

NEWSLETTER FOR THE DERBY, NOTTINGHAM AND MANSFIELD CHE GROUPS.

A shorter newsletter is a nice change (from a typist's point of view) and to keep things pithy I shall restrict myself to 3 brief statements:-

- 1. The Conference to discuss the setting up of the National Organisation for Gay Women takes place on Saturday Nov.5th. The address is Queen's Walk Community Centre, Queen's Drive Nottingham. The registration is £1. Women who wish to attend can register at the door, but it would help if you sent the money to Pat and Hilary, 25 Sherwood St., Annesley Woodhouse, Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts and they will send you full details of everything.
- 2. The Mansfield Group has (for the time being at least) no one prepared to act as convenor, so it has now come under the aegis of the Nottingham Group.
- 3. The reactions that we have had from local Tories like Philip Holland MP and Councillor Peter Wright make me think that anyone who is gay and who votes Conservative must be raving mad.

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PROGRAMME

DERBY

SATURDAY Nov.5th FIREWORK PARTY at Phil's. Bring a bottle and some fireworks. The bonfire will be lit at 8.30 prompt. Traditional bonfire fare provided for entrance fee of 25p. (Address under 'CONTACTS')

FRIDAY 11th Nov. COFFEE and Phone-answering at Phil's from 8pm.

MONDAY Nov. 14th. PUB EVENING at the BLACK HORSE, Hulland Ward. Phone for details.

SATURDAY Nov. 19th Trip to the NIGHTINGALE CLUB in Birmingham.
Lifts available by previous arrangement.

MONDAY Nov.21st COFFEE EVENING at CHRIS AND JEFFS (Address under CONTACTS) and then on to 'The Moon' for a drink. From 8pm.

FRIDAY Nov.25th
TEN PIN BOWLING in NOTTINGHAM and then on to SHADES CLUB. Lifts available, phone for details.

SATURDAY Dec.3rd Trip to the "141" club at STOKE on TRENT.
Lifts available by previous arrangement.

FRIDAY Dec.9th

Musical extravaganza organised by Maurice.

Bring a favourite record or cassette to Phil's and freak out baby! (From 8pm).

FRIDAY Dec. 16th CHRISTMAS DINNER at a restaurant to be decided.

Anyone interested MUST let us know by the coffee evening on Nov.11th, so that we can book well in advance.

WEDNESDAY Dec.21stChristmas Drinks at Phil's from 8 pm.

Sherry provided, but anything more exotic - and you'll have to bring it yourself.

A trip to the Menal Hunt at Kedleston Hall.

Meet in Markeaton Car park at 10 am prompt.

After the Hunt we will move on to the "Puss in Boots" at about 12.30 pm. There will be a soirce at Chris and Jeff's in the evening.

Turkey and Mince pies, plus some other goodies will be provided for an entrance fee of 25p.

Bring some games for later.

NEW YEAR'S EVE Trip to a club to be arranged, to see the new year in - phone for details.

MONDAY Jan. 2nd. BUSINESS MEETING at Chris and Jeff's to decide on the next programme - any ideas welcome!

Please note that the phone number to ring is Derby 752260, we will do our best to arrange lifts to and from meetings. We have quite a varied and interesting programme this time, so we would like to appeal to all members to try to come to as many meetings as possible, as attendance is the only way we know if the programme meets with your approval.

PROGRAMME

NOTTINGHAM

EVERY MONDAY: WOMEN'S MEETINGS AT THE CVS FROM 7.30 PM.

EVERY MONDAY and THURSDAY GAY SWITCHBOARD OPERATES FROM 7-10 PM.

This is at the CVS (Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service, 31a, Mansfield Road). Those of you who haven't been along should be reminded that anyone can turn up at any time between 7 and 10 and have a chat and some coffee with those who are there. If there is also a meeting take place on that night you can go along to the 'discussion' room and join it, or stay in the 'phone' room if you wish.

WEDNESDAY OCT.26th

THURSDAY NOV. 3rd

SATURDAY NOV. 5th

MONDAY NOV.7th

THURSDAY NOV.10th
THURSDAY NOV.17th

FRIDAY NOV.18th

MONDAY NOV.21st

THUR._ NOV.24th

FRIDAY NOV.25th
THURSDAY DEC.1st

MONDAY DEC. 5th

THURSDAY DEC. 8th
THURSDAY DEC. 15th

FRIDAY DEC. 16th

THURSDAY DEC. 22nd.

SHADES CLUB - from about 10 pm.

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

BONFIRE PARTY in DERBY. (See DERBY PROGRAMME)
Do you want a lift? Can you provide a lift?

BUSINESS MEETING at the CVS at 8pm. followed (as early as possible) by a COFFEE EVENING at Geoff's. (39, Colwick Road, Sneinton).

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

MICHAEL ENGLISH MP will be talking to the group from 8pm at the .CVS.

BUSINESS MEETING at the CVS from 8pm.

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

SHADES CLUB from 10pm (See DERBY PROGRAMME)

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

BUSINESS MEETING at the CVS at 8pm. followed as early as possible, by a COFFEE EVENING at Mike's 19, Thomas' Close, St. Anns.

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

PUB EVENING at the STRATHDON. from 8.30pm. We use Samantha's bar. Go in the lifts at the ground floor, go up one floor and walk

straight ahead into Samantha's bar.

DISCUSSION at the CVS from 8pm.

The DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER will be FRIDAY DEC. 30th

CONTACTS

NOTTINGHAM

Richard (Convenor) Nottingham 74870

David (Treasurer) Nottingham 216447

Tony (Social Organiser) Nottingham 49137

Howard (Political Activities) Nottingham 625266

Bob (Gay Switchboard Coordinator)

The publishable address of Nottingham CHE group is:-

Nottingham CHE, 31a, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

The above address is that of the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and the Gay Switchboard operates from there every MONDAY and THURSDAY from 7-10pm. The phone number is

NOTTINGHAM 46881.

DERBY

Chris (Convenor) 14, Farningham Close, Spondon, Derby.
Philip 29, Severn St, Alvaston, Derby. (Derby 752260)

IT'S THE TRUTH

Limp-wristed, typecast 'actor' John Inman of TV's 'Are you being served' is appearing in a show in Brighton and some members of Brighton CHE group are picketing the Theatre. Radio Trent here in Nottingham picked up the story and rang me for comment. After giving my all (well, nearly) in an interview, I heard to my embarassment that amongst the coach parties pouring into Brighton to see Inman was a crowd from Streatham CHE.

Ian (Nottingham)

The following letter appeared in the columns of the Nottingham Evening Post a few weeks ago:-

Dear Sir,

On the occasions that I have passed by the Theatre Royal recently, I have watched the progress of the new building as it emerges from its scaffolding. I am increasingly alarmed by the thought that with its milky colour and fluted curves it is growing more and more to resemble a blancmange. Are we now going to see it surmounted by a twelve-foot flashing glace cherry to complete this theatrical pudding?

Yours faithfully,

Michaela Hall.

NOTTINGHAM NEWS

Several local people have been out to talk to various groups/institutions/people over the past two months. Michael English MP was the last of the Nottingham MPs to be seen (by Ian, Howard, David - and Derek, just passing through on a short visit from Tehran). Mr. English gave everyone the impression of being exceptionally well-informed on the subject of gay rights and sympathetic to practically all of our aims. Pat, Hilary, Ian and David went to see the Worksop Samaritans; although both sides got on well with each other, it still leaves Worksop gays in a pretty dismal position in an area with a non-existent gay scene.

The Derby Group obtained a 20 minute programme to discuss gay matters on Radio Derby. Ian and Bruce were enlisted at short notice to help Philip and Chris (from Loughborough). Ian also had a brief interview on Radio Trent - which is mentioned elsewhere. Heather, Carole, Bruce, Ian and David had an evenings discussion with the Sherwood branch of the National Housewives Register. We have spoken to about a dozen of these groups and it is amazing how they vary; Sherwood's lot were, I'm afraid, rather dull, but they did give us some nice biscuits.

Nottingham's gay scene is still undergoing metamorphosis - whether the result will be a butterfly or a cockroach remains to be seen. The Stork Club has suffered a sudden miscarriage, the Roebuck's gay bar has closed - and then re-opened, The Sandpiper has had a nearly fatal run of bad luck with its staff and there have been moves - so far unsuccessful - to re-open La Chic.

Nottingham CHE's meetings continue to be centred around the CVS. There was a pleasant coffee evening at Tony's but the pub evening at the Regent proved a total flop (Told ya so!) so we are moving back to the Strathdon and its free peanuts. Gay News' Merlin (John Christopher Travers) provided us with an amusing evening of musico-astrological prognostication. His crystal ball had predicted the resurfacing of the Norman Scott affair, but readers of Private Eye received the same news in a less ethereal manner.

From a statistical point of view I cannot understand why so few Nottingham members have cars; it's always been the same ever since the group started (while everyone in Derby CHE has at least three cars, a motorised lawn mower and a pogo stick). This makes it very difficult to get members to anything outside the city centre. Undaunted, I point out that November 5th brings us a bonfire + party in Derby, so let's try to fill the Nottingham cars (both of them) and travel over there for the evening. I notice that the Derby group are coming over to Nottingham for 10 pin bowling followed by a visit to Shades on Friday 25th of November. I have taken the liberty of putting that event in the Nottingham CHE programme as well, so that anyone in Nottingham who wants to join them can do so.

DERBY NEWS

There are quite a few Derby members whose membership has lapsed. As we are short of money, newsletters will NOT be sent to members whose membership has not been renewed 1 month after expiry.

The phone-in evenings have gone very well, but are now about to be reduced because of the high advertising rates. The phone number is available to all members and I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who would like to ring. Please don't be deterred from coming to a meeting because you have no transport. Quite a few of us have cars and will be very happy to give lifts home. The programme for the next two months contains quite a few meetings out of Derby but there are plenty of lifts available provided you ring and make arrangements; don't think you are being a nuisance, we are happy to hear from all our members. If you can't go to a meeting and feel a bit out of things, please do ring even if it's only to chat about the weather. There is a good variety of meetings this next two months, make an effort and attend some of them - the group relies on your support.

Philip (Derby)

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

.....of a hotel near the Pyramids said:-

"There are Pharoahs at the bottom of our garden,"

while the "welcome" notice to the Welsh town that is now the home of the Mint read:-

"Llantrissant, the hole with the Mint in it."

Many of us will feel a responsive chord struck by the person who so carefully altered the letters on the name of a well-known bureaucratic establishment so that it became

"The Department of Stealth and Total Obscurity."

Some further examples of the wall-scrawlers art were recently featured on a BBC radio programme, from which we learned that:-

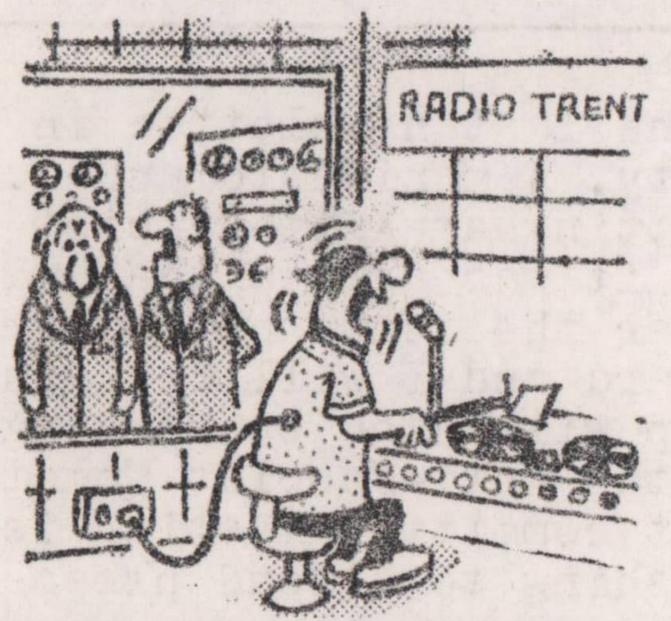
"Nostalgia is not what it used to be."

And

"You're never alone with schizophrenia."

And it can only be a matter of time before the loos of Nottingham are graced by the question

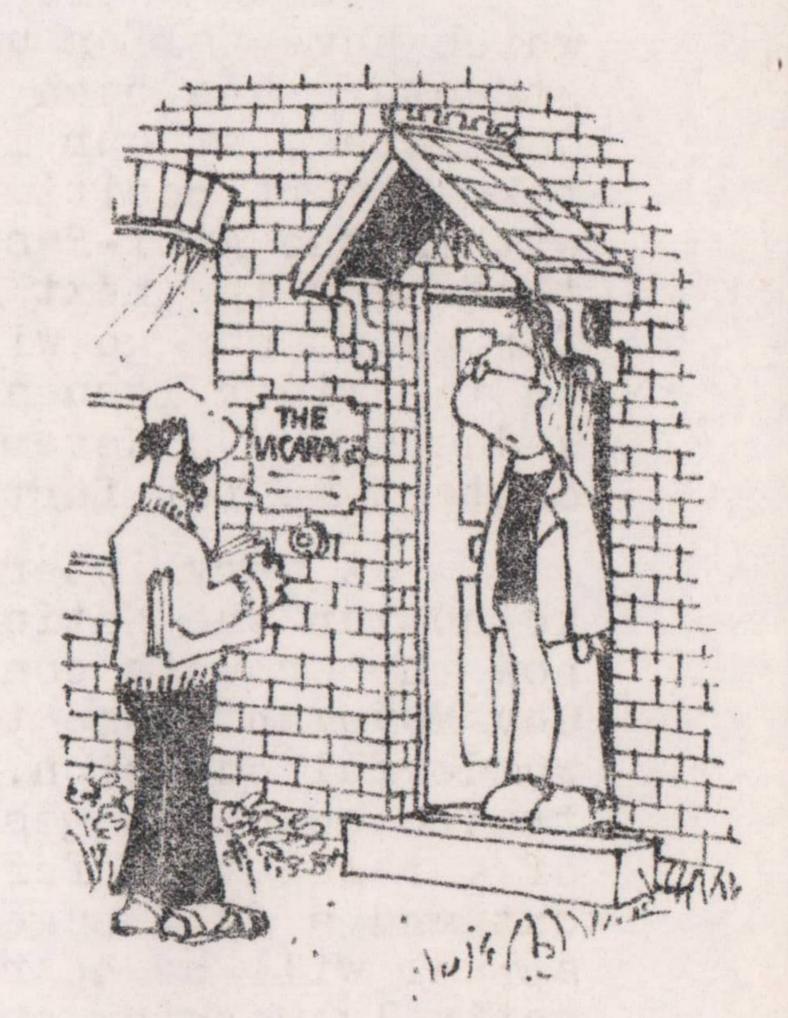
"Does God believe in Michael Hall?"



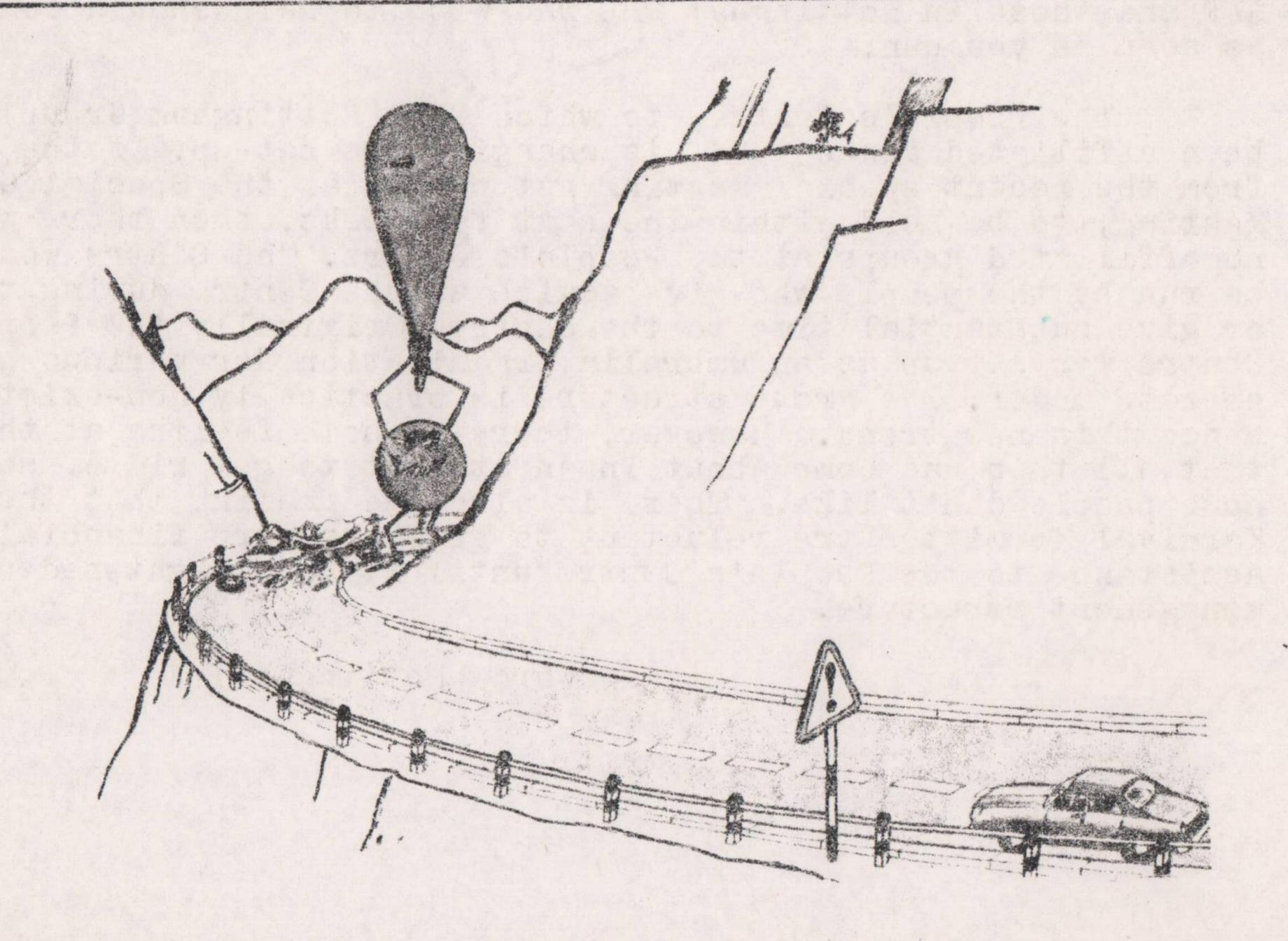
"Last one out of the studio switches off Michael Hall."



'Of course I've only got half-way through it—I'm semi-literate."



"Good afternoon. I'm your new atheist."



NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT

Quite a bit has happened since the last newsletter in areas which have fallen under my responsibility. A manifesto and formal structure has been formulated by the Nottingham Anti-Fascist Committee. At our last business meeting it was agreed that we should take a more positive part in putting over the issue of sexism within the Anti-Fascist Committee. Richard and I will be doing just that over the next few months. Our Group will also be working as far as it can go within our policy in the Anti-Fascist Committee on the wider issues of fascism. The next committee meeting is on Wednesday 9Th November - anyone . As e wishing to attend please contact me for further details.

A very interesting meeting was held in Birmingham on Oct.15th to set up the National Gay News Defence Committee (for which I am now the Group's contact person). People from various parts of the Gay Movement came together and united in a common cause. It was a wonderful occasion. A resolution for trade union branches and trades councils was formulated and this could help to form the basis of a resolution for local centres. Leaflets were worked out and a full page ad. was drawn up for Gay News. The Gay News appeal will be heard in 2 to 3 months time and the committee is actively working on arrangements for the demonstration. When the Gay News issue is over the committee will change its name and work in important areas - at the moment priority is being given to the Gay News issue, but other issues could be taken up if it becomes necessary.

Leicester Gayline, a telephone service for Gay People in Leicester, is suffering oppression by the 'Leicester Mercury'. Leicester GLF has called a meeting for 2 pm on Saturday 29th October at the Birmingham Gay Centre to discuss what must be done. Our group has pledged its support over this issue to Leicester GLF and those in Nottingham CHE who wish to help should contact me as soon as you can.

The People's Centre, to which CHE (Nottingham Group) has been affiliated since 1974, is changing its set-up. If the proposals from the recent special meeting get passed at the Special General Meeting, to be held within the next few weeks, then there will be no affiliated groups at the People's Centre. The Centre would then be run by the people who give advice at the Centre during the day, or give substantial time to the centre. Originally the People's Centre was set up as an umbrella organisation for various groups to operate under. The group structure is practically non-existent - hence this new trend. However, there is some feeling at the Centre that all this has come about in an attempt to get rid of someone some people don't like. There is also the feeling that the Karnival Kommittee are reluctant to give any more financial assistance to the People's Centre until it has tightened up its management structure.

Howard (Nottingham)

GAY WRIGHTS

As part of the group's programme of making friends and influencing hets, Howard invited the leader of the new Conservative controlled County Council to meet us, an invitation which elicited the following reply:-

Sir,

I must say that I considered it an impertinence for you to send me a letter as you did. I have always regarded homosexuality as one form of perversion and I very much regret the progress on permissive lines that have taken place during the last few years. I am glad that you realise the difference between homosexual and heterosexual activities.

I feel that my opinion is strengthened by the fact that you appear to be associating yourselves with the idea that sexual relations between adults and children are to be commended.

I also take exception to the use of the word 'gay'. From time to time I feel that I am gay, but at no time queer. I have reason to believe that public opinion is on my side,

Yours faithfully,

Peter Wright.

We may well be incensed by the tone of this but, in so far as it reflects the views some people hold of us, we should be grateful to Councillor Wright for expressing them so succinctly whilst marvelling that they can be so strongly held as to cause a 'leader of society' to forget the minimal demands of politeness required by his public office.

Howard's courteous answer which repeated his invitation to meet the Group, brought a brief "no further advantage to be gained by your correspondence with me" response. All this may seem very bad, indeed it is bad, but at least the vocal bigot as opposed to the silent one provides a welcome opportunity to fight back and that is what we are doing.

Councillor Wright has already received a plain-speaking letter from the Secretary of the Gay Conservative group, the unions have been alerted and copies of the correspondence have gone to all members of the Executive of the County Council branch of NALGO. They at their next meeting are being asked both to deplore the letter and to seek a statement from the majority party disassociating itself from the letter and the views expressed.

Failure of the NALGO Executive to act on this seems unlikely in view of its recently restated policy in support of gays. Failure of the County Council Tories to respond seems much more probable and in that case it is intended that a censure motion be put before the next NALGO Branch AGM.

Thus is prejudice exposed and we should be grateful to Councillor Wright, who incidentally is regarded as leader of the 'moderate' faction in the Tory Group, for giving us the opportunity to do so. He has also given my colleagues in the office a lot of fun; they have been dreaming of the opportunity of enquiring when he has his gay days!

Richard (Nottingham)

STORY

Trying to work out if kate's flat is an easy place to get to. First the long bus ride, getting off by the telephone box and manoeuvring across a four lane main road. No time to watch the black children dancing the ballet of football in the school yard behind me, or watch the aspen leaves complain in the town's dusty heat. Walk up the street then - hotels, offices, new housing units, flats. Modern glass-walled buildings facing sprawling Victorian whitewashed grandeur; the cheap red brick new slums taking over the gardens of the three storey houses standing gracefully back from the road - now converted into flats. Kate lives at the top.

I look up and see the living room window, open, and gaze at the secrets of the closed bedroom panes. So, up the path and tread carefully over the mutilated lawns, hedges and flower beds - I can remember the long garden and the high wooden gate, how soon would they forget? At last the door - and opening it, not ringing the outside bell, ascend the dark, lino covered stairs. They creak and grown under my passage, my shoes sqeak on the lino; it sounds throughout the vast staircase and hallways of the building. Excruciatingly and embarassingly, and half way up I take fright and creep slowly, each gasp from the wood mocking my efforts.

Top floor, surrounded by boxes and milk bottles - cross my fingers that the bell will work. Yes, I heard it ring inside. She comes.

We say hello, quietly, shyly, and move into the living room. I see again the old table, the white painted chairs sitting patiently by the window. I look at the flowers wilting in the jug, out of the window, back to the room. White walls, peeling corners, cracks round the woodwork, the green carpet piled high with history books and school essays to be marked. The long red sofa rammed against the wall looks out of place with the easy chair, the bookcases, too modern large and negative.

I sit down and look at Kate; warm, plump, curly haired, friendly. I remember the revealing bathrobe she used to wear; the time when she was waif-like thin after an illness; the hours I derived pleasure and comfort from her company. All the past evenings of tongue-tied, confused adolescent idiocy... I used to think, to dream, to want - caring more about bodies and physical pleasure than persons and relationships. O. yes, I used her then for comfort, for fantasies - but always felt out of place as if I wronged her existence by being there: guilt and dishonesty, fear and need. Still fond now- seeing her as she is and as she touches my memories. We smile and are at ease. Tonight I may be able to talk honestly.

NOTES ON ARRIVAL IN THE 'QUEEN OF THE MIDLANDS'

It all happened on a damp Monday afternoon in early September. Less than 2 hours before I had been in the huge white-tiled, brightly lit urinal, complete with piped organ music, called Birmingham News Street Station. Now here I was at Nottingham Station, which resembled a small, dingy refuse tip.

If you're not a stranger to Nottingham you won't be aware of how difficult it is to purchase a street plan of the city, but one was, I thought, essential for flat hunting primarily, but also to find the locations of the addresses in the Gay News Gay Guide. 2 days later and after having been lost 5 times, I found one and a whole new world unveiled itself before me. I discovered that on several occasions I'd been within 100 yards of several gay pubs and clubs and (horror;) never knew.

Now being totally alone in a strange city, I thought it imperative to 'do' the pubs and clubs in order to enjoy evenings out and make friends. After all, I can get along with most people and Nottingham folk seemed friendly beings if my experience of people to whome I had appealed when lost, of shop assistants and of bus drivers - who all seemed to think I was a duck, for some reason I'm still wondering about.

I was staying with relations in Arnold and by now I knew that the way into the city centre was via Mansfield Road, so I made the Roebuck my first call of the evening. And a very brief call it was too. "Gay guides are notoriously innaccurate," I thought. "Where's next?" Out came the trusty map and guide.
"Ah, the Dog and Partridge, Parliament St.," Off I set and found it without mishap. Cleaner, more pleasant, slightly better beer but where are the boys? In the bar marked 'Private' I learned a week later. Next stop - The Crystal Palace. Not as bright and glassy as I imagined, nor gay, apart from the barman who I didn't fancy! "Gay guides are notoriously inaccurate, aren't they?" I asked myself. It was 10.30pm. Club time. "Well at least a club must be livelier - if they are gay."

Having totally circumscribed (with aid of map) the entire Broad Marsh Centre, the long way round - not realising one was actually allowed through it - I arrived in Canal St. and found La Chic closed. "Is this an omen?" I asked. "The hest gay club in Europe closed down? Has there been an unreported witch hunt in Nottingham? Where have all the gay boys gone?"

"Excuse me," I said cautiously to an extremely docile Alsatian with an extremely ferocious handler at the Broad Marsh Centre. "Could you tell me the way to Stanford St.?" (Yes, I know I had the map, but roads confounded even that).

"Yes, duck, (another one) go up the twitchell at the side of Woolies."

"The what?"

"The twitchell."

"Oh!"

"You'll be looking for Shades, I suppose."

"Yes, actually."

"I thought as much - gerroff."

"Woof," said the dog.

NOTES ON ARRIVAL IN THE 'QUEEN OF THE MIDLANDS'

I gorroff. "Cheek!" I thought. "I never thought I was that obvious." I wasn't, as I discovered at Shades' door.

"Are you gay?" said the doorman.

"The Broad Marsh security guard thought so," I replied.

"But are you?" He insisted.

I suddenly regretted my £2-50 investment in a silver lambda pendant which I was wearing ostentatiously around my neck. Having eventually been admitted I began to wonder how some of the clientele had obtained admission, because they were obviously not gay. Was I in a gay club which admitted hets. No, obviously after the doorstep saga; so was I in a het club that liked gays? I began to dislike Nottingham. Actually that happened 2½ hours earlier. Nor were Nottingham gays as friendly as Nottingham Bus drivers, shop assistants, helpful direction givers or even Broad Marsh security guards. I suppressed a wish that he would get stuck up his caterpillar.

All except one person. At least I thought he/she/it was a person.

"I'm looking for a friend." He/she/it said.

"I'm sorry, "I replied, "But it's my first time here and I

don't know anyone."

"Yes,I know." he/she/it replied; "And you look friendly."
Here endeth the first night. Tomorrow is Friday and it's
bound to be better at the Hearty Goodfellow and the Sandpiper Club
- isn't it? Well, encore un fois, I failed to find the downstairs
bar marked private, but I did find the pub, which is more than can
be said for the club. But I had an extensive tour of Nottingham's
unique and beautiful lace market, although I didn't really
appreciate my consolation prize until day light the following
Sunday Morning. On Saturday, 6 days after my arrival, a friend
phoned from London.

"I don't think I'm going to like Nottingham," I told him.
"The gay scene's dreadful and they're all tattooed, you know."

"I've got a very good friend in Nottingham," friend said.
"He's the CHE Convenor. I'll give you his name and phone
number." Pause to regain composure after wild visions of
the Ultimate Discovery. So, with trepidation, I rang Richard,
who gave me some useful geography lessons and introduced me to
Nottingham CHE. I've settled into a nice flat, got a job, been
to the right places at the right times and met some lovely people
(especially one of them) and I'm liking Nottingham.

John Clarkson

One of our avid readers of Spare Rib was amused by the following sequence of articles in September's issue:-

- 1. Afraid of school: a 13 year old talks.
- 2. The Whole Woman and the High Priestess.
- 3. How to mend a toilet.

TONY'S COMPETITIVE FIASCO

I thought the prospect of a £5 book/record token would have enticed somebody to send me a reply to my competition in the last Chimaera - but not one solution was forthcoming! Anyway, here are the answers:-

1)C in CHE stood for COMMITTEE before it became CAMPAIGN.

2)Gosling, Drabble et al are all vice presidents of CHE.
3)USFI = Union of Sexual Freedoms in Ireland.

MCC = Metroploitan Community Church.

GAA = Gay Activists Alliance.

4) Ex-Chairperson of Friend was Alison Hennegan, editor of Gay News is Denis Lemon, CHE's information officer is Nigel Hart.

5) Magazines which have appeared since 1971 include: SAPPHO, PLAYGUY, LUNCH, HIM EXCLUSIVE, Q INTERNATIONAL, QUORUM, SAM, AFTER LUNCH, JEFFREY, FOLLOW UP, MAN TO MAN etc. (most of which have folded or been amalgamated.)

6) All the films, with the exception of the WEST GERMAN "Fox" were

made in the USA.

7) E.M. Forster wrote MAURICE, Richard Amory wrote FROST, Joseph Hansen wrote FADEOUT and David Storey wrote RADCLIFFE or PASMORE or SAVILLE.

8) Daughters of Bilitis and Mattachine Society are in USA.

9) DANNY LA RUE made 'Our Miss Fred', QUENTIN CRISP regards himself as one of the 'Stately homos of England', UNA, LADY TROUBRIDGE was Radclyffe Hall's lover and MARY WHITEHOUSE is the answer to 9d!

10) a) TRUE - CHE first launched in this area in 1971.

b) FALSE - Pavilion(Shardlow) was opened before SHADES.
c) FALSE - The abortive Nottingham Gay Alliance group

- The abortive Nottingham Gay Alliance group collapsed in 1975.

d) TRUE - Nottingham CHE did receive £100 this year from University's Karnival.

But no-one gets my generous donation. Ah well, I'll think up something else for a future issue - so watch out!

Tony (Nottingham)

As your humble typist I would like to say that I know that a lot of people had some fun trying to answer the quiz - though even after a bit of cheating and bribery none of us could work out a 100% accurate set of answers. Next time we will try to do better.