

THE NOTTINGHAM SPARROW



Rebel Nottingham ~ Our Nottingham

March 2007 N°1

RECLAIM SLAB SQUARE!

The city council is extremely pleased with its newly laid granite from China and Donegal, no doubt sourced in the most environmentally and people friendly way possible (not). Amid March's promised scenes of compulsory enjoyment we are told that the new Market Square belongs to the people of Nottingham – but does it really, or is it more of a money-making scheme for the council and private businesses?

Market squares of old used to be public as well as commercial spaces. Before the changes to the Old Market Square many of us will have had, or heard stories of, near misses with flying skateboards! But you can only admire the Goths and skaters for making the middle of Slab Square their own. Now that this feature has been removed and the city is full of busy-body Community Protection Officers, will the rest of us ever have the opportunity to make the square our own again?

The only way to know is for people like us to do it. We should aim to use the square on every occasion for regular and informal events, picnics and parties, and resist getting pushed around by civil servants.

HARDsquawk – The Sparrows' regular rant

Sick of Being Spied On

CCTV cameras are everywhere these days, and we are safer for it, so we are told. These electronic eyes are operating 24 hours a day in the city centre. You can often see them move as their direction of gaze is altered from afar. But have you ever wondered who is at the other end? The fact is we're told to fear each other much more than we should do. We should probably be more afraid of these video recordings ending up on an internet site like YouTube! Spying cameras can't make us safe. Only people looking after each other can do that.

LETTERS TO THE SPARROWS' NEST

Community Persecution Officers - a step in the wrong direction

Dear Sparrows, I was standing in front of the Left Lion last Saturday, waiting for a friend, when I saw a young chap approached by one of the city council's 100 new CPOs that I'd read about in the Nottingham Arrow. His crime? Standing on the bottom step of the council house! I watched for 20 minutes as several other people, male and female, younger and older, got a quick word from one or other CPO when they absent-mindedly put a foot back on to the steps. It's sickening to see £¾ million of council tax money being used so these petty-minded yellow-jackets can harass local people like this, on what should, after all, be a public building.

-- Mick, NG1

PEOPLE POWER ON THE WEB

Notts Indymedia
notts.indymedia.org.uk

The Sumac Centre
www.sumac.org.uk

HISTORY

The Galleries of Injustice

Readers of Private Eye magazine, and no doubt others, will already be aware of the term 'Rotten Boroughs' that is associated with council corruption and local injustices. But it's a shame that a more positive view of the deeds of brave 'reform' rioters of the 1820s & 30s is not offered in our local museums, especially the Galleries of Justice, whose court and prison was extended to try, deport, hang & incarcerate reformers, nor in the next door Police museum.

After a 1831 parliamentary reform bill was defeated in the House of Lords, at a time when growing industrial cities like Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds & Manchester did not have any representation and some powerful MPs represented only their own interests (the so called 'rotten boroughs'), Nottingham people burnt down the Castle and attacked a mansion house.

During the same period many poor people who rebelled against poverty in mill towns and rural areas were executed, deported to Australia, or mercilessly cut down by local Yeomanry, forerunners of the 'boys in blue', or by troops with cutlasses and pistols.

Parliamentary reform eventually took place but it took nearly another century before men and women all got the vote. Anarchists now realise the pointlessness of voting full stop but the heroics of ordinary people against inequality in this period of history should not go unnoticed, especially as we are celebrating the legal end of the British Slave Trade which took place only a little earlier, in 1807.*

* which did not in fact end slavery especially in former British colonies like Jamaica where it was not abolished until 1838. And it's important to note that slave rebellion was a major factor in the ending of the Trade.

ENVIRONMENT

Clean Nottingham?

The Labour Party did a door-to-door newsletter drop a little while ago called 'Labour - Positively working for Nottingham' where City Council leader Jon Collins is quoted saying:

"Recycling in Nottingham is growing at a fast rate, we are now in the top 3 of the UK's top Cities"

In fact, in a recycling rate league table released by the Government, and linked to on Indymedia by NAIL (Nottingham Against Incineration and Landfill), the council came an embarrassing 339th out of 393 local authorities, with a combined recycling and composting rate of just 18.6 per cent for 2004-05. This is because NCC prefer to incinerate waste rather than provide proper recycling facilities. Thanks to local protest, permission for a third Eastcrofts incinerator was defeated but more pressure is needed because the private operator WRG has appealed.
-- More info: www.nail.uk.net

City Academy 'Hogwash'

WORK

We hear that Nottingham University and Pork Farms/Ginsters tycoon David Samworth are putting forward a joint bid for rebuilding and running one of New Labour's 'City Academy' schools, William Sharp in Bilborough. Samworth already runs 'Samworth Enterprise Academy' which was previously Mary Linn school of Leicester's Saffron Estate along with the local Diocese. In their glossy brochures and videos, the city council and gleeful university bigwigs and education experts neglect to mention that Samworth is not only a bible-basher, but also a member of the secretive Midlands Industrial Council, an elite group that donates to the Tories and lobbies against corporate taxation, the same taxes that would presumably pay for school improvement without the need for Private Finance Initiatives of this kind. PFI for hospitals has already been shown to be a disaster for the 'public purse', although a gravy train for private interests, sucking up an estimated 7 times more public cash than the original building costs.

THE NOTTINGHAM SPARROW IS PRODUCED BY MEMBERS OF A LOCAL GROUP OF THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION. WE ARE INVOLVED IN A VARIETY OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. Do write to us, including letters for the Sparrows' Nest, at **BOX AF c/o The Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham, NG7 6HX**

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