the cities, the risk of family breakdown is great, as the reality often falls far short of the dream, and mothers with children are often left unsupported. Speakers examined topics such as brain and language development, ways to encourage education for peace and educational solutions for children who are different. A series of visits was arranged, which included the official opening of the 'Eva Balke' Ludoteca – a community project supported by the OMEP Development Fund, to provide support for families in a very poor area of the city. A programme of music and dancing and displays by the children, brought together civic leaders, OMEP members and the community, for an afternoon of 'fiesta'.

Other delegates visited La Portal – a project funded partly by the Ministries of Justice, and Welfare, and voluntary subscriptions. Here children with either or both parents in prison were educated, supported and cared for in a most successful programme, which has proved its worth over some 23 years.

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HUNGARIAN – UNITED KINGDOM STUDY VISITS
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Hungary
In March 1993, seven preschool workers from Hungary visited Great Britain after contact had been made between specialists, and with the help of OMEP and the two National Committees and Audrey Curtis, Vice President, European Region. Four of us were in London and three in Cambridge, where we had a chance to study and get to know a bit of the Early Education in Great Britain. The Hungarian delegation, besides the perfect professional programme got an opportunity to look into the high level of British cultural life.

For us as Hungarians, we saw many interesting things whilst we were there to learn from the British school system, because the traditional Prussian-German-Austrian way in our school system has many differences from the British. The pluralist school system, which is common in Britain is spreading out in Hungary as well, and tries to break the strong Eastern European influence.

Our group loved the open, friendly, peaceful freedom filled atmosphere which is natural in the English preschools and typical medium in Early Childhood Education in Britain. In addition we have got positive experiences about the primary educational system and the good connection between the nursery and primary schools which are fairly good and consecutive. It is a pity that in Hungary, the connection between the nursery and primary school has a gap and the two kinds of educative institutes are different from each other. The nursery school's main aim is to educate instead of teaching skills (but they teach skills hidden in play) but the primary school's main characteristic is teaching skills, even with the first grade, 6 year old learners too.

It has been a really great privilege to us that besides the nursery schools we were able to see some excellent primary schools too. In two of the schools which we found remarkable, 4 and 5 year olds were educated right beside older age groups on the same corridor. Therefore it is quite natural that it has its influence on each other. It seemed so similar to each other, that we could hardly tell which classroom belonged to which age group. The lovely coloured pictures on the wall and the children's work put on the wall and the toys and games in the school classrooms made the atmosphere homely and the institute pleasant for children. The good open connection among the teachers and parents set an example for us. What we have seen made it clear to us that Early Childhood Education has the child and parents in its midst.

As I mentioned earlier the two systems have differences, and have differences in teacher training too. So we were pleased when we had the opportunity to visit the Chiltern Nursery Training College. To our great surprise here we met a student who
spoke our language, Hungarian. The College has a lovely environment, but also a high standard to teach the future's educators. Not only did we see the Institute, but we also had an opportunity to discuss everything with both teachers and students.

We spent a pleasant and useful eight days with our English friends. We had many times to have new experiences and to learn from them, to debate and talk. Mutually we got to know each other's jobs, life and culture. I think OMEP as a world organisation has and will have a great part of intermediary among early childhood educators, and will help those who are interested in other country's mental and practical systems all over the world. We, Hungarians had many great experiences together with universal pre-school provision and an extensive social welfare programme, is being re-examined and new priorities established. The divisions in society are becoming more marked, as unemployment and its attendant evils becomes greater. It is a country which seems full of hope and expectation, aware of its cultural heritage and determined to preserve its new freedoms.

In our visit to Miskolc, an industrial town close to the C.I.S. border, we were privileged to discuss these matters in some depth, during two hectic days of sightseeing in and around Budapest. We cruised down the Danube past the Houses of Parliament and St. Margaret Island to the folk village of Szentendre, where local school children were selling craft articles which they had made. The group then travelled to Hölökö, a 14th Century village, to experience the traditional life of the Polak ethnic group, with its Slovakian influences. The next stage of the tour was through the Balaton National Park, with miles and miles of well managed deep, dark forests, mountain roads and intense silence, through Eiger with its famous 18th Century Lyceum, to the industrial town of Miskolc.

Then followed three days of intensive visiting to Day-care and Pre-school centres at Kelemer, Petnehazi and Serhaz, to the Directorate of the Country Public