

# sharing fame

## SHANE

Sneinton's own film-maker Shane Meadows cut his teeth making short films with a borrowed camera and his friends as actors. Memorable scenes featured gangsters on a bench in St. Stephen's churchyard, an Italian mafia punch-up at Sneinton Market, heavy debate in the pool room at the Fox and a petfood heist at the petshop on the Boulevard.

Shane has since moved out of Sneinton and moved up to feature films, with three under his belt, the latest being a spaghetti western set in Nottingham "Once Upon a Time in the Midlands". He's now writing "King of the Gypsies" about the life of bare knuckle champion Barclay Gorman. But we hope to be able to show some of the early films set in Sneinton, for the first time locally, at Sneinton Festival 2003.

I came to Nottingham for a college course in photography. All my friends on the course lived in Sneinton and I ended up living there. It was great except for the burglaries. I was burgled three times in one month - it was a bit of a pain. At the time I had nothing to steal.

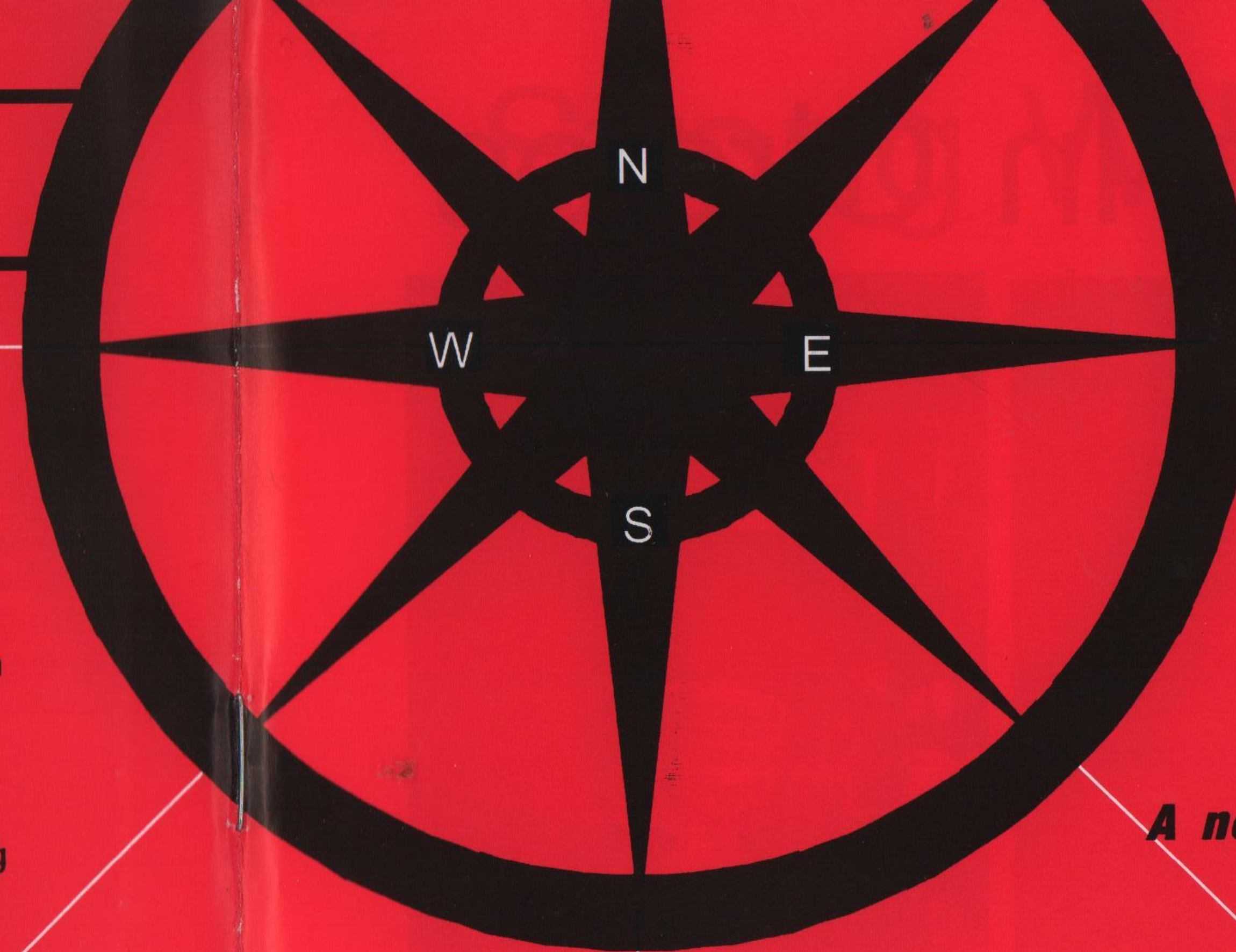
Sneinton still feels local - there's a real heart to it. I shot my first 20 films there. I set myself challenges - could I make a film in a day, in a morning, in an hour? I made a film called "The Cleaner" when I was helping out at Intermedia - the quickest film I ever made - in my lunch hour! I lived in Jubilee Street - everyone in the early films came from that street. In "Where's the Money Ronnie?" that was my first big break, it was all local people. I used to drink in the Fox, the Nelson (that was the calmest) and the Bendigo (that got more lively, especially when they had the Sneinton Elvis on).

People from the early films got parts in 24/7. It was my first chance to star and first chance for a lot of others too. I felt more comfortable working with friends than with professional actors. Some are continuing to act - Johan Myers has just made a film with Jackie Chan, Karl Collins is in The Bill and Danny Nausbaum has gone on to do several features. Even in my latest film, some have parts - and I always use the Carlton Junior Workshop to find younger actors.

I've been asked to move to London or to America - but all my ideas come from real places. If I didn't catch a bus to town I wouldn't get to hear interesting stories. If I go shopping in Kwiksave I come across more interesting people than in a thousand Soho parties.

I was brought up in a working class environment. Wherever there's a bit of poverty you'll find the finest humour - where there's the most pain, you get the most laughs.

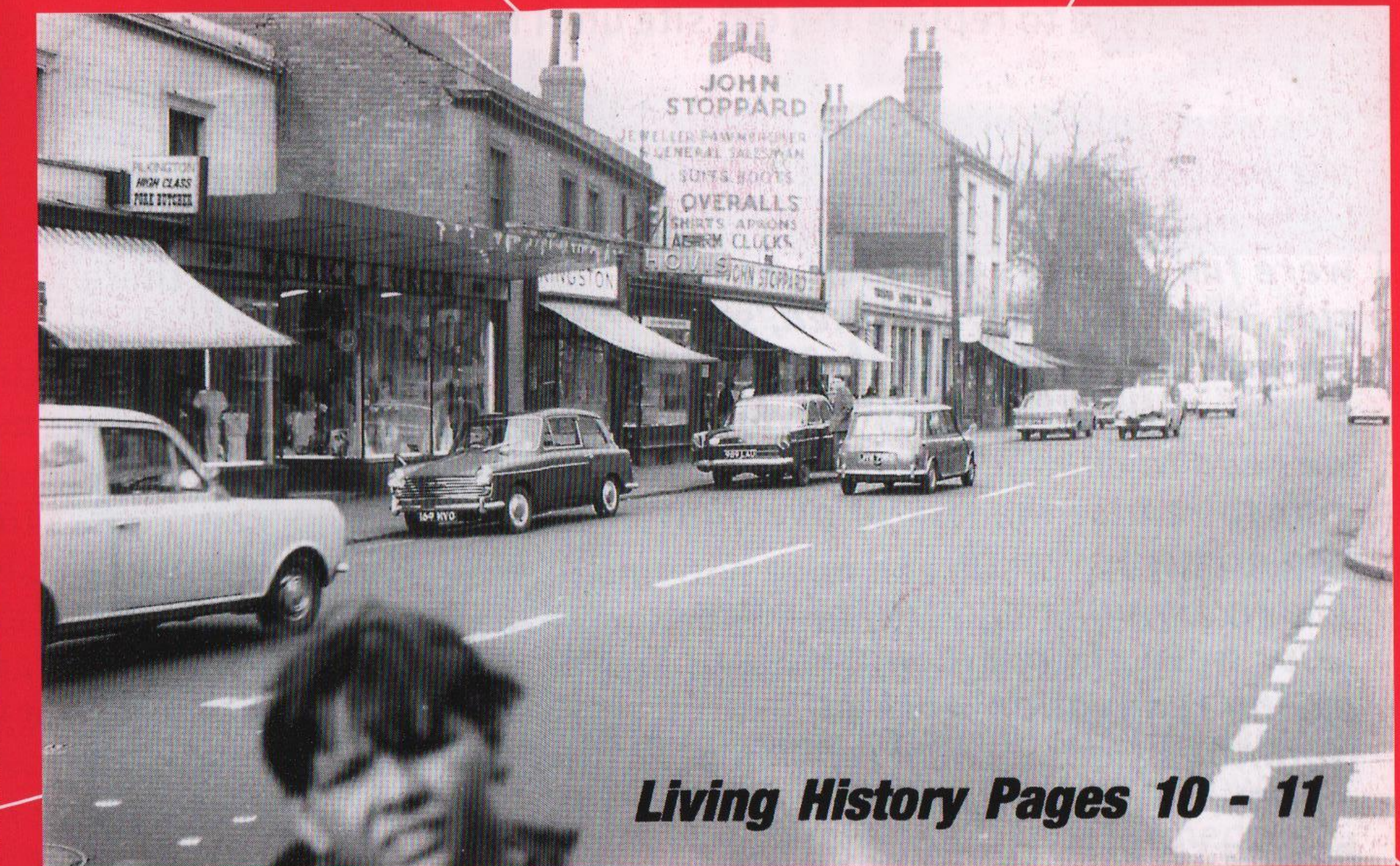
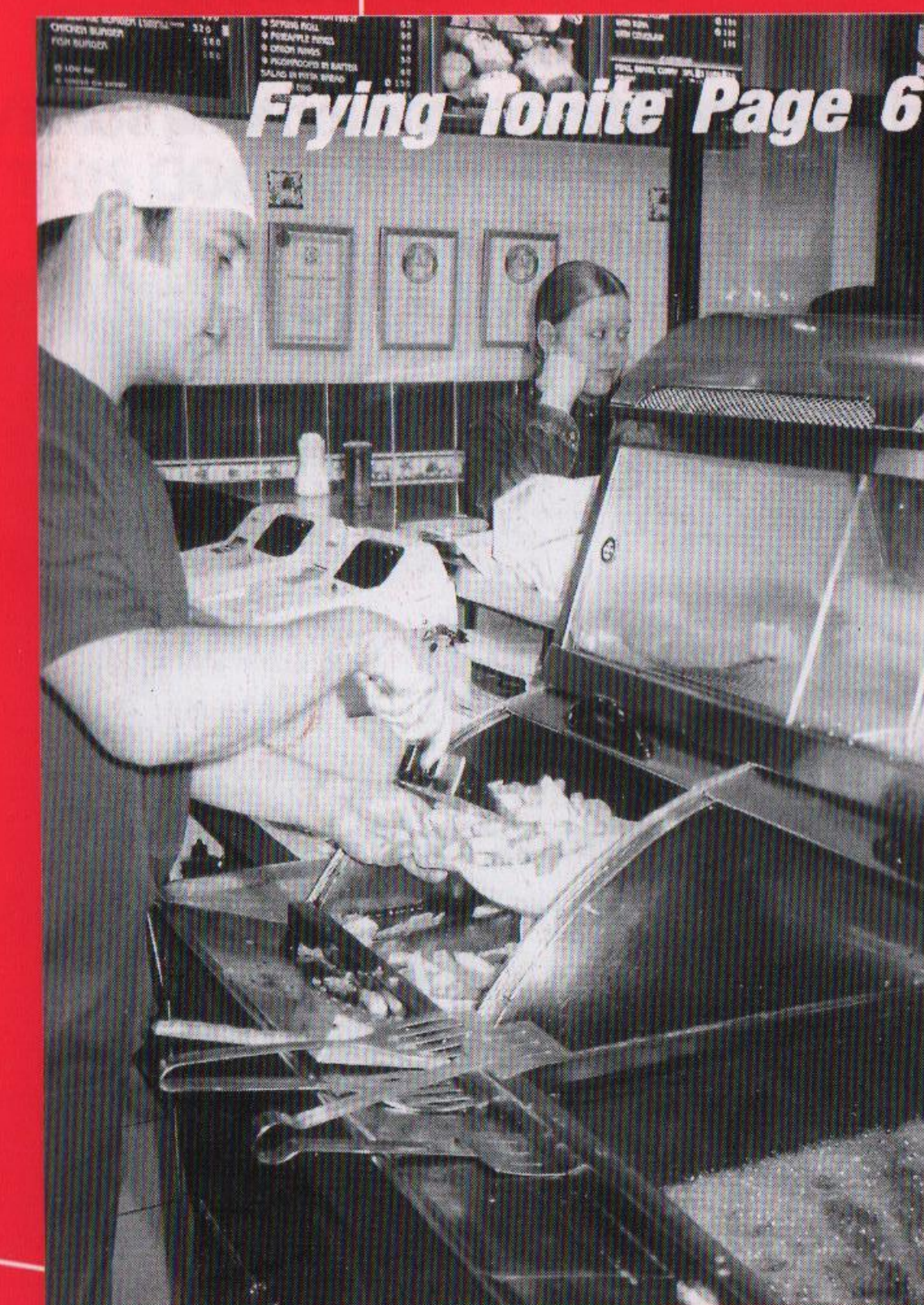
Shane Meadows



issue six spring 2003

# east of the city

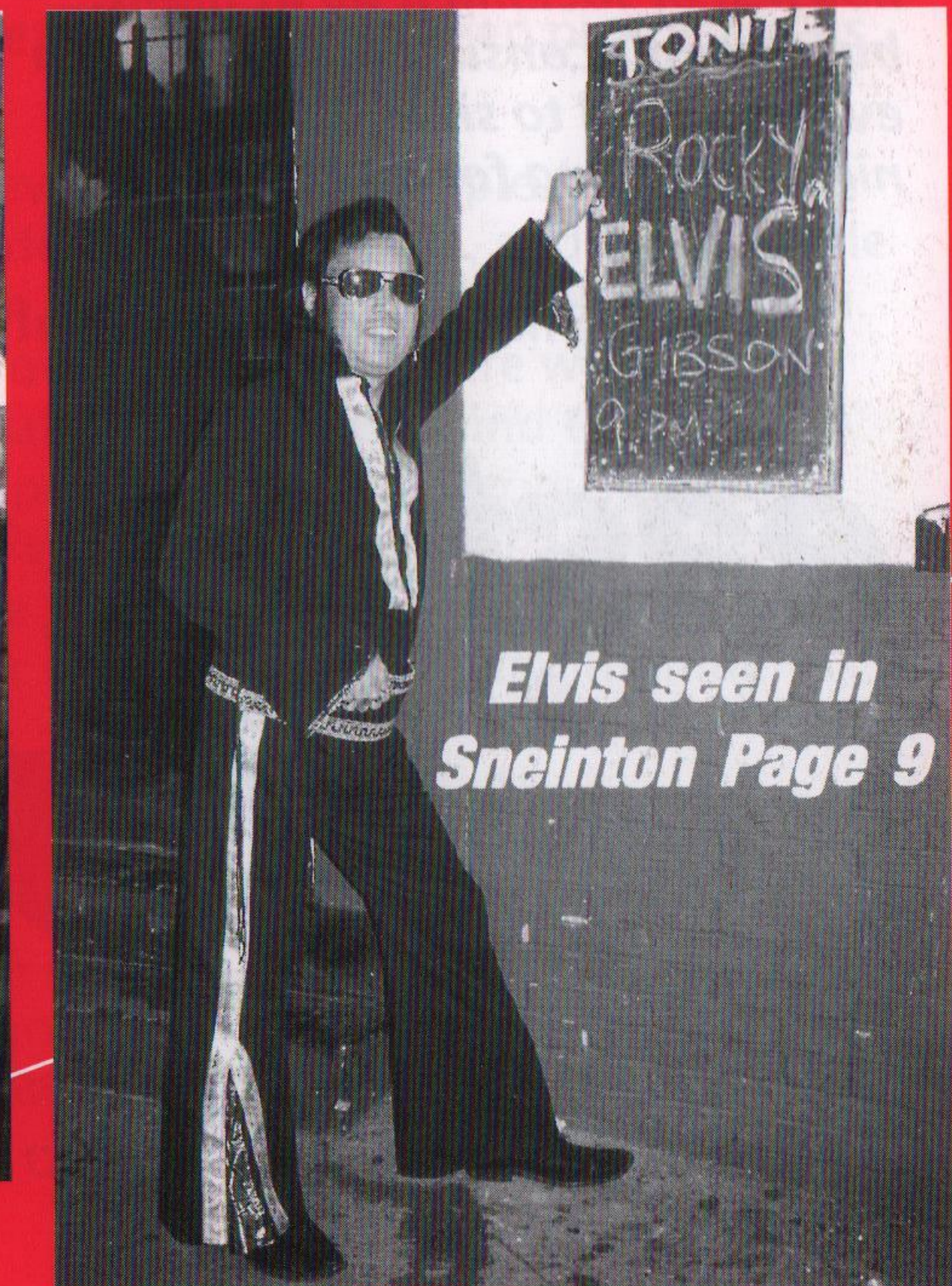
A newspaper for this side of Nottingham written by the people who live and work here.



Living History Pages 10 - 11



March Against Guns Page 3



Elvis seen in Sneinton Page 9



# Going Round In Circles

At the end of last year, Sneinton residents arrived with their bags of newspapers and bottles to find that their local recycling centre had disappeared. In the Green's Mill car park off Windmill Lane, this was within walking distance for most of the terraces of Sneinton. But without any advance warning, bins were hauled away and the railings removed. No notices were posted to explain what had happened, so bags continued to arrive. Not even the local church, St. Stephen's, had been informed, though they were the City Council's partners in managing the site.

Residents who rang up to enquire were told to take their recycling to Burroughs Court - a stiff uphill climb carrying a heavy load.

The Recycling department were at first adamant the site was gone for good.

"Over the last year or two there's been nothing but problems there - it was unfortunately used as a dumping ground. Bins were constantly contaminated with rubbish so we were unable to recycle anything. Businesses were using the site to get rid of trade waste and were difficult to catch and take action against. As an absolute last resort we removed the site."

People were up in arms that their only convenient local site had gone. Happily, their protests have resulted in a change of heart by the new Team Leader for Recycling, Chris Bailey, who is now looking for a temporary site to replace the old site until funding is found for improvement works to be carried out.



*"We were told it used to be one of the best used sites in the city. Bins were not collected when they were full, so bags were left on the side. Bins were left unlocked, so rubbish could be put in the top and paper scattered around. Maybe we need to change the style of the bins to reduce the risk of overflow and access by youth."*

*The fly tipping only started when skips were put out alongside during renovation work at Notintone House. Local residents wanted to offer support - by having security cameras on their houses, or locking it up at night, but weren't consulted. One person even offered to sit in his car at night watching for dumpers."*

Janet Summers

"What struck me was that there were a lot of people positive for the site. So many councilors wanted to know what the crack was. It's a new thing for us for people to be upset when a site is taken out. In other places there have been action groups trying to get rid of sites."

We'd like to get a recycling depot back on the car park. It was a well used site and there's a need for a site in that area. But it's necessary to secure the site with a fence along the front of the car park and lockable gates to prevent dumping, and address the lighting and maintenance issues. We hope to hold a presentation at a local community centre and invite people to look at the options. It's a two-pronged approach - if we can secure the site, we can go back in there, but we want to look at other possibilities. The more recycling centres there are, the more is recycled - in the next few years we'll be looking for more. We're putting some maps at community venues with suggestion boxes - we'll see what happens, if people with good ideas come out of the woodwork. We need to work with local groups to implement recycling - and adopt-a-site groups can obtain some funding from managing a site. The more the merrier."

Chris Bailey, Team Leader, Recycling

P.S. The Recycling Depot at Burroughs Court may also be closed if vandalism continues.

**east  
of the  
city**

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We welcome articles, ideas and comments from local people. Either phone 0115 8413721, write to East of the City, c/o The Renewal Trust, 27-31 Carlton Road, Nottingham NG3 2DG, or e-mail eastofthecity@hotmail.com

# Strong Willed-Women

## For Brendon

Brendon Lawrence  
Was somebody's son,  
Taken away by a gun  
(mourned by his Dad and his Mum)

Brendon Lawrence  
Was somebody's brother  
There'll never be another  
As his kin will now discover

Brendon Lawrence  
Was part of St. Ann's  
Living, dreaming, and making plans

- somebody took his life in their hands

Brendon Lawrence  
Wrong place, wrong time  
Victim of an unforgivable crime  
THIS COULD HAVE BEEN YOUR CHILD...OR MINE!

Brendon Lawrence  
And how many more?  
And how many others before?  
WHAT IS THIS JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR??

Brendon Lawrence  
Can't rest in his grave  
Not when there's so many young lives to save  
Not 'till cowards are exposed, by the brave.

Brendon Lawrence  
We owe him the truth  
Nottingham let down this young Black youth  
Murdered in broad day light  
AND WE CLAIM THERE IS NO PROOF!?

Brendon Lawrence  
Deserves to have peace  
His family need some release  
If you know ANYTHING

Speak up, PLEASE!  
Brendon Lawrence  
It's such a shame  
That we live in a society that will not name  
And bring to justice those who are to blame.

By Michelle Hubbard

Photo - Courtesy of Evening Post  
Cover March photo-  
Assunta Del Buono



This problem should have been tackled years ago. If they come at you with a gun, you don't have a chance. My lad had to die through this - there's no reason for it. That's why I'm angry. It's still not stopped - they fired at the police station recently. It's got to stop, that's all there is to it.

I still cry, I'm still weeping. Someone soon has got to say that this family has had enough. It's not about grassing up - it needs someone to say that this person needs taking off the street.

Mothers Against Guns started in America. When her son Damian died, Lucy Cope said "We've got to do something" - that's how it started in this country. Mothers in different cities have formed different groups - but we all stick together. The government has got to listen to us. What can we do - they can't keep promising us, they've got to act on it.

Before the march the phone never stopped - people stuck in traffic, people snowed in. Brendon's friends came, and even people I didn't know. People came from Manchester, London, Birmingham. We made us point that we set out to achieve. There were some powerful speeches, and Lord Falconer stayed behind to talk to us - he didn't have to. It's all right politicians talking promising this and that - their children haven't been shot dead. What would they do if it was one of theirs? We're not unreasonable to ask for a 10 year sentence and no parole for carrying a firearm and that life should mean life.

There's a big memorial service on July 27<sup>th</sup> in Hyde Park. A lot of stars will be coming and all the mums who've lost children.

We need all the support we can get. We've got to be strong-willed women - we keep each other going as mums.

Janice Collins (Brendon's Mum)





## CHANGING ROOMS

Have you watched all those decorating programmes on T.V. and been inspired but don't know where to start? Don't have the time or the money to try out your decorating ideas? Well that's what this group of Sneinton residents felt too!

So they signed up for the Sneinton Changing Rooms Project. The project was set up to enable people on low income and benefits the opportunity to makeover a room in their house, from designing and budgeting through to decorating. All the students on this course have children so the time available to decorate is limited. Working as a team has enabled them to transform their rooms in a short space of time and with tips and tricks from a local interior designer they have made dramatic changes to their rooms on a limited budget.

If you would like to find out more about the Sneinton Changing Rooms Project please contact TRACS 9584862.

Rebecca Marchant

## ARTY FARTY

## HAVING A NAIL OF A TIME

I've gone from not being able to draw to (hopefully) aiming to do an Art Degree at Trent University where I worked for 20 years.

The first time I came I sat and watched, the next time I did 2 paintings of a moon landscape and sunrise in gesso and chalk. I went on to draw still lifes of milk containers, coke cans, all your cleaning stuff, do landscapes in oil pastels and then ceramics. I've always been a bit arty farty.

All this was here at the Chase Neighbourhood Centre for free. A lot of people don't know what's going on on their doorstep.

Since then I've done a fashion course and City and Guilds in soft furnishings - it's all come from here - it's great really. It hasn't cost anything apart from materials.

I've really gone to town - I've got 10 framed paintings downstairs at home on the Wells Road estate. My kids keep pinching them - they must be alright if they put them on their walls. I even had an exhibition at the Chase for 2 months.

I'm 60 next year. I've been ill and getting out among people is fantastic. It's been like the League of Nations with all the different people I've worked with - and we've all got on well. It opened up my eyes.

If I can do it - so can you!

Gillian Morris

*Nails are not to everyone's taste - some like hairdressing, some like beauty treatments. But this suited me fine, I've always been interested in manicures. It's everywhere you look now - hairdressers and even sunbed shops are setting nail places up.*

*A lot of us can't afford a course - it costs a fortune. But this is a 10 week free course funded by Adult and Community Learning Team through Michelle Porter Beauty Parlour and then we get an NVQ at the end. Then you can work for yourself or get a bit of part-time work. A lot of us are single families - but it fits in here at the Greenway centre with a free crèche.*

*Also it's good to get together with your friends - we enjoy it, and Helen's an excellent teacher. One week, we've got to bring a model and do their nails, then we're doing a salon visit. This is the pilot round here.*

*You just feel elegant when your nails are done Christmas is coming up, and for weddings, christenings, parties - and for your man, to make him purr. You have to keep your washing-up gloves on to look after them - treat them like jewels, not tools.*

Cheryle Thomas



## How Music has Opened Up a New World to Me



When I came to Elliott Durham School two years ago I chose Music as a GCSE option. My music teacher, Mr. Townsend, discovered that I had great singing potential and suggested singing on a CD he was hoping to put together. I was excited, delighted and proud to work on such a big project.

The two songs on the CD - 'Magic Box' and 'I can dream a world' - were written to commemorate the first anniversary of 9/11. The school produced the CD with the help of the e-Learning Centre at Top Valley and sent copies to the President of the USA and the mayor of New York. We received encouraging replies and thanks.

As a result of the CD, I have been on radio and television giving interviews. I have also had the opportunity to perform live at the Council House (Goose Fair Dinner), the Royal Concert Hall the Albert Hall and St. Ann's Well library.

Lots of opportunities have come my way. As a result of my experiences, I have been chosen to attend and speak at a major national refugee youth conference in London in February.

I have performed many times with the group to children from the local St. Ann's schools. I also take part in a weekly after school music club at Elliott Durham. I like to think that I can show people that you don't have to give up on your dreams.

I am going to go on to college to continue my studies. I will, of course, carry on with my singing lessons. My real dream is to be the next Toni Braxton!

Saewyd Miller

*"Nowhere, however, will see the extraordinary hike in house prices that made a gentrified area of Nottingham Britain's top property hot spot this year. Homes in Sneinton, an up-and-coming district near the city centre, rose in value by 150% during 2002, five times the national average."*  
Sunday Times, December 29<sup>th</sup> 2002

## A Musical School

We are very keen to promote music in our school, Elliott Durham, to encourage children to take advantage of any opportunities going. As well as offering GCSE Music, we have recently started an Expressive Arts GCSE which combines music, drama, dance and visual and verbal arts.

Last year's major project was producing, recording and performing a CD called Magic Box. The songs were recorded to commemorate the first anniversary of the September 11 tragedy in New York. Over 40 pupils were involved in the production. Activities ranged from singing to mixing and editing. The singers have performed all over Nottingham at high profile events. We are very proud of their success.

This year, we are involved with the Magdala Opera Trust who work with the children on opera workshops. This is great fun as the children are able to experience opera and relate the stories to current day life.

We are also very keen to open our doors to our local schools for other musical events. The St. Ann's Singing Festival, which usually takes place in July, is hosted here. Over 200 children from the surrounding schools came here to perform their songs. We are looking forward to the third annual festival.

On Wednesdays we have a regular after school music club called Music Box. Children from the junior schools in our area join with pupils from our school. They have the chance to join music workshops including singing, keyboards, percussion, African drumming, ocarina and a junkband. There was a great Christmas performance to mark the end of the first term's session.

It is our aim to put on performances and encourage other local children to perform here in the future. Taking part in any kind of musical event, at whatever level, brings enjoyment, a sense of achievement and promotes and develops a positive community spirit.

## PLAYSTART TOY LIBRARY

The Playstart Toy Library, part of Sure Start Sneinton is now up and running with a session every Tuesday from 9.30 - 11.30am at Sneinton Hermitage Community Centre. The toys are for the under fours, and can be borrowed for 20p per toy per week. Parents can be reassured that there will be no fines for lateness or breakages, as we understand that accidents do happen and small hands put toys in unusual places!

Tel: 0115 91151191



# Oh Chapattis!

Lunch at the Pakistan Centre  
Woodborough Rd

This is a community restaurant - the food is really nice and it's very cheap as well. Restaurant food is just restaurant food, but this food is wholesome, it's home cooked. This is proper food from Kashmir. It's in a central location and easily accessible. Lots of professional people, local residents and people on low income come here. It's £2.50p all in - affordable for everyone. I don't know if men are better cooks than women, but in restaurants and community centres you always see them more. This is just right for me - not too hot, not too mild. The tray has different compartments for daal, meat, rice, saag and chapatti. Daal is made from boiled lentils, saag from spinach and potatoes. It's very easy to eat with chapattis - they're basically like bread. You break it and mop around your daal or saag and eat it. It's not like Mexican tortillas where they fill them in. My staple food is the chapatti. If I don't eat chapatti I feel like I haven't eaten anything. Chapattis fill you up. The chapattis are made with flour and water. You roll it out and put it on a hotplate and in 2 minutes it's ready. It's always fresh and very healthy.

Ali Asghar



## Georgio's Plaice

*Sneinton Dale retains the atmosphere and usefulness of a local shopping street. Within easy walking distance of each other are the bank, pub, post office, doctor's and dentist's surgeries, chemist and a surprising number of local shops and take aways. These have survived because they are good and have adapted to the challenge of the age of the chain groups and out-of-town centres.*

*One of these, near the top on the left, between the bank and the post office is Georgio's Plaice, which combines the mouth watering delights of a traditional chippy with a surprising range of international dishes all of which are prepared on the premises within sight of customers.*

*For the traditional the fish and chips, with mushy peas if you want come in various sizes, a constant supply ensuring freshness and fullness of taste. The only thing missing, and not regretted I am sure, is that the old style torn newspapers are now replaced with clean wrapping paper.*

*It is fitting that this excellent takeaway incorporates the fish in its name, but this is only the start of it. The long list of different dishes numbers over sixty separate items, some of which can be had in different sizes of portions, making overall a tremendous choice the permutation of which would tax a comptometer. Kebabs, baked potatoes with numerous fillings, pies, sausages, fritters, onion rings, etc. All these may be accompanied by various breads and cobs, sauces, pickles, and salads, all made up to order as you wish. And if you are thirsty there are various beverages.*

*It is also fitting that the name includes reference to "Georgio". One key element to its success is that it is still run as a family concern, so that there is in house supervision of every aspect of the operation, so obviously lacking at the chain outlets. The staff are friendly efficient and know what they are about, which makes it a social occasion to go there. The place (as well as the plaice!) sparkles with the care taken.*

*The only minor disadvantage which customers sometimes have to adapt to is that it is so popular that there are often queues, despite the quickness of the staff. If you are behind two or three people with a "shipping order" involving a wide ranging menu, then you will need a little patience. But then there are friendly folk to talk with, and whatever you are having will be well worth waiting for. The prices are good value too. You won't need to draw your savings from the cash machine next door to get a slap up dinner here. And for those who usually do the cooking at home there is the added bonus that it is all done for you.*

Tom Huggon

# Caribbean Fried Chicken Revitalised

"Food to me is an art. It is not a hobby", says Henry Johnson, owner of Caribbean Fried Chicken. His take-a-way is situated on the corner of Freckingham Street and Carlton Road so many of his customers come from Sneinton and St Ann's. But the business has a delivery service for those living further a field and caters for private functions.

Preparing food is not perhaps the most obvious vocation for someone who spent six years in the RAF engineering corps but Johnson insists that food has been his passion for many years. After studying Food Science at university and working in the catering industry he decided to set up his own business.

The menu is as Caribbean as you would expect but there are some surprises, for despite the company's name, fish is its speciality with lobster, bream, swordfish and tiger prawns offered alongside fried chicken, curry goat, yam balls and savoury rice.

Like the best chefs Johnson is reluctant to reveal his recipes and is most secretive about the ingredients of a drink called Depth Charge. His first response to questioning was, "It's not for you". He later admitted that it is an aphrodisiac and only men can buy it but no amount of encouragement could get him to reveal its contents. With a knowing wink, he said, "Revitalisation is the key".

Christine Belle

## Eating Out East





It's here at last. Childcare problems could be a thing of the past.

Yes! Sneinton has another quality after school childcare project. On Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December a launch party was held at Sneinton Hermitage Community Centre which was attended by parents and their children.



## Renewal Trust Business Advisory Service

An important part of the Renewal Trust's work in the regeneration of the St Anns and Sneinton areas is the provision of our Business Advisory service. The Advisory service is free and looks to help new and existing businesses operating in our area with Business Planning and guidance. Possible financial assistance is also available to eligible applicants through our Business Grant and Loan scheme.

Peter Matkin, our Business Adviser joined the Trust in January 2001. Peter was a Business Manager with NatWest and has many years' experience dealing with a wide range of businesses including people looking to start up a business for the first time.

Peter deals with in-coming enquiries for assistance and applicants are advised on how to apply for funds. Peter will use his experience to help and assist applicants develop their idea for a business through to the production of a detailed business plan. The Business planning aspect is seen as very important and during the development stage of the plan it may highlight any potential difficulties that the business may encounter and how best to deal with them. Peter maintains close links with other similar organisations in the Nottingham area and we are able to signpost individuals to other organisations where their support would be more appropriate.

Peter is based at our offices at 27/31 Carlton Road and can be contacted by telephone on 0115 9112309. If you are interested in starting a business or would like any further details then please contact him. You will be assured of a friendly reception.

## Sneinton Playcentre

Workshops were on offer in jewellery making, circus skills, face painting and Christmas decorations. A fantastic buffet was provided and a lot of interest was created for parents who were able to take away welcome packs for the new facility.

The Afterschool care project is now running from Monday-Friday, 3pm to 6pm. Children can be picked up from school, tea is provided and creative, stimulating and fun play activities are on offer from qualified and experienced playworkers.

For more details please contact Vanessa on (0115) 9586483  
Or TRACS on (0115) 9584862.

Don't miss out.

## CHANNEL SNEINTON

('Everyone's famous for 15 minutes'.)  
-Based around the theme of T.V.-

If you or your project, organisation or group have any ideas around popular TV shows, and 'Reality Televisions' - like putting on a talent contest mimicking 'Pop Stars - The Rivals', hold a 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' show (note you must supply the £1,000,000). if you believe your 'chair' has all the tact of Ann 'The Weakest Link' Robinson, or you have the urge to dress up like soap stars, or a 'B' list Celebrity or can design costumes and artwork around classic TV moments and characters, if you fancy holding an 'Antiques Road Show' with car boot goods to raise funds, get your youth group to build go-karts and put on a 'Wacky Races', get your local schools to create 'Robot Wars', turn the 'International Food Evening' into 'Ready Steady Cook' - we might even be able to arrange for your members to be locked into the Hermitage Centre for a week while we film a 'Big Brother' and vote them out, or as a last resort, you could paint your committee yellow and become the 'Simpsons'....

- whatever and where ever the theme takes you, bring your ideas along to the

SNEINTON FESTIVAL July 5th  
Tel : 9584862

## Elvis Nights

As we walked up Sneinton Road late on a Saturday night we heard a familiar voice. Was that 'The Wonder of You' wafting out from the Fox? But the door was bolted and we couldn't get in.

Luckily, Elvis nights at the Fox happen quite regularly. Or rather, Rocky 'Elvis' Gibson nights. 'Mr. Rock 'n' Roll Himself' also does a good rendition of other 50s and 60s stars - Billy Fury, Buddy Holly, Eden Kane and Johnny Kidd. But Elvis is his greatest love. "There's only one Elvis and ever will be. Some impersonators are a joke - they might as well be red-nosed clowns in a suit. I'm not an impersonator - I class myself as an ambassador of Elvis music - putting songs over the way Elvis would want them put over."

He doesn't ape the accent, but has some natty Elvis outfits which he designs and wife Caron machines and hand sews. He met her at a charity concert.

"It's my 24<sup>th</sup> year in the business. I started roadying for my brother Barry the comedian, then joined a band called the Cayotes and toured Germany. You grow up quick - you soon lose your innocence."

He's well known in the area, having played at the Beacon and Wishing Well and the opening of the Curragh.

"I'm really lucky that I've got a band of loyal followers (that used to be called the Tarts on Tour) that follow me from gig to gig." Landlady Mel at the Fox likes her Elvis music too - but some of the regulars seem oblivious to it belting out. One of his followers is 76 years old and has been following him for 20 years. At the finale to strains of Glory, Glory, Allelulah, she brings out the rebel flag.

"He brings tears to everyone's eyes - he's that good. He's fantastic - nobody'll say any different. Three cheers for Rocky."

Colin Haynes



## ST. ANN'S SHOWMAN

I can't count how many years I've been coming here to Goose Fair - it's been since the fifties. My family always stood fairs and I've always worked on fairs - and done other things like Punch and Judy and running a Joke Shop on Mansfield Road. Lucky I've got a sense of humour.

I'm not doing a lot now - I'm getting old, I'm near to seventy. I'm more or less retired - but you don't retire in this game - just drop dead. I've got the Cakewalk that goes to major fairs, but got rid of the Slide and Waltzer.

That's my signwriting on the traditional roundabout. I also build scale models of fairground equipment to order - there's a very big demand. People can't buy them. And I carve Punch and Judy heads.

Goose Fair's been messed around this year by the tram system. Goose Fair's changed - now it's all big hitters - thrill rides for teenagers you've got to have nowadays that take the money. But you have to move with the times - there's an old saying "Don't forget the past while looking into the future."

Ted Cordall



# St. Ann's Living History

This interview was conducted by the Youth Inclusion Project as part of their research into the history of St. Ann's.



*Norma is 61 and is currently living near the Chase. She has lived in St. Ann's for most of her life. She lived on Westminster Street until the age of 18 and has also lived on Sycamore Promenade. She is Asian and has seen many changes over the years she has lived in St. Ann's.*

"In the old days everyone knew their neighbours and everyone left their doors open. As a child we used to play on the streets without any fear and we were afraid of the police. If we were naughty we would get a clip round the ears and they told our parents. Nowadays the youths are intimidating and I don't go out after 7pm. There's a lot of buildings that have changed, the Gala Bingo used to be a dance hall called the Carno Ballroom and we went dancing there every Saturday afternoon and danced to rock and roll. You didn't go out at night on your own. On Westminster Street there used to be St. Ann's Boarding school but it isn't there any more."

"Wash Day was on a Monday and the washing had to last all week. We used to top and tail our bedsheets to keep them fresh. Everyone did their washing at the Wash House which is now the Victoria Leisure Centre. We had an outside toilet. I actually remember living on the Promenade in 1964, it was very posh and you couldn't go out without lipstick on!



We didn't get a TV until 1952 when the Queen was coronated. But the TV was black and white and really amazing! There was a big street party when the Queen was coronated and all the girls got a toy replica of the Queen's coach and a mug."

"There wasn't much violence back then but I remember the Pretty Windows murder which was a pub which is now called the Fox and Grapes pub. The owner took his dog out for a walk one night and was stabbed to death. They never really found his killer but we were all really shocked by it. I walked to most places but there were trolley buses and the tram. My weekly wage was £3 and 10 shillings. The 10 shillings went to my mum for my keep and I had loads left to spend."

"The only racism I had was at school when I first started. The other kids soon accepted me for who I was."

"The IC Discount Warehouse on St. Ann's Well Road used to be a picture house. I went with a friend one afternoon and when the film finished we went outside. I was really scared and shocked because there were big men outside fighting. There were people stabbed and really badly beaten up and it was obvious that it was between black and white men. My friend was scared for me and pushed me into an alley to try and keep me safe. We eventually got home safe. These riots hit all the newspapers and became known as the 1950's race riots.

Religion was very important and I was brought up as a Catholic. We went to Sunday School and Midnight Mass. Religion doesn't seem as important these days."

Photos (from the early 70s) are from the Nicholson Archive

Top: Festus Street,  
Left: Cavendish Cinema,  
Right & Cover: St. Ann's Well Road.

## Ruth's Book

Yes, I finally finished this large book on the history of St. Ann's in living memory. It was launched at St. Ann's Library on November 8th 2002. Despite pouring rain, the community room was crowded. The Elliott Durham School Singing Group started the celebrations. Stewards from the school helped throughout the day, which included refreshments prepared by the Community Cafe staff and volunteers in the Chase Neighbourhood Centre. There were exhibitions of the Nicholson Photo Archive (in the Library) and the Youth Project's History Project (in the Neighbourhood Centre). On the other side of Chase Precinct in the afternoon, St. Ann with Emmanuel hall was open to everyone for tea and biscuits served by church volunteers.

Two things in particular helped to create my resolve to gather up a history of St. Ann's in living memory and to create a book about St. Ann's:

Firstly, during the years I worked in London, I experienced how little the people who make decisions in Government Departments, and other institutions, actually know about ways of life in local communities. Certain locations, like St. Ann's, are stereotyped because it suits the purposes of those who do the stereotyping. I resolved to try and get more community history 'on the record'. Having known St. Ann's very well since 1965, and still living in it several days each week, St. Ann's was where I wanted to be as a community historian.

Secondly, when I was working with young people in Elliott Durham School a few years ago, few of them knew very much or anything about the history of their home area. There was no clear source of information for them about St. Ann's history in living memory. Different people and groups knew parts of it. This is because much of St. Ann's was demolished in the late 1960s and early 1970s when 30,000 people were compulsorily uprooted and

many had to leave the area. Three-generation families, networks of friends and neighbours were broken up. The destruction included 650 shops and most public buildings, including churches and pubs.

The history of the area fragmented. New people moved into the newly-built estate. They inhabited a large district in which almost all physical landmarks had been destroyed. With much effort, many people in the 'new' St. Ann's have created a sense of community, and - in recent years - housing improvements have helped.

This book project was participative at all stages and included open sessions in the library; many interviews; visits to schools, groups, churches, the Mosque, pubs, community and neighbourhood centres; lots of time spent chatting around the area: people sending in ideas, articles, photos, news cuttings, booklets and phoning to make suggestions... It involved those born in the first decade of the last century and today's Primary School children. The history covers life in the 'old' St. Ann's, the time of planning blight and demolition and the 'new' St. Ann's. It demonstrates the continuities and the changes over many decades through the words of those involved.

I am told the book project has helped to build confidence. I also hope it helps people outside St. Ann's to view it with more respect and not to allow the incidents of crime in the area to define its whole community. Huge thanks to the hundreds of people who helped with the project.

Ruth I. Johns

**St. Ann's Nottingham : inner-city voices.** ISBN 0951696092. 576 pages including 940 photos, maps and index. Published by Plowright Press, a not-for-profit publisher. Available in local libraries and also for sale at St. Ann's Library.

I agree with the historian Simon Schama who says: "History ought never to be confused with nostalgia. It is written not to revere the past but to inspire the living - it is the secret of who we are."



# St. Ann's Living History