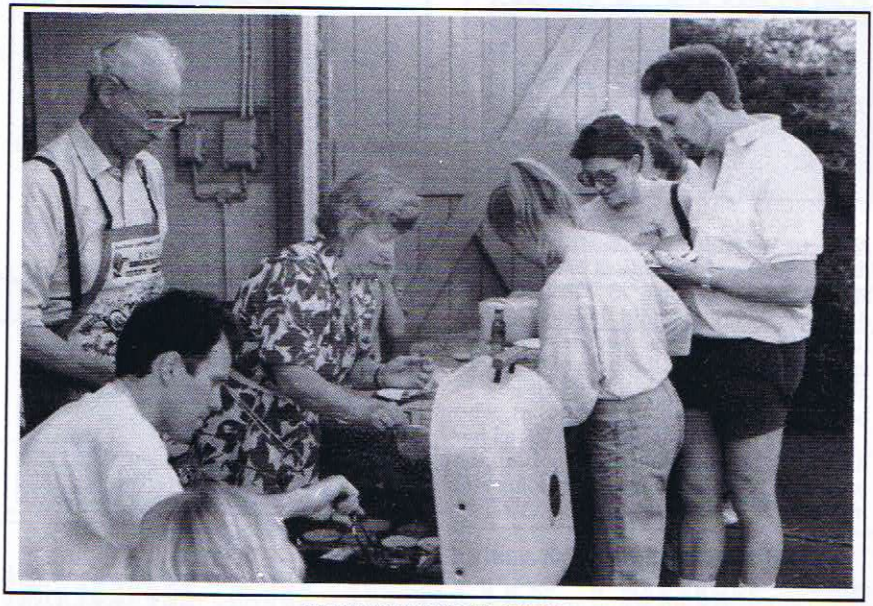
Beyond the committee, all of whom do sterling work for the branch, I must not forget those of you who are also dedicated to helping out at meetings and other events, such as Larry 'the baker' Ward, Ewart 'the wine waiter' Jackson, and of course everybodys friend, the irrepressible Don 'the Voice' Pritchard (who is this Tom Jones anyway?). Sometimes I feel your help goes unnoticed but thank you very much, and also to those of you, far to numerous to mention in this literary composition bordering on lavatory composition, but you know who you are, lets hope this will kick start the others into participating more instead of just sitting back and enjoying the ride.

Are you able to be able? if you are especially on flag days, members and non-members, then please get in touch. We need your help to fight the cause.

People often ask where is the money being spent when donating. The answer not only lies in research and welfare which takes up a tremendous part of our resources, but as we receive no funding from headquarters for the running of the branch some of that money must be spent on running costs to provide a monthly meeting place for sufferers to meet, somewhere to go when you are feeling isolated with M.S., a chance to sit amongst others who understand and know how you are feeling. If you are a sufferer, don't be afraid to attend the meetings, we are a friendly crowd and we will not depress you with talk on M.S. but if you do need to talk there is always a sympathetic ear.

It is always a difficult decision for the committee to make when deciding on day trips for the branch, whether the access is right for wheelchairs, will there be too much travelling involved, it's difficult to please everybody so your ideas and experiences are needed, either tell me personally or voice your opinion at the A.G.M. and lets not forget the success of the branch caravan which is well supported. It will not last forever and maybe we should look towards buying a new one in the future, this time by the sea perhaps for those of you who want a change of air as well as scenery. Don't forget it's your branch, voice your opinion.

ROBERT PITTS
Secretary



FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD
Members queue for their food at the summer barbeque held at the Hale Estate in July.

BESIDE THE SEASIDE
Just some of the eighty members who made the trip down the M5 to Weston-Super-Mare in June.

Review of 1992

The past year once again brought many enjoyable hours for members and friends. What better medicine is there than enjoyment and laughter?

The year started with a record 95 members turning out for the Annual Dinner. A quiz held the same month was won be Edna (Clever Clogs) Ward with an exceptional score of 42 out of 49.

February saw John (Dick Turpin) Palmer give his yearly Slide Show. He certainly didn't save the blushes of many, especially Ray (Nellie the Elephant) Gibbs and Mollie (Birdie Song) Bird. Our visit to the pantomime to see Des O'Connor the same month was enjoyed by all.

Spring was welcomed with a mouth watering cheese and wine party. June saw members royally entertained by the Royle Harmony Sextet. Eighty members made the trip down the M5 to Weston-Super-Mare. The weather could have been kinder especially for Robert (Cold Legs) Pitts. The coffee morning went well, I was assured no-one burnt the toast, and Larrie (The Baker) Ward sold out quicker than ever.

July saw Sheila and Jean get soaked to bring us the usual succulent strawberries. The same month brought a grand barbecue evening at the Hale estate, for once the weather was kind, so Don (The Voice) Pritchard had no excuse for water in the beer.

The biggest cheer of the year was reserved for the arrival of the fish and chips at the September meeting. Four days later 50 members made the trip to York, with some saying it was our best trip ever. Mollie just failed to get us a police escort home. The following Saturday was flag day, only 45 members collecting. What ever happened to the 95 who attended the annual dinner, but how well those few did, beating the record set in 1990 by £167.55, Brian Margetts, Tony Hale, Sheila Palmer and Stuart Kirk our top collectors in that order, with each collecting well over £100. To complete the month, members enjoyed the short trip to Walsall Illuminations.

October saw Dandy, one of the Midlands top comedy duos entertain us. At the November meeting, members were given advice by Teresa Fullilove (DSS) and Francis Hartly (Social Services). The year ended with our traditional Christmas party and a visit from Father Christmas. Cupid also fired his arrow with St. John's Josie Mann and Atila Hassan getting engaged.

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Treasurer's Tidings

In March last year I took over the Branch Finances with some apprehension. I need not have worried, everthing was in such order that it was a pleasure to carry on the good work that had gone before.

I am used to keeping books, but now I find one aspect totally strange, no working here for a profit at the end of year. Thankfully with our Branch the more money we raise, the more we spend on our members welfare and research.

Basically, our money is raised from flag day, donations, fund raising efforts and subscriptions. Very little is raised from subscriptions as most of it is collected on behalf of Headquarters and has to be sent on to them. Some members add a donation with their subscription, to show their appreciation to the branch.

Of course, without the members who do their bit, large or small, I should be redundant and the branch would close. All the money we raise goes on helping M.S. sufferers to have a pleasant or at least a more comfortable quality of life, and research into finding a cure for M.S.

As far as the finances of the Branch are concerned I will be happy if the balance sheet shows no credits, no debits. Hopefully by our joint efforts some day soon that elusive cure will be found and all our efforts will have been worthwhile.

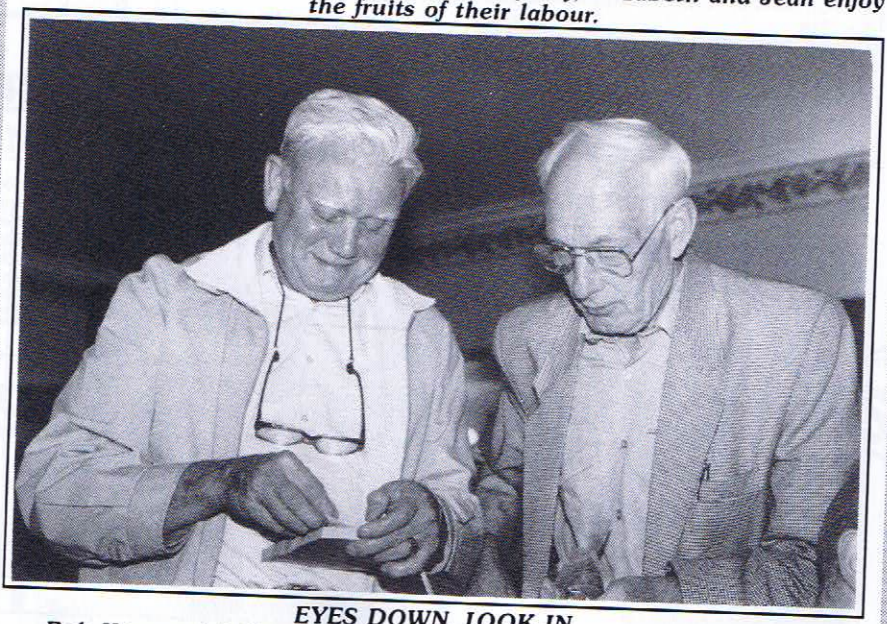
JANE ROBINSON
Treasurer

SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

No, not competitors for Miss Sutton Coldfield, just some of our delightful members.

STRAWBERRY FAYRE

Sheila Hale with her hard working team of Joy, Elizabeth and Jean enjoy the fruits of their labour.



EYES DOWN, LOOK IN

Bob King and Bill Irving, two hard working members making sure everyone has purchased raffle tickets.

With Grateful Thanks

A glance down our list of donations might suggest that these come like Goldilocks Bears, in three sizes. The size of the donation usually reflects simply the method of channelling people's generosity to the benefit of our funds. Large donations do occur but rarely. Almost everything the branch finances comes from quite small amounts of cash from many people. Who are these people?

They are — the people in the street on flag day.
They are — the pensioners on a tight budget and an open purse at coffee mornings.
They are — the folk who attend jumble sales, barbecues and boot sales.
They are — groups of highly organised women at well dressed social functions.
They are — Policemen, Accountants, Sportsmen and School Children.
They are — young people in jeans and T-shirts who do something daft to raise a smile and some cash.
They are — generous folk who are prepared to commit their money on a sonpsor form.
They are — people in work who pause momentarily to buy a raffle ticket.
They are — extraordinary people who run marathons, fun runs, sponsored walks or quite crazy things like cycling from Lands End to John-o-Groats.
They are — the jobless, lame, blind and disabled people.
They are — people who gather in groups called clubs or societies, churches or branches, colleges or schools, shops or offices or whatever.
They are — just very generous kind understanding people.
They are — Gods children.

We thank them all from the bottom of our hearts.

We would particularly like to thank —

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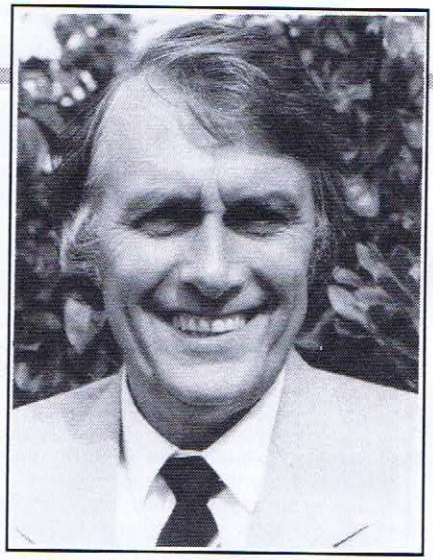
We also wish to thank all those advertisers herein whose kind contributions to this year book have enabled it to be produced at no charge to our funds.

We would like to remind members to support those companies that support us, whenever possible.

Walk on the Wild Side



John Palmer

It's not good to dwell on the idea but it is a well known fact that the older one gets the quicker time seems to pass, it seems no time at all since I told you of my journey in the land of the giant spider, in last year's book. A lot has happened since then but I thought I would tell you about just one event.

I took a risk some weeks ago and went into the city. Could I make it from the bus stop at the top of Dale End to Centenary Square without being mugged, knifed, shot at or blown up?

It was worth a try, I turned up my collar and limped off, cutting up Union Street into bandit country by the scaffold encased Cathedral. So far, I had survived.I wasn't even barged by a lurching drunk. In fact most of the passers-by were weary women lugging carrier bags and a lady being pushed in a wheelchair with a bunch of flowers on her knee.

Could this be the same city centre that so terrifies the good folk of Birmingham that more are put off going to town by the threat of violence than the cost of the bus fare or parking?

That's what a survey found. Nearly a third of those questioned said they thought twice about going into town because of potential trouble.

After a rest in the church yard to watch children feed the pigeons I walked on towards Chamberlaine Square and there before me were two ambulances. Obviously a flare up. Would there be blood and teeth on the paving stones?

Hardly. The ambulances turned out to be there on behalf of Red Cross flag day. As I turned up by the Central Library some exotically clad characters advanced towards me, wielding sticks.

Phew! That was a close one. These Morris Dancers look pretty threatening with the light behind them. I looked at the faces around me for signs of fear. There were none, only a few grimaced as they passed a busker with what could only be described as the worst voice in Birmingham, yes even worse that Don Pritchards. I glanced in his hat and noted he had collected more money than one of two of our members on flag day.

On reaching Centenary Square an attractive young Portuguese woman walked up to me, handed me her camera. "Would you mind" she enquired in impeccable English "taking a photo of my friend and I?"

It was an idiot-proof camera, so I was happy to oblige. I asked them what they thought of Birmingham "It's great and the people are so friendly" came back the reply. I couldn't say I was surprised, I've been walking through the city for the past 48 years without incident, maybe I'm just lucky, after all I was born on the thirteenth.

I can understand the elderly and disabled being disturbed by isolated but well publicised incidents about attacks on people. They're only publicised because they're isolated. Yet, to hear some people talk you would think Birmingham was on a par with the South Bronx.

This is the city that took everything the Luftwaffe could throw at it and carried on.

Are we now to believe that the Blitz survivors and their sons and daughters are too scared to go shopping in town for fear of a few 'yobs' clutching cans of Pepsi. Never. I know Brummies and they don't scare that easily.

JOHN PALMER
Editor of the Year Book, Branch Bugle and Press Officer

SYLVIA'S SNIPPET

Mrs. Sylvia Harvey

I have been looking through the books and I realize that I have been a member since the club was formed way back in 1976, and membership secretary for over twelve years. Time goes so quickly when your having fun (I am not going to mention age) and meeting so many nice people.

When I was diagnosed having MS and came to realize that I would be spending many hours sitting around I wondered what I would find to do with the time. This question was answered in April 1980 when Eve Kittner asked me to take the post of membership secretary, and to my surprise the membership agreed to have me.

Since that fateful day I have met many interesting people, and attending committee meetings, collecting on flag day and doing a little office work has kept me from feeling bored and useless, the thought that my little bit may one day help to find the cure to MS certainly keeps one going, it also stops me feeling sorry for myself and worrying about my MS.

It is not nice having MS and it's definitely not the end of the enjoyment of life. I have found that sufferers must always be positive and never be negative, old members may remember a popular song of years ago that went

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

Shall we all make this our theme for 1993/4?

SYLVIA HARVEY

✣

– EVERY TUESDAY –

Every Tuesday there is a get together next to Walmley Library in Emscote Drive from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. where members can have a natter and a cup of tea. If you wish to know more ring Sylvia Harvey on 021-350 3833.

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Words on Welfare

Mrs. Barbara Gibbs

As you know, I took over from Jean Kerrison in March. Jean will be very much missed and I was, and still am, very nervous about filling the post as expertly as she did.

We are in the depths of an economic recession but our branch has still been very lucky with donations and fund raising so we have still been able to help members who have asked for assistance — any member who needs help should ask. Every application will be considered in the strictest confidence by the committee. Even if we cannot help we may be able to apply to headquarters for their assistance. One of the purposes of fund raising is for welfare so nobody should be afraid to come forward and ask.

We welcomed several new members over the past year and it is good to see the branch growing. Each month we see more new faces and I hope it will continue in 1993. Though in another light it is very disappointing that another year has passed without a cure being found.

The caravan is available for members to take a holiday, this has proved very popular so book early. We are still able to help with part of the cost of a stay at Helen Ley House although this is now very expensive.

For new members, we offer a transport service for MS sufferers who have no other way of getting to meetings. This is by mini-bus with tail lift wheelchairs. Anyone who requires this service should contact me so that I can include them on the transport list. Members are reminded that the Ring and Ride service will come to the club if it picks up in your area.

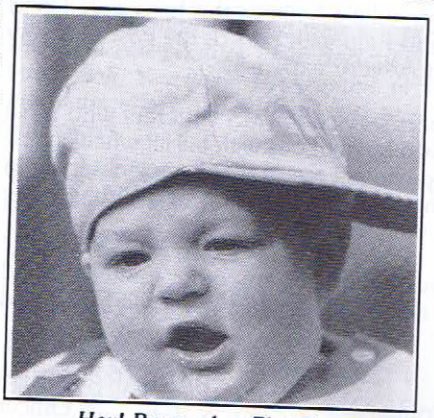
Anyone who needs information about welfare, or any other matter, should not be afraid to contact me. If I can't answer your question I will try to find 'a man who can'.

BARBARA GIBBS
Welfare & Transport Officer

A chip of the old block?

John Robson – Capped again

Ladies?



Hey! Remember Flag Day

Smokey Joe Bird

A SUPER STAR – Steve Holmes (Sec. Rod Stewart Fan Club) presents Mollie, Roy Holmes and Sylvia Green with a cheque for £1,536 from international singing star Rod Stewart and his fans.

NOT ONLY DICK TURPIN

Some of the members who made the trip to York in September. Those who went know why Mollie is smiling.

Get Out and About

There are a number of services to help you get out and about. Don't sit at home and vegetate, it is surprising where you can go with just a little effort.

ORANGE BADGE SCHEME

An Orange Badge grants car parking privileges to people who are severely disabled contact: Birmingham Social Services, Snow Hill House, 10-15 Livery st. B3 2EP.

NATIONAL KEY SCHEME

There are some 1,120 toilets throughout the country for use of people with disability. Each fitted with a lock. A key can be obtained with a list of these toilets from: Access for All, Ladywood Leisure Centre, Freeth St., Birmingham. Tel: 021-454 8233.

MOTABILITY

This is a government-backed organisation to help disabled people buy or lease a car. You must be in receipt of mobility allowance. Many garages throughout the city operate the scheme — look for the motability symbol or ring 0279-635666.

CONCESSIONS ON BRITISH RAIL

British Rail has a rail card for people with disabilities. This allows the holder and a companion to discount travel. A free leaflet is available from your local station.

HELP AT THE STATION

If you are disabled and require help at the station or to board a train telephone 021-644 4288.

HELP WHEN TRAVELLING

The Red Cross can provide assistance for the disabled using public transport alone for long distance coach or rail travel. Contact: Red Cross Society, 34 Blossomfield Road. Tel: 021-704 4661.

SHOPMOBILITY

Some shopping centres offer assistance in getting around the shops. Merry Hill, Tel: 0384-481141 ext 25. Sutton Coldfield, Tel: 021-355 1112.

RING AND RIDE

If you cannot use public transport this scheme can provide individual bus services in certain parts of the city. Only part of Sutton Coldfield is included at present. Tel: 021-333 3108.

BUS PASSES

If you are under retirement age, you may be entitled to a subsidised disabled bus pass, contact: Social Serivces, Snow Hill House, 10-15 Livery Street, B3 2EP. Tel: 021-235 2131.

LOCAL SERVICES

For full details of all local bus and trains in the West Midlands, Tel: 021-200 2700.

CENTRO

Centro has set up a transport special needs committee to consider transport facilities. If you have a question or a point to make contact John Palmer (Press Officer).

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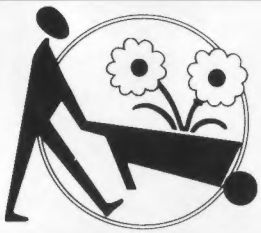

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