

3D *on't pay!
on't collect!
on't implement!*

Issue #5 of the open,
independant newsletter
produced by the
3D network

Beating the bailiffs

After the bailiffs were successfully resisted nine times last month in Northampton, the battle ground moved to Wales and the South West.

It had become clear late in July that most councils in the South West were going to use bailiffs. The South West Federation held a dayschool on responses to the bailiffs and from there set up a bailiff monitoring group in Bristol.

It quickly became clear that a large number of South West councils were going to use the same bailiffs — a company called *Roach and Co.* based in Bristol. The Avon Federation moved into action. We watched their movements for a week and identified all their cars (they had a series of Nissan vans).

We looked them up in the Companies Register. We examined their premises and discovered that their compound was at the end of a cul de sac (ideal for pick-ets...). We put this information out to local groups who in themselves turned up a load of information about the bailiffs — some new them personally, others had useful 'dirt' for the press campaign.

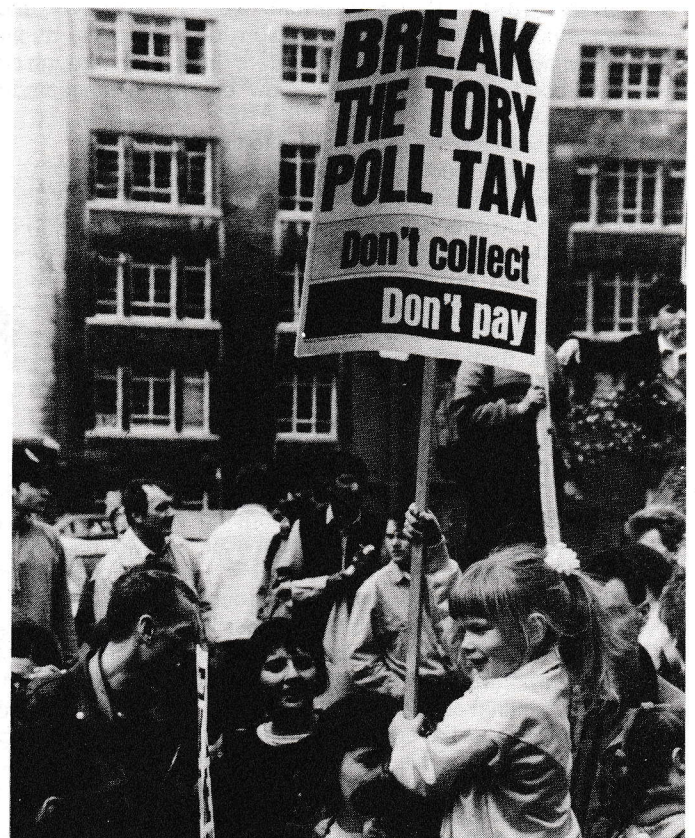
The action began on August 3rd. In the previous week Roaches had been both to Bishops Lydeard (a small village near Taunton) and Barri (in South Wales) to deliver a 'walking possession' notice. This meant (in two cases where they had been able to gain access to the houses) that they were in a position to take people's possessions.

We called a blockade for 7am Friday morning. People turned up from APTUs across Bristol. No vehicles were able to leave the compound, and we got massive press coverage. In fact a number of vehicles left from the bailiffs private homes. They were spotted by our people crossing the Severn Bridge at 7.30am. They never arrived, but the van was discovered sometime later with its tyres let down.

Meanwhile in Barri and Bishops Lydeard, the whole community was mobilised. In Barri over fifty people were outside the houses of the threatened families; telephones on the window sill; another two hundred people ready to respond to a phone call; vehicles roaming the area watching for bailiffs; kids, prams, icecream vans creating a carnival atmosphere.

In Bishop Lydeard half the village decided to take the day off. All the roads in were sealed off by the community. All cars going through were required to identify themselves. The bailiffs never got near the village.

These scenes prove that the non payment figures are not just empty statistics which will crumble as the threats get stronger. The community is proving its strength — this has inspired people throughout the South West. It has sent shockwaves through council and government.



As we go to press the bailiffs are threatening to act around the country, including in Wandsworth in London. But when people really believe in something there is *nothing* that can stop them.

By Danny Burns
National Committee member
of the All Britain Federation

3D National Activists Meeting
Saturday 15th September 1990

1.00pm - 5.00pm

Leeds University Students Union
(food and bar available from 11.00am)

For more details see back page

The next step

Five months after the introduction of the Poll Tax, it is now abundantly clear that mass non payment is holding firm.

Even according to the Times there are ten million who have paid nothing so far; and we can add three or four million who have either stopped paying or who are not registered.

After a quiet period in the summer, a sort of "phoney war", the battle against enforcement has begun.

Most areas of the country have seen their first court cases as councils apply for liability orders. If the councils and magistrates ever thought they could rubber stamp thousands of the orders in empty court rooms they now know different.

Thousands have heeded the call to turn up at court. Our success so far is evident in that local authorities are now begging court clerks to speed through cases.

This brings us into a new area. If Labour councils start putting pressure on the government to give them new powers to 'get heavy' with non payers, then all their arguments that they are unwilling participants in the enforcement of the Poll Tax collapse like a house of cards.

Those people living under Poll Tax capped councils no only too well the lengths that Labour authorities are prepared to go to stay legal. Swingeing cuts have been made to jobs and services in the affected councils.

The Socialist Movement trade union conference in Sheffield on 8th September is an opportunity for anti-Poll Tax activists to link up with trade unionist to build a united strategy against cuts and Poll Tax.

The bailiffs just haven't been doing very well. Northampton has proved to be a no go area for them. Their excursions from Bristol to Barri and Bishops Lydeard could have been scripted by a comedy writer.

To put it simply, so far we have been better organised than they have. But massive amounts of work need to be done across the country to make sure it stays this way.

Which brings us on to communication. Our success will be heavily dependent on having an effective national communications network. So far the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation has failed to provide this. Maybe it never had any intention of doing so. Which leaves the job up to us.

The next 3D activists meeting in Leeds will primarily be concerned with building the network. We hope it will not be used simply as a forum for criticism of either Militant or the All Britain Federation, because we don't have the time.

Fourteen million people are relying on us to build an effective network. And we only have four hours to get it started. So if you want to help us with this massively important task, join us at Leeds University Union on the 15th September.

Fighting in the courts

The Magistrates Courts have provided us with surprising venues for the first round in the fight against the Poll Tax.

So far things have gone pretty much our way. Councils have taken relatively small numbers of non payers to court. This does not auger well for the big city authorities that are now getting into gear for their cases.

Unless there are radical changes in the way that courts deal with non payers it will take them several years just to deal with this years Poll Tax.

However, they are learning from their mistakes as well as finding new ways to rush through cases. So it is crucial that we too can learn from our experience.



NALGO

GMB
working together



To start with the summonses are often sent out in an arbitrary way. A lot of footwork has then got to be done contacting people and getting them to turn up at court. At the court we must do our best to make sure that people know what is going on at all times, through leaflets and personal contact.

A team of activists should take on the job of approaching defendants on arrival, explaining the situation to them and directing them to our solicitors and 'McKenzie friends'.

Council officials will be doing the same, attempting to 'help' make arrangements for people to pay out of court. We should organise creches for kids and refreshments for hungry bellies.

This level of organisation will be difficult to maintain over several weeks. In Leeds we are planning for individual anti-Poll Tax groups to run things on separate days — organised well in advance so activists can take time off work.

Normally the courts will deal with the cases of all those who attend before proceeding against non-attenders. Sometimes as at South Tyneside they have attempted to adjourn the cases of all those present till a later date, enabling them to proceed with the absentees very quickly.

We will argue against this, explaining that people have arranged time off work or organised childcare to enable them to be present and have a right to have their cases heard.

People can be represented by either solicitors or McKenzie friends. McKenzie

friends are lay representative who can take notes and give advice to the defendant. They do not have an automatic right to address the court but may be allowed to do so in the interest of time.

Liability orders may be sought from several people at once. Since each person still has the right to question council officials and give their own defence this does not necessarily save the courts time.

It goes without saying that people should always ask for their cases to be heard separately.

Usually the local authority is asked to make its case and then those summoned can offer their defence. The local authority has to prove to the court that the sum claimed is due and that it has not been paid. Therefore the magistrate shouldn't grant a liability order unless they are satisfied that:

- The Council has passed a resolution fixing the Poll Tax.

- Your name is entered in the "Community Charge Register" showing what type of Poll Tax you are liable to pay (the local authority can prove this either by producing a copy of the register certified by the registration officer; or by evidence given by a local authority officer who has inspected the register).

- The Poll Tax has been demanded in accordance with the law i.e you have been served with a "demand notice" (a Poll Tax bill) and a further notice.

Service of the demand and reminder must be proved either by sworn oral evidence by a council official with personal knowledge of the relevant postings or who can actually produce a record of the posting or by a "certificate" signed by a duly authorised officer.

Each of the above presents us with the opportunity to give the council officials and their witnesses a rigorous cross-examination.

When all this has been accepted as proven the opportunity falls to the defendant to offer a defence. Political arguments won't wash, but they can still take up time.

There is a good chance of getting an adjournment if you have a rebate application pending or if you have applied for a review of the rebate decision. Both cases are looked on with more sympathy if they were made before the summons was received.

More than half of those attending court have managed to get adjournments or withdrawals of liability orders because of outstanding rebates and reviews.

It must be emphasised that the battle at the courts is only a facet of the struggle. But the work put into this area so far by the anti-Poll Tax movement has paid off impressively.

If we succeed in getting even greater numbers of non payers down to the magistrates courts, the councils could get liability orders against all of us... sometime in the twenty first century.

**By Ian Greaves
Leeds Against the Poll Tax**

TSDC

Wherever there is oppression there is resistance

At the beginning of August, anti-Poll Tax activist Rob Robinson from South London got sent to Wandsworth jail for two years for kicking a police van ("violent disorder") on March 31st.

On that day hundreds were arrested for defending our 200,000 strong national demonstration from a concerted and brutal police, which included cop vans driving at full speed into a packed Trafalgar Square.

This ruthless *political* sentence was the first at Crown Court. The courts are threatening to dish out scores of similar and worse sentences (from five to fifteen years) in a series of show trials over the next six months.

Already over one hundred defendants have been heavily fined and some imprisoned. Over four hundred and fifty more cases are in the pipeline, many arrested in police raids since the day — these are still going on.

We have to force the authorities onto the defensive. After eight Hackney activists were arrested on 21st June in a big and violent dawn raid, it was decided to immediately organise a number of general solidarity protests — seven so far at courts and prisons, starting with a demonstration of one hundred and fifty at Pentonville jail. More are planned.

Meanwhile, on the legal side we are getting most cases adjourned and are matching defendants and witnesses.

We've at last forced the Crown Prosecution Service to hand over fifty hours of video evidence seized on April 2nd, which will be used to expose police crimes and their huge cover-up of the truth, and to secure acquittals.

Hundreds of anti-Poll Tax local and regional organisations have affiliated to the TSDC, as well as Trades Councils and trade union branches. But this support needs to become *active* opposition to the show trials, and solidarity with the defendants.

All groups are urged to:

- Affiliate, raise money for defendants' welfare, send witness statements, support defendants in your area.
- Set up a solidarity organisation/defence fund for any Poll Tax protestors arrested now or in the future.

International Days of Action Friday 19th/Saturday 20th October

Following pressure from supporters here and abroad, the TSDC national defendants meeting on 4th August called for actions throughout the country (police stations, courts, etc) and the world (embassies, etc) in solidarity with all Poll Tax defendants and prisoners.

We ourselves have called a London demonstration to the All Britain Federation

festival in Brockwell Park, South London on 20th October.

Please organise a protest in your area on the 19th or 20th and come to the demonstration. Send TSDC a report of your actions.

We will not tolerate court intimidation of non payers and demonstrators.

Contact TSDC at Room 205, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1 (071-833 8958).

COUNCILS

More bloody cuts

All over the country local councils, both Labour and Tory, have been implementing cuts to maintain artificially low (or indeed high) poll tax levels.

The unexpectedly high levels of non payment are already being used as a smokescreen to try and blur the

issue — as if it's *our* fault that our jobs and services are being decimated.

The truth is that councils are implementing cuts to cope with the shortfall in revenue due to the Government's deliberately unrealistic Standard Spending Assessment, thus ensuring councils get far less money than they need in Government grants which make up the bulk of council income.

THE POLL TAX AND THE UNIONS

Defend rights, jobs, services and democracy

Saturday September 8th 1990

Polytechnic Students Union, Sheffield
(opposite Sheffield BR station)
Registration from 10.00am

Organised by the Socialist Movement
Trade Union Committee and 3D.

Contact Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Rd, London E15 for more details and registration forms.

This lies at the heart of the idea behind the poll tax — to force cuts and make privatisation of services a more attractive option.

The Tory's friends in the City have long been lusting after a slice of the municipal cake, generally denied to them until now.

The Tories' bottom line is this: "non-essential services" (i.e. those that can't make a profit) must go, and "essential" (i.e. profitable) services must be privatised.

The disastrous effects of privatisation have been well documented, with cowboy contractors ripping off service users, paying workers even less, and making fat profits.

The capping of twenty charging authorities has simply brought this process forward, as the capped councils look for cuts, plunder reserves and sell off assets.

But it is not just the capped authorities that are swinging the axe — they are all at it.

Loony rightwingers in Wandsworth, subsidised to the tune of millions of pounds this year, will have to pare to the bone to keep their poll tax from being £400 next year.

And as Wandsworth residents will tell you, there's a lot left to cut — Wandsworth Social Services children at risk register is already bigger than they can cope with, but Social Services will still be a prime target.

Obviously the cuts are coming (they've already come in Haringey, facing over five hundred redundancies).

But what has been the response of the local government unions? NUPE and the GMB, the main manual unions, have done nothing. NALGO, the white collar union, wants to reduce the issue to one of "no compulsory redundancies" rather than fight the cuts, and by extension the poll tax.

The action so far has been minimal and isolated. In September and October councils will meet to prepare next years budgets.

This is when they will announce the cuts and this is when the fight by local government workers must take off.

It will be no use relying on national union structures. The leaderships will only take action if forced to by the militancy of the rank and file.

Anti-poll tax activists should be consolidating their links with their local trade unions, and particularly the rank and file, and be ready to support their actions.

No poll tax! No cuts!

By Martin Howard
Brockley APTU

Poll Tax for toddlers

On April 4th four West Yorkshire children aged six and under received bills for £289 each.

Michelle Wilkinson complained to the Council who then promised to remove them from the Register.

A week later new forms to register the kids arrived.

The kids promptly tore them up!

Now 16 month old Kirsty has got a final reminder. Her mother has promised to take her to court when the summons arrives.

Around the country

As the campaign moves into the courts and bailiffs offices there has been an enormous amount of activity against the poll tax across the country. Pickets, lobbies, occupations, strikes — you name it, it's happened.

Below are just a few examples of what's been going on:

★ In Glasgow after police and bailiffs smashed into a house, 39 people occupied the bailiff's office until 1.00am, ignoring an injunction to leave. Police axed the door and arrested the 39 on serious charges.

★ Over 60 people picketed the first court hearing in Barnet in early August.

★ The Wandsworth offices of Madigan's bailiffs were picketed, gaining brilliant media coverage for the campaign, as the first of many bailiff-busting actions.

★ Strikers in Greenwich poll tax offices won their demand for re-grading after a number of weeks on strike. They won tremendous support from local people for their dispute.

★ Lothian's 45 sheriff's officers are attempting to deal with 240,000 non-payers. They're meeting stiff resistance all the way.

★ Twelve anti-poll tax demonstrators were arrested at a lobby of Sutton Magistrates' Court in south London this month.

★ Nearly 3000 Nalgo members in Haringey took a days strike in June against massive proposed cuts in jobs and services.

★ The People's March Against The Poll Tax will be underway from Glasgow, Scotland and Liverpool from September, culminating in London demonstration and Festival 20th October.

★ In Kirklees, Housing Benefit officers have been refusing to process poll tax rebate applications since April 9th. Nalgo is fully supporting the workers and planning strike action to co-incide with court cases.

★ Dartford in Kent has 40,000 non-payers facing some of the most reactionary magistrates in the land — the local campaign may be seeking a judicial review into the denial of basic rights in the courts.

★ The first summonses issued by a Labour Council in inner London have been issued in Camden. Large mobilisations are expected at the first court cases on 31st August.

This is but a fraction of all that has happened over the last couple of months. Send all reports of what's going on in your area to 3D c/o 116 The Avenue, Tottenham, London N17. 6DG.

Changing the Federation

The 3D editorial collective met on 11th August to plan the next three issues of the newsletter and to discuss proposals to put to the next All Britain Federation conference in November/December aimed at opening out the structure.

We submit these proposals as a basis for discussion at the 3D activists meeting on 15th September where we hope agreement can be reached on amendments to be made to the Federation's constitution.

1. The national conference of the All Britain Federation is the sovereign body of the Federation, which should meet at least annually.
2. The national committee should be elected at national conference, on the basis of regional caucuses at the conference.
3. The national committee, between conferences, should be accountable to at least quarterly national aggregates.
4. Between conferences, the national aggregate is the sovereign body of the All Britain Federation, a real decision-making body, to which the national committee should refer all major decisions to.
5. The national aggregate should be based not on delegates from local and regional federations, but on one delegate from each charging authority (for example, London would potentially have 32 delegates which could be elected by the borough wide federations).
6. A national aggregate could be called by say 100 delegates from charging authorities.
7. At national conference there should be direct elections for only four national functional officers. We would suggest two secretaries, a treasurer, and a press officer.
8. The national committee should not elect any more functional officers, but should convene a number of working groups (for example, Trade Unions, Legal, Publicity, Press) which could co-opt members from outside the national committee and would be open

3D Regional Contacts

London: Sham c/o Tottenham APT, 72 West Green Rd, London N17 ☎ 081-808 5893)

South West: Danny c/o Avon Federation, 34 Belle Vue Rd, Easton, Bristol ☎ 0272-255504

Eastern: Nick c/o Cambridge APT, 34 Devonshire Rd, Cambridge and Katya c/o Norwich APT, 72 Connaught Rd, Norwich

Midlands: Alex and Tess c/o Hyson Green APTU, 47 Foxhall Rd, Forest Fields, Nottingham

Yorkshire: Ian c/o Leeds CAPT, Trades Council, Saville Mount, Leeds 7 ☎ 0532-623822

Northern: Linda c/o Middlesborough APT, 45 Athol St, Middlesborough

North West: Nick c/o Wythenshawe APTU, 20 Troutbeck Rd, Gatby, Stockport SK8 4RR

Scotland: c/o Refuse and Resist, 2/3 182 Ark Lane, Glasgow G31 2JS

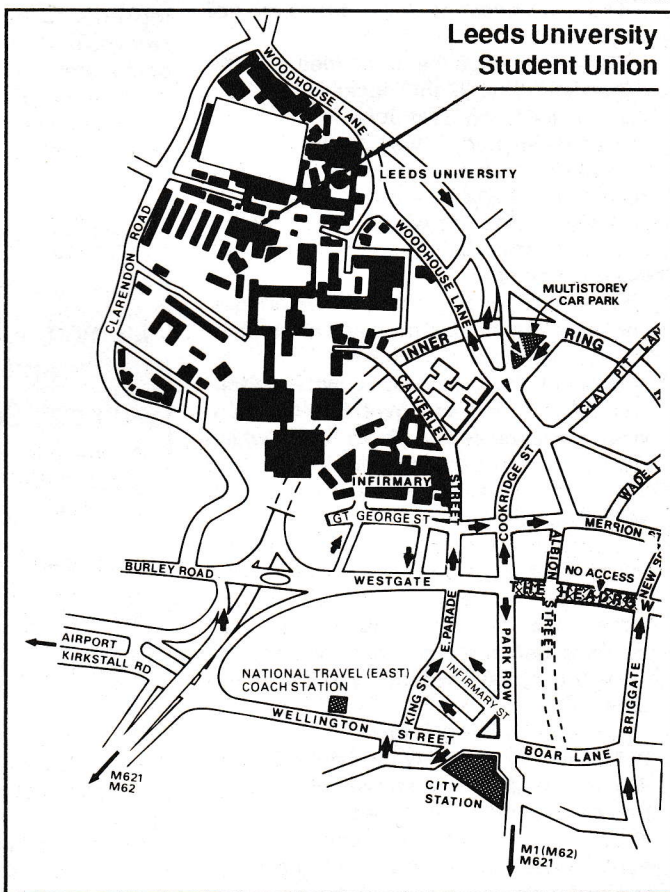
3D Activists Meeting 15th September 1990

Agenda

★ Regional Round-up ★ Organising Within the Movement ★

★ Court Strategy ★ The Next ABAPTF Conference ★

If you share the aims of 3D, please make sure at least one representative from your APTU or workplace APTU attends. Please bring donations and articles for the newsletter and any money from sales. For information on accommodation, buses to the University etc. contact Ian Greaves on 0532 623822.



to any affiliate of the Federation.

9. The national committee should ensure that a regularly, at least bi-monthly, newsletter is produced to facilitate the flow of information within the movement.

Please try to discuss these proposals prior to the activists meeting on 15th September.

We don't think that these proposals on structure are exhaustive, or the complete answer to the problems facing the movement. But we do feel that these, or similar proposals are necessary if the Federation is to become a genuine federation, based on all the currents in the movement, capable of uniting, co-ordinating and providing leadership.

The 3D editorial collective

3D *on't pay! on't collect! on't implement!*

Insert to #5

Aims and principles

The 3D network has been set up to foster open communication and democracy within the anti-poll tax movement.

It does not set itself up in opposition to the All Britain Federation. Rather, in recognising that an all Britain federation has an important role, 3D hopes to be a positive force towards democratising that organisation and enabling it to represent the needs of the thousands of groups on the ground in a way which we believe it has failed to do to date.

We believe that there is a need to learn from the events of the past year, and as a result outline the following principles as being necessary for the movement to acknowledge.

1. The strength of the anti-poll tax movement is its diversity. This must be encouraged. Attempts by any groups, factions, parties to control the movement should be resisted.

2. The initiatives of the movement should come from the bottom up. The role of the national federation should primarily be: provision of information co-ordination of national events national press work.

3. The movement should be united and concentrate its energy on actively pursuing a range of strategies against the tax. It should not get caught up in minor disputes about emphasis. We believe that non-payment and non-collection are mutually interdependent. Both must be actively pursued. We should also continue to put pressure on councils and call for non-implementation.

4. The movement must defend all those intimidated by the police and assertively expose the violence and brutality of the state whenever it moves to strike against us.

5. The movement should clearly state its bottom line and make clear that it will continue to fight until these bottom line conditions are met.

★ A system based on ability to pay ★ A system which protects jobs and services ★ A system which gives local people/councillors the right to determine their own level of service provision and ★ An immediate amnesty for all non-payers of the poll tax.

Proposed by 3D editorial collective
for discussion on 15/9/90

Affiliate to the All Britain Federation now!

The next conference of the All Britain Federation will be held in late November, or early December, probably in Nottingham. Whilst the date has still to be confirmed the last National Committee agreed that October 31st would be the deadline for resolutions, affiliations and re-affiliations. That doesn't leave all that much time for groups to get their act together.

3D urges all anti-poll tax groups, large or small, to affiliate and send delegates to the All Britain Federation conference. If the Federation continues to be overwhelmingly dominated by one political current after December we only have ourselves to blame. Democratic structures exist within the national Federation — we have to use them.

Existing affiliates will be entitled to two delegates at a cost of £10. New groups will have to affiliate before October 31st for £10 and pay delegation fees. Although it sounds like a lot of money, it's a small price to pay for democracy, and not much compared to the money raised to produce leaflets and keep the movement building.

To affiliate write to ABAPTF, PO Box 764 London E5 9SX.

Support 3D!

3D has, in its short life, made an important contribution to developing the anti-poll tax movement. If the work of building up the 3D network, keeping activists in touch, organising to raise an independent voice within the movement is to continue we need your support.

There are loads of ways that you can ensure that 3D as a newsletter and a network continues:

★ subscribe to 3D as an individual — £5 will ensure that you, and other activists receive the next 5 issues.

★ subscribe to 3D as a group — £10 for 10 copies of the next 5 issues.

★ make a supporting donation.

★ organise local and regional 3D fundraising events — then send us the money!

★ write articles, send in photos and cartoons, volunteer to take copies to distribute in your area.

★ get in touch with your regional contact and organise a regional activists meeting.

★ follow the example of Norwich and produce your own local 3D supplement!

Name Organisation

Address

I can subscribe as an individual ☐ subscribe as a group ☐ distribute 3D in my area ☐ organise a local 3D activists meeting ☐

For bulk orders contact the 3D editorial group. Money, articles, local reports, and orders should be sent to: 3D, 116 The Avenue, Tottenham, London N17 6DG or telephone Sham on 081-808 5893