

invaluable, not only for quick diagnosis but also for research. We had earlier provided a portable Doppler for the Cardiologists to take with them to the peripheral clinics.

PROVISION OF HOLIDAYS

36. The Heart Circle kept two caravans at Burnham-on-Sea, (although currently there is now just one) to allow parents or families to take subsidised free holidays.

INFORMATION BOOKLET

37. We published an Information Booklet for parents with the support of Children in Need.

OTHER SIMILAR GROUPS NATIONALLY

38. Whereas I believe the Bristol and South-West Heart Circle to have been the first of its kind, other independent charities have been formed to carry out similar work for other centres of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery, many of which may have used our organisation as a prototype. Birmingham, Oxford and Guys Hospital for example, all have well-established support groups. These all operate independently although now the Children's Heart Federation provides a degree of national co-ordination.

39. The Bristol and South-West Heart Circle currently have over one thousand member families on the membership list.

OTHER ISSUES - THE SPLIT SITE

40. The Heart Circle was approached several times over the years about the transfer of the paediatric service to Bristol Children's Hospital and always welcomed any move in this direction. The split site proved extremely hard for parents to cope with. For many years the catheter lab was in the BRI and parents of children in the BRHSC were left