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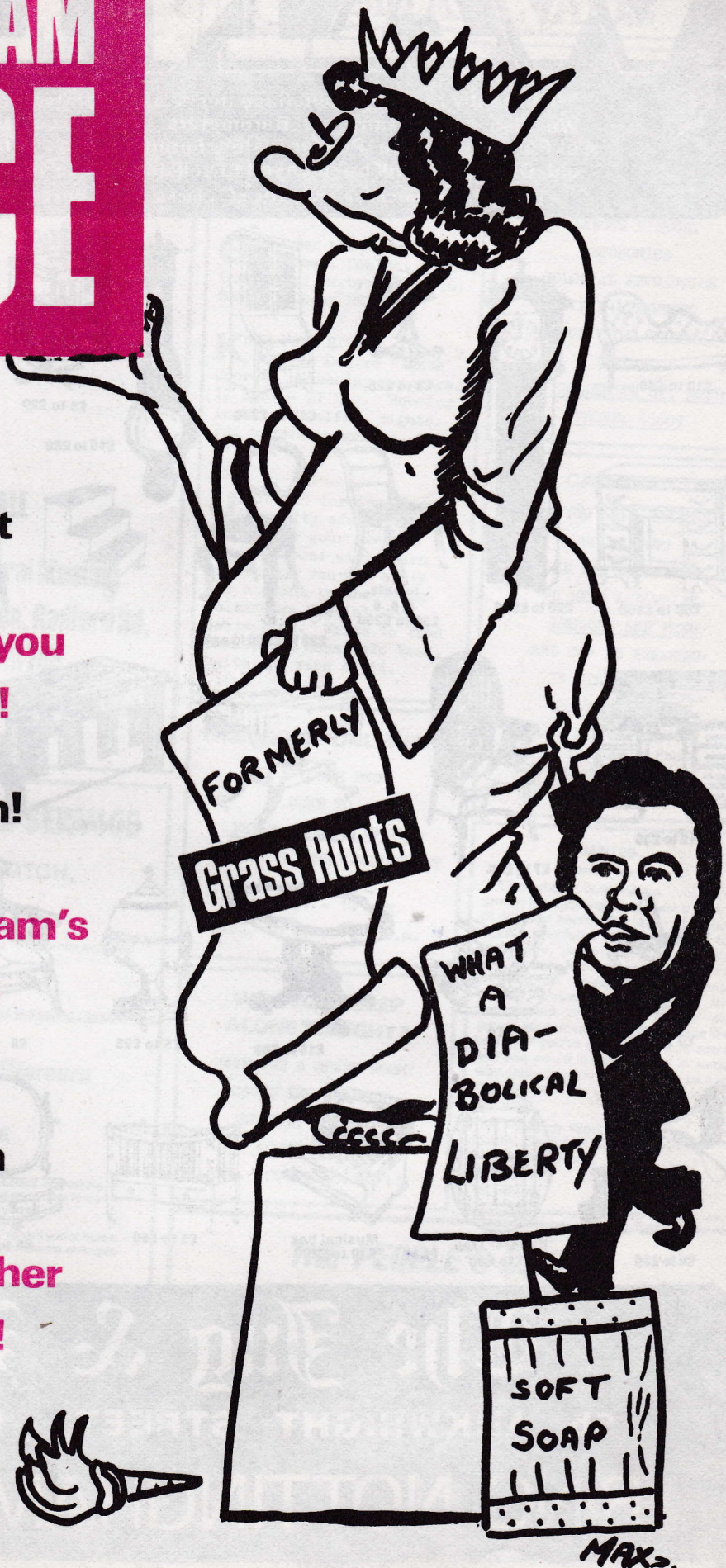
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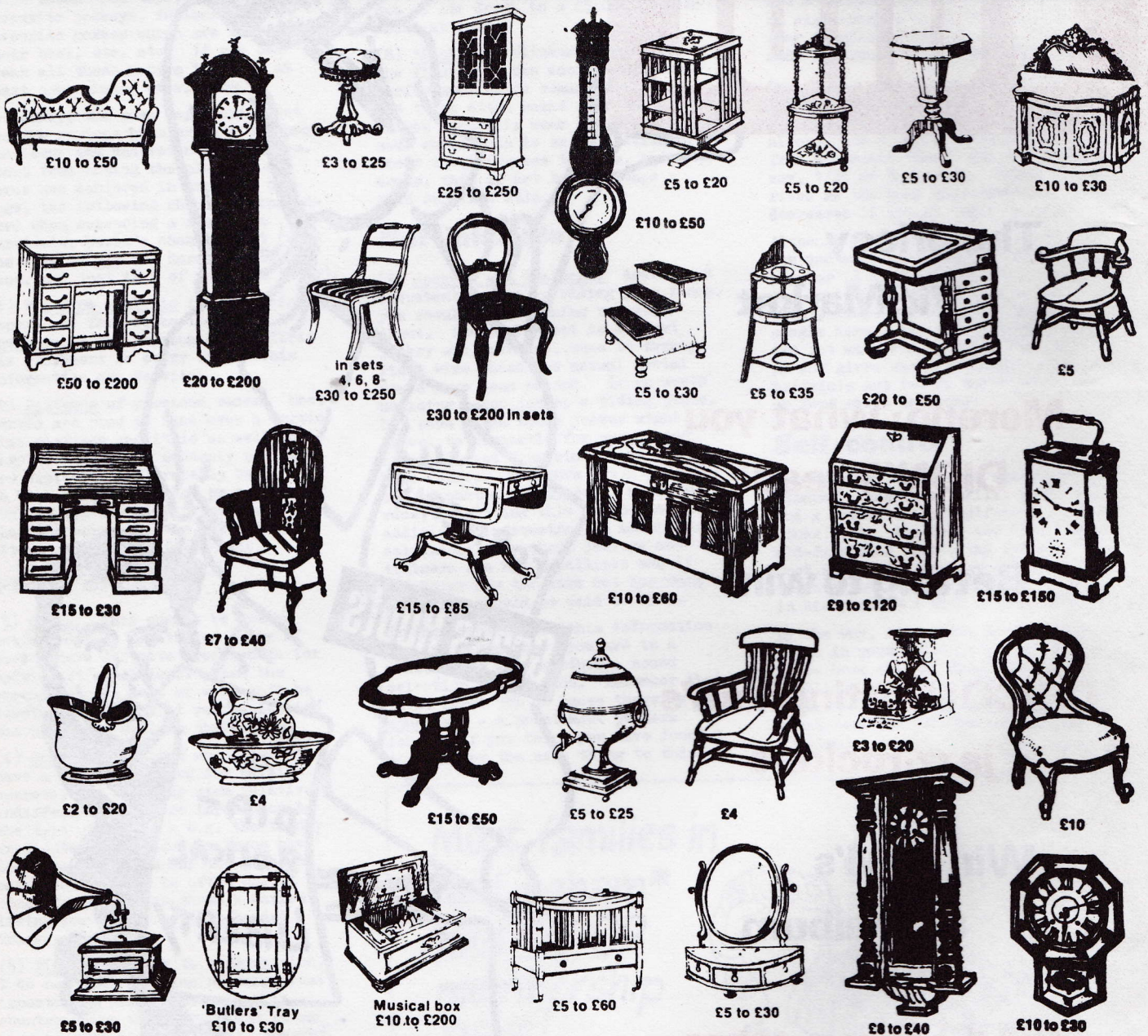
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Nottingham's independent monthly paper

NOTTINGHAM VOICE

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Committee

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Case for treatment

ON CHRISTMAS DAY TWO MEN ESCAPED FROM the top security hospital at Rampton (a bleak part of the Nottinghamshire countryside near Retford). The local population was terrified, not surprisingly, since the men were said to be violent and dangerous. This is the most recent getaway attempt from the hospital in a series of escapes over the past year or two. It is time to look at some of the reasons why patients attempt to escape and why the local people in and around Rampton village feel so threatened by the hospital and the mentally abnormal offenders it houses.

Unhappy

Rampton hospital was described in an official report eighteen months ago as "a profoundly unhappy place". It has 1,200 patients living in cramped and overcrowded conditions. The staff, though called "nurses", are, in fact, members of the Prison Officers Association, and they wear the navy-blue serge uniforms and clanking keys more readily associated with prisons than hospitals. Patients are usually addressed by their surnames and allegations of brutality are rife. Rampton is seriously understaffed - nurses are expected to work long hours of overtime; a patient can expect to see his psychiatrist once every six months. Hardly a caring, supportive environment for the mentally sick, Rampton has justifiably been called society's dustbin for the seriously mentally ill.

Under the Mental Health Act 1959, patients committed to special hospitals (there are three - Rampton, Broadmoor and Moss Side) by the Courts can be held indefinitely. Their only hope of release as the

endless days stretch on being the report of two psychiatrists (this is something of a rarity after the disastrous mistake made by Broadmoor doctors who released Graham Young) or by application to the Mental Health Review Tribunal - a privilege normally extended to patients only once every two years. Legal aid is not normally allowed for tribunals (even here where an individual's liberty is at stake) and at Broadmoor and Moss Side patients rarely get legally qualified assistance. At Rampton, however, the active social work department has persuaded a panel of local solicitors to help patients under the Legal Aid Fund's "green form scheme".

Overdue

Rampton's social work department has been rapidly expanded over the past year or so - a long overdue improvement (until recently there was one full-time and one part-time social worker for all the patients!). But to a large extent this is little more than window dressing. The fact remains that there are 1,200 men and women crowded together, most needing treatment which they cannot hope to get from the five overworked psychiatrists.

Many patients privately complain that they suffer ill treatment, but they have recourse only to internal investigation for a remedy (which many are too frightened to pursue). The recent attempt by a Broadmoor patient to bring a private prosecution against a nurse for assault was thwarted, after a staff work-to-rule, by the High Court. This effectively closed the only public route for such complaints. (continued overleaf)



On target

Just a coincidence

REG PRENTICE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR Education, paid a visit to Nottingham last month. On his visit he inspected Cottesmore School on Derby Road and found it in better shape than he would have done a few days earlier. In fact, a real flurry of activity preceded him. A partly demolished wall was rebuilt by bricklayers, windows were replaced and fitters arrived to grease and clean the machinery in the workshops. This, apparently, was the "twice-yearly" inspection. It was mere coincidence that it happened immediately before Reg was shown round, and that it was the first such inspection for at least five years.

Even more of a coincidence was the arrival of scaffolders the day before Reg's visit to shore up the roofs of huts being used as classrooms. The debate over the safety of these roofs had been going on for several months. Indeed, the kids were sufficiently concerned over this to present Reg with a petition. But by then, of course, action had been taken - if only to put some scaffolding poles under the roofs.

Recovery charge

IF ANYONE WAS STILL LABOURING UNDER the impression that the National Health Service is basically free (ignoring prescription charges, optical charges, dental charges, etc.),

(continued from page 3)

It should be said, however, that even if the High Court had upheld the conviction it would have been difficult for patients to use this method of public redress since legal aid is not available for private prosecutions, and the £2-£3 per week earned by Rampton patients (on a points scheme for good behaviour) would not go far towards paying a solicitor. It would be difficult for a member of staff concerned about conditions inside Rampton to expose them, since everyone working in Special Hospitals is covered by the Official Secrets Act.

People who live near Rampton hospital

we have a report from an editorial board member who became detached from a motorbike recently. The result was an ambulance to hospital, and, whilst still languishing in bed, a promptly delivered bill for "emergency treatment" for £1.25 per person. The bill also gave details of the Act of Parliament which authorised this, and said that the hospital had a right to demand payment at the time of treatment if they wished. Of course, they don't do it like that in America ... do they?

Income taxis

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY YOU STOOD in a taxi queue? The real reason is because the City Council - up to now - has restricted the number of taxi licences issued. The result is that you stand in a queue and taxis are very profitable. Of course, private hire firms are springing up all over Nottingham, since the demand is there (and is growing).

A private hire car is not the same as a taxi. Taxi drivers can sit and wait for you to 'phone them (like private hire firms), they can use the official taxi ranks (unlike private hire firms) - or they can ply for hire in the street. How often have you seen this happen in Nottingham? So profitable are Nottingham taxis that, in spite of the competition from private hire firms, they sell licences to each other at prices currently reputed to exceed £6,000.

On Monday, 6th January, the City Council had on its agenda an increase in taxi fares (which it also controls). Most City Councillors, we believe, want to increase the number of taxis as well, although some would prefer to protect the taxi owners. More power to the majority: we shall be watching to see who resists this idea.

To those who have ...

IT SEEMS THAT NOT EVERYONE GETS EQUAL priority in slum clearance areas after all. The Salvation Army Envoy in the Meadows was recently moved from premises in Phase 3, which is currently being cleared, to a nice new three-bedroomed house in Phase 4A. The trouble was that he was one single person. However, it was soon learned that the Envoy was leaving anyway - so perhaps the three-bedroomed house was for a Sally Army family? But no; when the Envoy moved

out (within a fortnight of moving in), the new Envoy was found to be ... a single solitary person.

We rang the Sally Army to see what their policy was on all this. They told us that they didn't see anything wrong because in the first place they might need all three bedrooms later on if they happened to get a family in the Meadows, and in the second place they hadn't specifically asked for a three-bedroomed house at all. They said the Council had given it to them. If that's the case, let's hope that the same principle applies to everyone else. We can expect to see a young single bloke getting a four-bedroomed house - well, he might get married and have seven kids.

'Free' speech

MAINTAINING, AS USUAL, ONLY THE highest standards of journalistic integrity, the Evening Post cautions its correspondents: "We do not like making cuts in readers' letters because they are too long ... of course, the Editor reserves the right to cut letters and to amend passages where necessary".

Readers curious how this "right" is exercised may be interested in a recent experience of NALGO (the Local Government Officers' association) after submitting a letter, part of which read as follows: "Consistent with the apparently unending spate of misinterpreted and frequently biased articles on Local Government and Staffs in particular, your paper excels its own dubious record in the item which appeared in the issue of 20th November under the heading 'Comment'. The article once again reflects the 'Post's' penchant for devious reporting and it can only be hoped that your readers will, after so many examples of this type of report, not be so gullible as you so evidently think they are and will treat it with the contempt it deserves."

This was obviously too long, so the Post summarised it as follows: "The expression of opinion in your Comment of November 20 is exaggerated."

Another quotation, this time from Comment in the Evening Post of Monday, November 11, which announced piously: "Elsewhere in this newspaper today is a full-page advertisement from the Yorkshire area of the NUM. We publish it in the interests of freedom of expression, although we do not agree with its contents."

(many of them work there as nurses, orderlies, kitchen assistants, etc.) feel that the place is a sword of Damocles hanging over them. They know that many of the patients have records of violence and they are afraid of escapes. The sheer size of Rampton and the number of inhabitants worries them deeply. It is the size and the impersonal attitudes this breeds that is so damaging for the patients, too. It would be far better to have smaller secure units up and down the country where patients could be near home while undergoing treatment. Family visits are a rarity for patients whose aging relatives live in, say, Anglesey, but could be of

inestimable importance for their health and stability. This is not an original proposal. Its importance has long been recognised. The fact that mentally abnormal offenders are still lumped together in only three huge, bleak hospitals is a vivid example of the low priority held by mental patients in Government spending.

The Butler Committee Report on mentally abnormal offenders is expected soon. The Committee has heard evidence from many individuals and organisations. It is to be hoped that it will come up with suggestions which will improve the lot of the unhappy inmates of Rampton Hospital.

... And the difference between a paragraph of "freedom of expression" from NALGO and a whole page of it from the NUM? Well, apart from the fact that no criticism of the Evening Post is involved, the value to the Post of a full-page ad. is in the region of £800 ...

Comparing notes

"MAY I REFER TO MY NOTEBOOK" IS A familiar phrase in court when a policeman is on the stand giving evidence. You might be forgiven for thinking that the purpose of this is to enable the officer to refresh his memory as to what he saw and heard on the occasion about which he is being questioned. But you would be wrong. In *Rex v. Ashcroft*, Nottingham Guildhall magistrates decided that it was "accepted practice" for policemen to meet and piece together a conglomerate story. They were technically right. In *Stone's Justice's Manual* it states: "There is no objection to two witnesses who have acted together refreshing their memories from notes made in collaboration (*Rex v. Boss*, 1953)." However, there seems little point in sending police witnesses out of court in order to perpetuate a charade of independent evidence if what they offer is, in fact, a jointly worked out story.

Splashing out

LOCAL DIGNITARIES WHO ENJOY GETTING pissed at the ratepayers' expense are eagerly awaiting the announcement of the opening date for the Citizens' Advice Bureau on Beeston Market Hill. A good time should certainly be had by all, since the organisers of this gruesome event have set aside £200 to be expended thereon, most of which will doubtless be spent on liquid refreshment. This alcoholic reporter is glad to see that they've got their priorities right, and have managed to cut expenditure on inessentials like office equipment right down to £199.50. The People's Centre (whose application to the County for £500 for essential running expenses was turned down) should take a leaf out of the CAB's book - but perhaps the People's Centre is more interested in counting clients successfully helped than counting empty champagne bottles and tired and emotional councillors.

On a more sober (sic) note, Nottingham Voice would like to congratulate Richard Best (ex-People's Centre legal eagle) on his appointment as solicitor to the CAB. Just for the record, the egalitarian and socially conscious Mr Best will be earning £3,939 p.a. and £400 "traveling expenses", while the organiser will be earning £2,187 and the clerk approximately £1,000.

Pipped at the Post

THE EVENING POST IS HAVING INCREASING trouble keeping up with the whizz-kids from the Radio Nottingham newsroom. One of the Post's problems is that Radio Nottingham is often much quicker off the mark, and many people feel that it gives them a fairer hear-

ing. The Post's copy deadlines have something to do with this. The "midday" edition (number 6) has a deadline around 10.30 a.m. So, for example, on December 9th the Post led with a story about a masked raider who robbed a garage owner and his wife, ending the story: "Mr and Mrs Revill were today still resting after their ordeal and unavailable for comment."

Shortly after this story went on the news-stands in edition 6, Radio Nottingham were on the air with their 12.45 bulletin ... and an interview with Mr and Mrs Revill. The Post couldn't catch up with this until the afternoon edition (number 7, deadline 1.30 p.m.), when it led with the headline: "COUPLE TELL OF TERROR NIGHT!"

Self help



TENANTS MOVING OUT OF REDEVELOPMENT areas who are on the telephone are being asked to help the Post Office's manpower shortage. The instructions they receive for disconnecting the phone are: "Rip it off the wall and take it to any post office!"

Interesting landlords (4)

JOSEF BUCKO IS AN INTERESTING LAND-lord known to many people in Nottingham. He owns, or at least owned until recently, 23 multi-occupied houses in Nottingham. Some of these houses are in Phase 2 of the Meadows redevelopment area. Mr Bucko used to own eight houses in Queen's Drive, one of which is number 65. Mr Bucko has recently had trouble with the Public Health Department, who have attempted to place Direction Orders on all eight houses down Queen's Drive. A Direction Order is a legal order which limits the number of people who are allowed to occupy a particular dwelling. It is used when the Public Health Department are satisfied that the dwelling is not being managed correctly, with particular regard to overcrowding.

However, despite the attentions of the Health Department, Mr Bucko has taken the Council for a ride. Number 65 Queen's Drive recently had a Notice of Entry served on it. This means that the Council has reached the point in compulsory purchase when it can take over completely the management of a property. There are

two ways of proceeding when a Notice of Entry has been served. The first is to take over management. The second is to allow the owner to retain possession (and therefore to continue to collect rent on the property). The latter course of action is accompanied by an understanding with the owner that he will not create any new tenancies. This is so the Housing Department can rehouse tenants, without fear that new tenants will immediately move in who will also require rehousing.

This was the case with number 65 Queen's Drive. However, Mr Bucko obviously has a different interpretation of this "agreement" with the Council, since he proceeded to advertise number 65 with a view to getting new tenants in after the notice of entry had been served. The Council has now decided that it has no legal right to proceed against Mr Bucko, since the agreement which was reached was a "gentlemen's" agreement. It is to be hoped that the Council will in future take more care to take possession on giving notice of entry with landlords who are going to behave in the way Mr Bucko has behaved. We rang Mr Bucko to ask for his point of view. He referred the matter to his wife, who said that we "must be mistaken".

Dunnett again

NEWS OF ANOTHER STUTTER IN THE ONCE-mighty mechanism of Jack Dunnett's East Nottingham Labour Party - and just before it comes under the National Executive microscope on January 12. True, the latest slip involves but a tiny cog - young Councillor Dennis Carroll, whose far-out life-style and physiognomy seem so incongruous in an off-spring of the old rocker himself, City Council leader and Dunnett master mechanic, John Carroll. But young Dennis has been holding down perhaps the hottest job in East Nottingham - the secretaryship of volatile Market Ward. Based along by occasional visits from Dad (who is wont to wave his P45 around to prove how poor he is), Dennis has been pretty impressive, ignoring inconvenient votes of no-confidence and unanimous instructions to oppose the Theatre Point office block, and benefitting from a mysteriously portable majority of some three dozen Asians who have recently been appearing at gratifyingly convenient moments - until the December meeting, scheduled as uncontroversial. Unhappily, Dennis chose this moment to reveal rather unnecessarily that the ward could elect three delegates to the big National Executive inquiry on January 12. Too late to retract - the speedy result was three left-wing delegates: including thorn-in-the-flesh of the City Council Labour Group, baby-faced Councillor Stephen Evans.

We trust Dad's comments on all this were suitably paternal.

Footnote

... and whoever gave Councillor Bird a photostat copy of the back page of the December Grass Roots, please take note that we are on sale in good news-agents and bookshops, and that there is such a thing as copyright.

MARKET PRICE

WHY NOTTINGHAM'S NEW MARKET IS SO PRICEY

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A thriving open market in the middle of Nottingham on the Old Market Square. It had been there since the Norman Conquest and was famous throughout England. But in November 1928 it was moved to the Central Market site despite public protests and a lively press campaign against the move. (The press was heavily criticised by Alderman Pendleton, who declared that when a newspaper said the Council was more concerned about civic gymnastics than the trade of the city, it was a brutal, deliberate insult.)

Prestige

The main reason behind the move was the building of the elaborate and imposing Council House to replace the old Exchange: a prestige project requiring a suitable setting - and a tatty collection of market stalls just would not do.

The Central Market, however, soon gained popularity with both customers and traders who, after initial losses, soon made more profit than before. The market was 6,000 square yards in size and held 327 stalls.

Then, in the mid 1960s, new road traffic plans were drawn up. The Central Market was in the way. It would have to be moved - the ideal place would be the Victoria Station development. Again, public uproar and considerable opposition from traders. Mr D. Kennedy, 1968 chairman of the Nottingham branch of the National Market Traders Federation, speaking at the branch's annual dinner, said the Victoria Market scheme had been "foisted" on the City Council by a powerful and extremely rich development company. He felt that traders would have been much happier if the extra money from increased rents at the Central Market had gone towards better market facilities.

He had a point. In 1968-69 the Council, while making a profit of over £30,000 on the market, spent only £638 on repairs, painting, furniture and fittings.

So £700,000 was spent on establishing a market in the Victoria Centre. Mr Alf Pether, the 1967 Market Traders' chairman, said, "I have not met one market trader who is satisfied with the proposal".

Surprisingly, considering the strength of public feeling against

the Victoria Market, the press welcomed the market not only in expensive advertising features paid for by Capital and Counties, the site developers, but also in pieces by its own reporters who featured only stall holders who thought the project "marvellous", or who had very few reservations.

Drawback

The market opened nearly a year behind schedule. It has fewer stalls than the Central Market, but it is a lot bigger. It has a small open air section where stalls can be rented on a casual basis for £1.50 per day. The main drawback, and it is a serious one, is that the market is on two floors. Apart from being contrary to tradition (and, after all, markets are traditional places), it is also inconvenient - traders from the fruit and vegetable sections waste many hours a week going up and down the lifts between the stores in the basement and their stalls on the top shopping floor. The lifts are sometimes out of order, and since storage on the stalls themselves is not allowed this can be very frustrating.



Office facilities, too, are in the basement - so book-keeping cannot be done on the stalls, as it usually was in the Central Market.

Of course, it is much warmer in winter than the Central Market, and there is no need for traders to wear money gloves and stamp their feet to keep the cold at bay. But even this has some disadvantages because, despite the air conditioning, traders in the food sections are worried about the hot atmosphere from heat rising from lower floors. This was aggravated in the early days by the drains being blocked with fish and offal.

Rents are considerably higher than they were at the Central Market - in some cases double (they range from £9 to £60 per week, and there is electricity and storage to pay for on top of that). It is hardly surprising that there is no waiting list for stalls, as there was on the old site.

Many traders retired when the market moved. Others, like Mr Reg Taylor, dissatisfied with the accommodation being on two floors, left the market and went elsewhere. Mr Taylor now has a thriving florist's shop on Mansfield Road.

The Victoria Market is not just a covered market - it is a totally enclosed covered market (apart from a small outdoor section), and not seeing the light of day from opening until closing time worries several traders.

The prices are not much cheaper than in shops around the city - the high rents are inevitably passed on to the customer. For the first six months many stall holders made huge losses, and the empty stalls are an indication of the reluctance of traders to try the market.

Difficult

There are very few interesting little stalls selling unusual, home produced goods or specialised goods; again, rents make this type of enterprise difficult - although the outdoor stalls do provide the flexibility and atmosphere of a real market, and it is here that brave individuals can have a go. One lady selling second hand clothes in the outdoor section made only £2 on her first day there (out of which came £1.50 for the rent), but with a lot of advertising and a growing number of personal contacts she is now doing well.

Many of the traders have been in business for years - some even remember the old market in the Square. Theirs are family concerns: one man has eight of his relatives working on his stall. Some others, however, are run with a heavy dependence on casual labour, where wages are low but paid in cash - no questions asked.

The feeling among many traders and customers is that the market should be back on the old Central Market site - and, ironically, this would have been possible, because the road plans which were the original reason for moving were turned down by the government after a public inquiry, and the building is still there!

TERESA WOODCRAFT



MORENO

AS A BEMUSED OBSERVER OF THE Machiavellian lines on which Notts Education Department operates, I found the ousting of social studies teacher Manuel Moreno little surprise.

Following compilation of the detailed dossier on him by the headmaster and some senior staff at Sutton Centre School, Sutton-in-Ashfield, he will doubtless join the notorious DES blacklist. And this should effectively put paid to his teaching career in state schools. No appeal is likely to change that.

Although it must be said Mr Moreno appears at times to be his own worst enemy, what does all this achieve?

Headmaster Wilson - not to be confused with the Parliamentary school head - claimed Moreno lacked competence as a teacher and was unsuitable to be in charge of children.

MORE HONEST

I suspect he was being more honest in the very last section of his condemnatory report when he quoted an article written by Mr Moreno himself in which he said he was disliked by most of the staff at his previous school, Garibaldi Comprehensive, Forest Town, because what he was doing affected their authority in and out of the class.

He had said he "regretted his inability to introduce anarchy into schools".

Could it be that Moreno started to build relations of mutual respect between himself and his pupils which the average teacher could not handle because of reliance on a professional veneer to preserve authority through repression?

Indeed, Mr Wilson commented: "It has become increasingly obvious that Manuel Moreno is unable to accept the professional discipline and normal standards of behaviour which are fundamental to a teacher."

If teachers cannot save future citizens from the crushing social emphasis on the virtues of normality, who can?

Mr Wilson said Moreno used obscene language - to wit, he told one fifth form group, "Piss off - I'm tired of you lot shitting on me."

Did laughing Bill Cairns and his disciplinary sub-committee henchmen manage to keep a straight face, I wonder?

He also claimed Moreno displayed unsuitable reading material in the classroom, including a "typed document in which Mr Moreno describes certain episodes in his life as a young man". Come, Mr Wilson, as a communicator, why so vague?

The Evening Post described it as a teenage sex document, cataloguing his adolescent sex experiences and used in discussion groups with fifth form boys - and, as we all know, the EP is a "family newspaper", not a black dossier with strictly limited circulation.

Mr Moreno described the document as shocking "because it was real. It was about how young men use girls for



MERRY-GO-ROUND

their own end."

Mr Wilson listed an armful of reasons why Moreno lacked teaching competence. These ranged from not marking some children's work to "inadequate emphasis on English usage, spelling or simple punctuation".

And, in between, "files were misused, worksheets were pitted with attempts at punching holes and logical order was absent".

Yet some teachers had a startlingly different view of his work. One department head vouched for his competence in teaching the all-important basic skills, and added: "It is also interesting to note the children who had participated in his experimental course, many of whom had previously been withdrawn and tense, were absorbing concepts in a manner which I had considered impossible just a few weeks earlier."

DEPRIVATION

Another teacher, who described herself as a mature woman, a trained teacher and mother of three sons aged 21, 15 and 13, had this to say: "I have had no personal experience of Manuel using obscene language in the presence of children, but the children living in the area are aware of and in fact themselves use words that could be classed as obscene. We have only to select books from our own library shelves to find these words reinforced as part of the locality. Try D.H. Lawrence or Alan Sillitoe. Words only are obscene in the manner in which they are intended."

In most of the children to whom she taught basic skills she found "grave emotional, experiential and environmental deprivation."

"Many of these children have forgotten how to play, to laugh or indeed communicate, if indeed they ever did know how."

"They are not aware that this world holds choices for them."

"For some time prior to Manuel's admission to the school I felt there was no point in teaching the mechanics of reading and number to these children."

"With little money, with few resources other than humanity and compassion, the experiment began. The methods were not traditional, but since each of these children had received between six and ten years of traditional education and were each labelled 'failure', there was nothing to lose. If, and I say if, bad language was used, this opened up an eventual situation to discuss why we all swear."

Talking of the impact Moreno's work had, she added: "I only hope I am able to continue in doing similar work, for although it is tedious, slow and often appears to have failed, it is I believe the only way in which the whole of the community in Sutton is to be recharged."

Condemnation of Moreno's sex document was "utter nonsense", she said. The literature had been in the room since July, "and there was nothing which I would have objected to my sons reading."

Indeed, this document had led "to some considerable interesting discussion within my own household."

"If politically we fear to show our children the other side of the coin, I seriously mourn humanity."

"While being certain of his sincerity, I would be among the first to agree that Manuel's methods are less than traditional, that his image hardly fits that of the traditional structure of education, but in view of the general chaotic state of education, in view of the rising juvenile crime and truancy rate, can anyone deny him the right to try?"

ENOUGH ROPE

The County Hall Kremlin can and has. But then Sutton, at the heart of the North Notts pits, relies on the local schools to churn out fit cannon fodder for the primitive coal face toil down below, and the housewives and mothers to keep them in an illusion of happiness.

It was obvious when he was transferred from Garibaldi to Sutton that Moreno was to be given just enough rope to hang himself.

He was popular with both pupils and parents at the Forest Town school. They backed him when he lost his job there after suspension for supporting a schoolgirls' strike.

So the break could be carried out with greater clinical efficiency in a school where he was unknown and did not have the same popular following.

The education praesidium then sat back, kept careful notes and waited...

Moreno has said he wants to continue his work with problem children either through social work or by starting his own "free school" - I hope he gets the chance.

TOP VALLEY

INDICATIONS ARE THAT THERE IS STILL A laundry-full of dirty washing to be publicly washed over the £3 million Top Valley Housing affair which gives Canberra Developments a tidy profit on buying land and re-selling it to the Corporation.

The deal was rushed through the December City Council meeting to avoid any possible financial embarrassment to this company whose headquarters are in one of the finer slum areas of Birmingham, and who before New Year could have been struggling to raise mortgage finance to continue buying the hived-off land.

But during that debate Nottingham's Mr Brylcreem, Bert Littlewood,

Housing Chairman, came embarrassingly close to admitting he publicly lied over the deal.

Just before the last election the bourgeois militants of Top Valley got inside wind of the 319-home deal.

The Evening Post, said Bert, asked him if their claim was true. "No," said Bert. And like the honourable gents they are, the EP published his denial on the front page.

Yet here it was, signed, sealed and delivered just a couple of months later.

Bureaucracy, by definition, was not invented to work that fast.

But, said Bert, the EP asked the question hours before the General Election.

In his infinite wisdom, he decided it was a political question. Goodness me. How paranoid can you get? Surely your friendly local family paper is too gentlemanly to pose nasty political questions.

Anyway, he told the Council, "I gave them a political answer." It had not been discussed by any committee or the Council, so it could not be said the Council was planning to buy the houses.

Who is kidding whom? Surely the erudite Mr Littlewood does not believe decisions are taken at committee or Council meetings? If he does, he does not deserve his political eminence.

His explanation would not have convinced a backward toddler.

The Labour majority always falls over itself to get publicity for its justifiably "progressive" housing policy - why all the hush-hush speed over this deal, particularly since it was the Tories, and Bill Derbyshire, that originally set up the sale of this land, with the Labour councillors bitterly opposing it?

One councillor has already called on the Local Government Ombudsman to intervene. Will he do so? and will he find out the answers?

The tension is higher than the climax of any Flash Gordon serial.

DUNNETT

THE LONG-PROMISED INQUIRY INTO THE affairs of the Dunnett machine and East Nottingham constituency is at last getting under way.

The inquiry was holding court in the city on Sunday, January 12.

It should have plenty to go at. The expulsions of Dieter Peetz, and a couple of other Labour Party members who kicked against the Dunnett machine; the expulsion of Stephen Evans from the City Council Labour group for his embarrassing opposition to the Theatre Point scheme, and the veiled threats made to three members of the City Planning Department over the affair; the Eddie Milne meeting in Nottingham about local government corruption; votes of no confidence in the esteemed MP and Market ward chairman Harold Roe and secretary Dennis Carroll that were never fully debated.

The findings of the inquiry may well read better than any Harold Robbins novel, or Watergate tape.

BARKER

LETTERS

Homeless (1)

Dear Grass Roots,

You are getting better all the time but your piece on "Squatters' Lot" last issue didn't seem to fit in at all with other things you've been saying, in fact, it was hypocritical. You devoted a lot of space to the brutal axing of the People's Centre grant and took up the issues of the Council not knowing the connection of the People's Centre and Grass Roots, not knowing who is involved, what they are doing, etc., and therefore basing it on "very slender background evidence", etc. Then you do the same yourself to the Homelessness Action Committee! You don't bother to find out much about it or to represent all its aims. Perhaps someone from Grass Roots would like to attend its next meeting?

There's a lot of tactical and ideological disagreement about squatting, fair enough, but perhaps the writer would like to put his views on another page, rather than completely misrepresenting the group's aims and putting his views at the expense of the Homeless Action Committee. I hope you get back on target.

Yours,
Roger Critchley.
Meadows.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: We really can't agree. We did have quite good information about the HAC - indeed, the article you mention was written by two people who were at the meeting in Slab Square, one of whom marched with you and addressed that meeting! The HAC is quite free to submit an article on its aims and actions, and has repeatedly been asked to do so - and before your letter was received. We think that "Squatters' Lot" was fair comment about the HAC, and it is a pity that you are reacting in a similar paranoid fashion to the Council. Further, we cannot accept that we "misinterpreted" any of HAC's aims. What we were trying to emphasize is that the HAC is not firmly rooted amongst those people it seeks to represent - i.e. the homeless, the squatters and the semi-homeless.)

Homeless (2)

Dear Grass Roots,

The last Grass Roots carried an article wondering if the Homelessness Action Committee's meeting with Bert Littlewood "to ask permission to occupy empty council houses" made much sense. Without that request springing from a real movement any deal made with the Council will be in the Council's favour. In the end, under certain conditions, the Council probably will accept a squatting deal. The HAC began at a time when many students had nowhere to live. However, these same homeless students were not invited to the first meeting and only "their" union representatives came along. It's not surprising, then,

that by a majority the Committee decided to press ahead with the attempted squatting deal over the heads of the half dozen or so squats they could easily have contacted. (The majority included one squatter's vote, the minority two.)

What are we up against?

It's important to criticise HAC (although in a friendly and constructive way), because unless the fight for change is directed through the fullest involvement of those who need the change nothing worthwhile will happen.

At the same time, squatting is not just about moving furniture into houses that are being wasted or learning to recite the 1381 Statute of Forcible Entry backwards. It's a desperate act of people who need a house and who have no confidence in the Authorities any more. Squatting is just one of the actions that people have to take to solve the problems created by capitalist organisation. Withholding rent, closing roads, picketing shops to bring prices down, and occupying factories are other examples. We often have to take what we need and then organise to retain it.

No confidence

Should we have confidence in those Authorities and expect them to give in to our "demands" and come up with satisfactory housing? Our local Council let through the recent "Unfair Rents Act" which led to massive rent increases. Since the last war, local and central government have carried through tremendous clearance and rebuilding schemes in the name of progress: slum clearance. But now we find ourselves with Balloon Woods and Top Valley; the neighbourly organisation of old working class estates which sustained both factory and community struggles is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. When we ask the Council to "Build more houses now!" are we asking for more Balloon Woods?!

Slum clearance was fought for by yesterday's "radicals". But this is the sort of progress that makes us poorer and weaker.

We need to set ourselves new aims which are in touch with the times. MATAR's community-based renewal, for example, at least keeps people together and affords the close organisation that the "slum clearance" scheme is trying to break up. Links between building workers and tenants have been forged to get a higher guaranteed pay and better housing. I would welcome discussion towards a modern and practical housing strategy.

N.I.
Raleigh Street.

Also, here's a picture.



BUILDING GEODESIC

INTRODUCTION

Domes are a cheap way of obtaining shelter. I know of two which are used as permanent accommodation - one on the Yorkshire Moors, the other on a Cornwall cliff top. Another of their uses is for children's "Wendy-houses". They are cheap and easy to construct, and no expensive tools or specialised knowledge is needed.

TOOLS YOU WILL NEED

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Cardboard | 5. Paint & paintbrush |
| 2. Set square | 6. Plastic sheeting |
| 3. Scissors | 7. Rope |
| 4. Stapler & staples | 8. A few tent pegs |

STEP 1 - THE TRIANGLES

I will describe the construction of a dome large enough to comfortably stand up in, though dimensions can be changed according to needs. First, get some cardboard which has two sheets on the outside and a corrugated piece in the middle. You may be able to get double ply, with two corrugations - it is stronger (and warmer), but more expensive. You can get it from factories and warehouses free, or buy direct from cardboard manufacturers - it will cost about £5. Now, cut out thirty equilateral triangles with sides 4' long. You must also leave a flap (about 1" wide or so) on each side for stapling together. If you score with a knife along the flap it will be easier to fold. (See figure 1.)

STEP 2 - STRENGTHENING

Examine each triangle for weaknesses and folds, which may now be reinforced with pieces of cardboard left over. The corners will be the weakest regions. Ideally, the reinforcements should be affixed with an industrial half-inch stapler, but if you can't get one a pair of ordinary stapling pliers (from any large stationer's) with 5/16" staples will do. The reinforcements should obviously be fastened on the "inside" of your triangle, leaving a flat surface on the outside. Leave one triangle plain - do not reinforce it.

STEP 3 - THE DOOR

There are many ways of constructing a door - the simplest is shown in figure 2. Take the one triangle which is not reinforced, and from it cut another triangle with sides about 3'8" long, as shown in triangle B. The 2" wide strip of triangle A must now be reinforced with spare cardboard. Now cut some lengths of cardboard about 3" wide. Staple these onto B so there is a 2" overlap on all sides, as shown in C. Now make a handle for each side of the door - this may be effected by screwing together two pieces of wood on either side of the triangle and affixing a handle to each as shown in C. Now get some of that material which has tiny nylon hooks on one piece and tiny eyes on the other, and glue six small pieces with hooks on triangle A at the points marked X. Take six pieces with eyes on and glue them in corresponding positions on C.

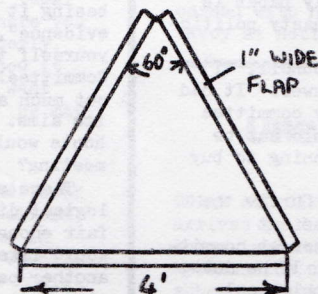


FIG1.

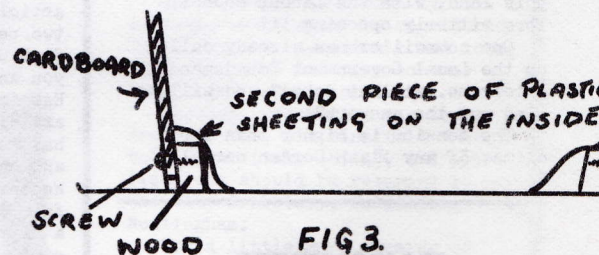
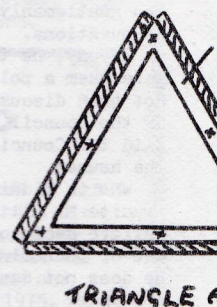


FIG3.

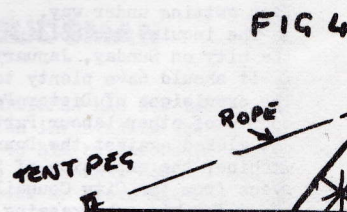


FIG4.

IC DOMES IN TEN EASY STEPS

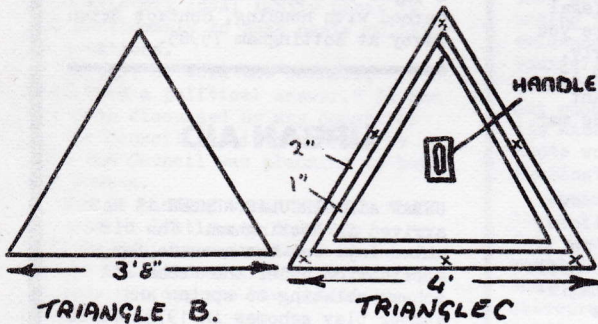
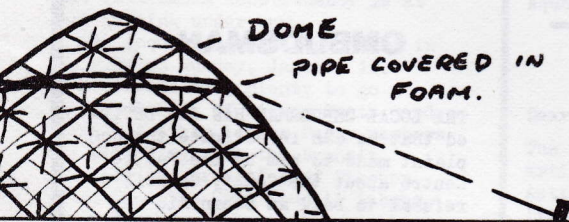


FIG 2.

GOOD OVERLAP
OF PLASTIC



STEP 4 - PAINTING

Give each triangle (and the flaps) two coats of paint - polyurethane is best, but expensive. But if you look like a student go to a shop which gives student discount and tell them you've lost your S.U. card - it usually works. Alternatively, you can try and hustle some - say it's for a valuable sociological project, etc. If you paint the dome white, it will look like a spacecraft. If you paint it black, it will absorb heat and be very warm. Remember to paint the door most carefully.

STEP 5 - JOINING THE TRIANGLES

Take five triangles and staple the flaps to form a regular pentagon. Take care that all reinforcing pieces are on the inside. You will now have six pentagons. Staple these together, taking care that the door is positioned conveniently. However, the bottom of the dome will not be flat - so cut off all the points, and staple them in the gaps to form a perfectly level base.

STEP 6 - THE BASE

(If the dome is to be used inside only, proceed now to Step 10.)

The best base is a large sheet of plastic. Make sure that the bottoms of your triangles rest on the plastic. If desired, wooden strips may be screwed on the inside of each triangle, and a second groundsheet of plastic can then be laid on the inside which will definitely exclude any penetration of water. (See figure 3.)

STEP 7 - FINAL PAINTING

Give your dome two final coats of polyurethane. Make sure the paint penetrates the joins where the triangles are stapled together. If you have done this correctly, the dome will be positively watertight.

STEP 8 - ANCHORING

There are two basic methods, and you can use either or both. First take some strong netting and pull it tight over your dome, fastening it to the ground with tent pegs. Or, second, obtain a length of hosepipe, fill it with sand to add weight and then join the ends to form a circle. Then cover the pipe with foam rubber (this will prevent damage to the cardboard) and place it on top of your dome. Then attach three or four ropes to the pipe and anchor the ropes with tent pegs, as shown in figure 4.

STEP 9 - INTERIOR INSULATION

To make the dome warmer, cover the inside walls with metal foil or polystyrene tiles. Both are expensive. If money is short, just paint it white and this will reflect back any heat.

STEP 10 - CELEBRATION

Get a few crates in, sit down, and celebrate - the dome is complete.

If you have any problems or require further information or advice, do not hesitate to write to Tony Stevens, 6.05 Victoria Centre, Nottm.

COMMUNITY ACTION

NOTTINGHAM

BY FRED BROAD

NEW PAGE

"COMMUNITY ACTION: NOTTINGHAM" IS a new page in Nottingham Voice. The aim of the page is to print news and information about community action locally. Community action means people organising to control their own lives and their own communities. I shall try to keep you informed of significant happenings in community action in Nottingham, to keep an eye on what is proposed locally, and to offer some information about how other people have tackled problems.

You can keep in touch nationally by subscribing to the magazine from which this page takes its name: "Community Action" is available from the more interesting Nottingham bookshops and newsagents, or can be obtained on subscription (90p for 6 issues - or more if you can afford it - and 15p + postage for single copies) from: Community Action Magazine, P.O. Box 665, London SW1X 8D2.

SECTION 99

SECTION 99 OF THE 1936 PUBLIC Health Act is the legal way of getting your landlord (private or council) to do repairs to a rented house. Roughly speaking, Section 99 says that you can summons your landlord in the Magistrates' Court in the same way as the Public Health Department if they fail to get the repairs done. Earlier this year Mrs Newton successfully brought a summons against the Friendship Housing Association under Section 99.

One of the main problems with Section 99 has been that you are not eligible for legal aid to bring the prosecution. However, there is a way that it can be done. You start off by going to a solicitor for "legal advice" about your case, and he can do work for you up to £25 under the Green Form scheme.

When the case comes to Court, the solicitor can appear in Court and apply for an extension of the Green Form scheme to cover the appearance in Court as well as the advice. He must argue that he cannot get legal aid, that you need a qualified representative because you are not able to represent yourself, and that the case is a difficult one, etc. The law covering this is contained in the Legal Aid Act, Section 2 (4).

The solicitor can also try to get the magistrates to agree that he can apply to the Legal Aid Area Office to increase the amount he is able to claim to £50. This should be sufficient for an average Court hearing. If your solicitor wants more he shouldn't be handling your case anyway.

This procedure can be used for Section 99, for assault cases where you are the complainant, and for minor crimes where full legal aid has been refused and where you cannot defend yourself properly.

Keep this article and show it to your solicitor when you want him to use this procedure. He may not know about it already.

... And good news for the Lower Broughton Action Group in Salford, who have just won their case in the High Court against the Council. The Appeal Court upheld the magistrates' decision that repairs should be done even though the house was in a Clearance Area and was Council owned. And the Action Group have another 86 Section 99s ready to go. Wake up Nottingham!

Section 99 footnote: The "Guardian" typesetters added their own characteristic note to the controversy with the following effort. Wait till Bert Littlewood hears about this one! ...

THE GUARDIAN

Thursday January 2 1975

For example, it was not until 1974 that the citizens' rights created by the Public Health Act, 1936, were tested and upheld by the courts. That, you may think, was because §99 of that Act deals with some obscure and unimportant matter. The reverse is true, because the Act allows anyone aggrieved by the condition of a house which is prejudicial to health to force the local council to rectify the inadequacies.

1. What are Nottingham's housing needs and how does the present Council policy attempt to meet them?
2. How far is the housing crisis a part of a wider social crisis?
3. What can be done to fight for housing policies which are more in line with what is really needed?

If you would like to help prepare a paper on a particular topic concerned with housing, contact Brian Davey at Nottingham 75985.

URBAN AID

URBAN AID CIRCULAR NUMBER 13 HAS arrived in Nottingham. The circular lays out the grounds for application under the Urban Aid scheme relating to spring and summer play schemes in 1975. It is a pity that it didn't arrive a bit sooner. The deadline for spring play schemes is the 31st December and for summer the 31st January. Since the circular was dated 27th November, only one month was allowed for the circular to be communicated to local groups and for applications to be made.

The circular lays down typical projects which might be considered. These include educational and community projects and play schemes during the school holidays.

Further information can be had from the CVS, 31A Mansfield Road, Nottingham (tel. 46714), and applications should be returned to the City Secretary, Guildhall, Nottingham.

But a little more warning of all this would have been welcome. Complaints about the lack of time should be sent to the Home Office, Dean Ryle Street, London SW1P 2AW, quoting reference ICR/73 10/22/1.

OMBUDSMAN

THE LOCAL OMBUDSMAN HAS NOW DECIDED that he can investigate the complaint made to him by the People's Centre about the County Council's refusal to back an Urban Aid application. Indeed, the letter from the Local Commissioner says he has taken professional advice on the matter. The next step is to have the complaint officially referred by a councillor. After that, the Ombudsman will ask for comments by the Council. Rumour has it that this is not the only complaint the Commissioner is looking into locally, nor may it be the last.

WORKSHOP

THERE WILL BE A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP to discuss Nottingham's housing needs on Saturday, 15th February. This Housing Inquiry will be held at the International Centre at 61b Mansfield Road. The object of the Inquiry is to bring together information on the housing problem in Nottingham with particular regard for the needs of people. Bring along your questions and ideas to the Inquiry. The Inquiry will concentrate on three questions:

Know your rights

Children in care



THE RIGHTS OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN care vary according to the way a child has come to be in care.

1. Voluntary Entry

Parents may entrust the care of a child to the Local Authority if for any reason they are unable to take care of the child or make other arrangements. Under Section 1 of the 1948 Children Act, a Local Authority may take a child into care with the consent of the parents.

Parents' Rights

There is no loss of rights in this case. The child can be removed from care by the parents at any time - BUT watch out for Section 2.



Section 2

Once a child is in the care of the Local Authority, the Authority may pass a resolution assuming all parental rights, under Section 2 of the 1948 Children Act. The Local Authority must show one of a number of grounds applies. These include abandoning the child, disability of parents, and general unfitness of the parents. Section 2 involves complete loss of parents' rights (except general rights - see below); but parents can apply to the Local Authority to have the resolution set aside and/or apply to a Court for this. Legal aid is available for this - see a solicitor.



2. Court Orders

The Local Authority can take proceedings in the Courts to place a child into care. This can be done in two ways:

- (i) The Authority can take care proceedings because the child is in need of "care and control".
- (ii) The Court can make a Care Order when a child is found guilty of an offence which could result in an adult going to prison. The Care Order would normally last until the child was 18 years old.

A Court may also put a child in the care of the Local Authority as a result of either divorce or separation proceedings. This is not the same



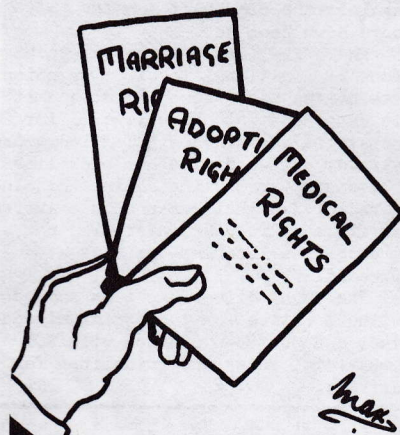
as the Care Order explained above, but the parents have similar rights of appeal, etc.

Parents' Rights

A Care Order means the Local Authority takes over the duties of parents. You can appeal against a Care Order, and you can apply to the Court to end the Care Order. Legal Aid would be available for this - see a solicitor.

General Parental Rights

Religious Rights: The parents of a child in care have the right to insist that the child be brought up in the religion (or lack of it) of the parents.



Medical Rights: The Local Authority does not normally overrule the wishes of the parents concerning medical treatment, and the agreement of parents to medical treatment will normally be sought. However, in the case of a blood transfusion parental wishes may be overruled.

Adoption: The Local Authority cannot agree to adoption of the child without the consent of the parents. An application to the Court to overrule the parents' wishes may be made and the parent has a right to oppose this. Legal aid is available.

Marriage: It is normal for the Local Authority to get the consent of the parents to marriage of a child in care.

IF YOU ARE STILL IN



THE PEOPLES CENTRE
WILL HELP YOU!!

Emigration: Parents must be consulted if the Local Authority is making arrangements for the emigration of a child in care.

The Local Authority has a duty to work for the return of children in care to their parents. Parents should be consulted and informed of the progress of their children. Local Authorities have the power to pay expenses of parents in travelling to see their children.

Where to go for help

Further information on the rights of parents with kids in care is available at the People's Centre (33 Mansfield Road, Tel. 411227), which can also give expert advice and legal assistance where necessary.

THE PARISH PUMP

WATCHMAN



"SOCIAL DEMOCRACY" AND "SOCIAL justice" are terms much used to emphasise democratic socialist ideas - to create a society that reflects the will and the needs of the people and acts for them. And who better to promote such aims than the Labour majority party in the Nottingham City Council, whose policy should lead to this end product?

We ask the questions: Is there, in fact, such a policy? If so, are its objectives and strategies being achieved and perceived? And can we recognise it in the efforts of the ruling coterie which makes policies and recommends them to the Council? This ruling group can be identified as the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the dominant power Committee, Policy and Resources, and its two Sub-Committees, Land and Finance. Do their policies reflect socialist principles, and are they of such a character that party members are able to judge and accept them?

Rank and file

The burden of responsibility on the members of these Committees is great, and the decisions resulting from their deliberations are, in the context of socialist principles and socialist faith, of immense importance to all the rank and file. These deliberations and decisions should be made widely known to all, and not confined to the few who attend the Committees. Let us have more "open" local government. We all know how difficult it is to be courageous and original in policy making - but let us reflect on the words of a wise man some 2,000 years ago: "Although few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of a policy."

Let us not forget that the Committees we are discussing have powers delegated to them by a Nottingham City Council with a socialist majority, whose aims should be to carry out policies decreed by the Party. This is the cardinal test of all Council actions. How do these actions stand up to scrutiny?

The most urgent and important decision-making issue today is housing. This is of paramount importance in socialist faith, and must be number one priority. What is being done? What strategy is employed by our decision makers? Is the best use being made of our resources? Have we enough stock of land in the ownership of the Council? Why cannot small or medium Housing Communities be set up urgently to provide homes for people? What is holding up such a strategy?

Let us all have our priorities in correct perspective. Let other

projects, however desirable, be put back until the people are housed. Let the voice of Nottingham be heard. Listen to the clamour of the grass roots of the Party.

In future issues, we propose to give opinions on these important questions and find answers to them, and we welcome any comments our analysis may elicit - from whatever quarter.

AUTO-BIOGRAPHY

THE DEATH OCCURRED TODAY OF A WELL-known character at an NCT bus stop, Miss I.M. Waiting. Her departure to the Great Bus Stop in the sky is a milestone of achievement in the history of the local transport authority.

Miss Waiting was born at the bus stop and spent her entire life there, counting the buses passing in the opposite direction bound for the depot. She made a fair living by running a book and quoting the odds against a bus ever returning along the route to pick up passengers.

It was a hard life. Miss Waiting was exposed to all the vagaries of our climate. Over the years she struck up a kind of auto-friendship with the bus drivers who flashed by across the road, exchanging a friendly wave as they sped along bound for hearth and home.

The cause of death is not known. Foul play is suspected. It is surmised that at approximately 11 a.m. today a bus did indeed arrive at Miss Waiting's stop, believed to be a pre-meditated crime by a brash young driver intent on picking her up. It is believed that Miss Waiting, never having seen a bus at such close proximity before, put up a valiant fight against the big green monster that bore down upon her.

There are likely to be repercussions at a national level. Top union executives have been called, and it is expected that MPs will call for debate in the house. NCT drivers are already out on strike and picketing bus stops, protesting against passengers' claims that buses should arrive at frequent regular intervals, not on a once-in-a-lifetime basis as at present.

The young driver has been sacked without notice for industrial misconduct and non co-operation with NCT unofficial rules and guidelines for drivers. JL

REFUGEES

THERE ARE 250 CHILEAN REFUGEES AT present living in various towns in Britain. 900 more are expected within the next few weeks. All are victims of persecution by the Chilean Junta which overthrew the democratically elected Popular Unity Government of Salvador Allende in September 1973.

On Thursday, 12 December, sponsored by the Nottingham Trades Council, a small meeting of Trade Unionists and Labour Party members was held to form a committee to help some refugees to settle in Nottingham. Pete Skethley is the co-ordinator. Please contact him at Plumtree 5615 if you can help with accommodation, Spanish/English interpretation, money, etc.

Dates

Cinema

Nottingham Film Theatre

Fri. & Sun. 7.30 p.m., Sat. 5 & 8 p.m.
Co-op Arts Centre, Broad Street.
Jan.10-12: B.O.F. (X)
Jan.17-19: One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (A)
Jan.24-26: Save the Tiger (AA)
Jan.31-Feb.2: Brother Sun and Sister Moon (U)
Feb. 7- 9: The First Teacher (X)

Jazz

Sundays: Nottingham Jazz Orchestra. Old General, Radford Road.
Cisco. Imperial Hotel, St James's St.
Wednesdays: Mercia Jazz Band. Tally Ho, Oakdale Road.
Thursdays: Ken Eatch Jazzmen. Old General, Radford Road.

Jan.11: Chris Barber. Slipper, Central Avenue, West Bridgford.
Jan.15: Danny Moss. "The New Place". Federation House Social Club, Ebury Road, Sherwood.

Rock

January

11: John Martyn (Nottingham Univ.)
12: Cisco (Imperial Hotel, St James's Street - and every Sunday)
17: Decameron (Nottingham Univ.)
18: Argent (Leicester Poly)
22: Hello (Derby, King's Hall)
25: John Entwistle's Ox (Leic. Univ.)
25: Black Oak Arkansas (Hanley Heavy Steam Machine: nr Stoke-on-Trent)
26: Hello (Jacksdale Grey Topper)
30: New Mahavishnu Orchestra (Sheffield City Hall)

Theatre

Nottingham Theatre Club

The Lace Market Theatre, Halifax Place. Bookings: Tel. 57201, 7-11 p.m., or 233695, daytime.
Jan.20-25 (7.30 p.m.): "Home" by David Storey.

Co-operative Arts Theatre

George Street. Bookings: Tel. 40692.
Jan.6-11 (7.30 p.m.): "Hobson's Choice" by Harold Brighouse.

(EATING OUT continued from page 18)

Finally, drink. Here, in my view, the restaurant fails. They seem to have an adequate supply of wines for those with the lack of discrimination to want to drink such things with curry. But the lager (for the uninitiated, lager is the only suitable complementary drink for curry) is a nameless insipid brew. Let the Darjeeling look to its cellar and let it do justice to an excellent kitchen by providing a decent German brew.

G.NOME

ARTS

33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham

Mummers (2)

IN DECEMBER'S "GRASS ROOTS" WE printed information about the Nottingham based "Owd Oss Mummers" and their plans for the Christmas period. On January 13th, the group are planning some Plough Monday festivities in the locality. They would be particularly interested to hear about the Plough Monday mumming tradition in the Nottingham area from anybody who has information or memories of such

festivities in the past. If you have anything to pass on, write to Plough Monday Project, 4 Laneham Avenue, Arnold. Look out for the Owd Oss Mummers if they come your way. GP

Caravansari

ANOTHER AMATEUR THEATRE GROUP functioning from within the city boundaries is "Caravansari". They are a youth theatre workshop who meet in St Ann's twice weekly to produce drama improvisations and plays. Their first production of the new year will be a "colourful" setting of "Cinderella" at the Church Hall of King's Hall Methodist Church, St Ann's Well Road, at 7.30 p.m. on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th January (25p adults, 10p children). Any readers who might be interested in contributing to Caravansari should write to them c/o Nottingham Voice, 33 Mansfield Road.

Any groups involved with drama, mumming, improvisation or play read-

ing who are operating in the city may like to write to us at the above address, giving information about themselves so that we can present a full breakdown of "Drama in Nottingham" within the next few months. GP

Galleries

NEXT MONTH, AS PART OF A PLANNED expansion in our coverage of the arts, we are publishing the first of a series of articles on the local art galleries. In particular, we'll be considering their place in the Nottingham community - their policy, their management, their finance, their audience - as well as interviewing the people who run them, reviewing their exhibitions, and asking some pointed questions about their direction in the future.

JS

Striking Gong

THE AUTUMN '74 ISSUE OF "GONG", THE Nottingham University Arts Magazine, contains many varied and stimulating items. It includes articles on such diverse topics as Folk Culture, Nottingham Playhouse, Joni Mitchell and the Cult of the Self (by Stephen Barnard), and the problems of translating "Orlando Furioso", in addition to the striking and technically adroit drawings of Tyrel Broadbent (one of which is reproduced on this page).

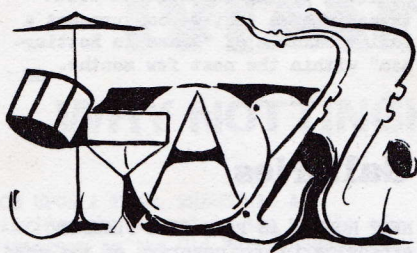
However, the selections from the work of ten poets, which make up over half the total content, are of a rather uneven standard. Some of the poems gain little from being written in verse, and are marred by self-conscious mannerisms. The policy expressed in Michael Draper's editorial is that more or less "anything goes", the criterion being that the contributions should have "something positive" to offer. Indeed, the poets generally have something to say, and some originality and sensitivity with words, but lack technique and a clear view of their aims, and need stringent self-criticism if their work is to communicate to a wide audience.

A further drawback of the magazine as a whole is that it would certainly not appeal to anyone outside the academic/artistic community (although this is perhaps inevitable with a University arts magazine); this is all the more regrettable since the magazine sincerely tries not to be a "clique" or "coterie" publication.

Despite these somewhat grumpy criticisms, though, "Gong" remains a well-produced and worthwhile magazine, with much to admire, and it provides full value for the asking price of 25p. It's available from Sisson's (Milton St), Dillon's or Mushroom (Heathcote St); alternatively, it can be obtained by post (30p) from Michael Draper, "Gong", Students' Union, Portland Building, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD. I guarantee that all followers of the arts will find enough interesting material within the 52 pages to justify this modest outlay.

CS





A CURRENT SOURCE OF CONTROVERSY centres around the validity of rock music influences within musical boundaries previously defined as jazz. Not that it's all that easy to define such boundaries. Jazz has its "pure" and "adulterated" forms in much the same way that other areas of the arts do. What may be classified as jazz by one listener may be dismissed as rank commercialism by another: for example, the recordings by any number of American big bands which contain recognised jazz performers among their personnel but whose pitch is definitely aimed at the commercial market.

It seems to me that two important criteria are essential in jazz performances. There must be an emphasis on the rhythmic element in the music, and opportunities for improvisation should comprise an aspect of any performance. But both requirements are fulfilled by the best rock bands appearing on the concert circuit. Without going into long and complex arguments about the differences which exist between rock bands and jazz groups I would like to suggest that it might be more profitable to explore the areas in which they share similarities and to assess the value of cross-fertilisation between the two types of music.

Influences

Within the rock groups which qualify as improvising bands may be found many of the younger generation of jazz musicians, and a lot of other fine musicians who wouldn't acknowledge jazz as an influence if you asked them. It's the presence of top-quality players which separates the improvising bands from the purely commercial products offered in such TV programmes as "Top of the Pops". Within the area of rock represented by these "quality" bands the rock/jazz division is not so easily perceived. Certainly the musical influences which have filtered down into both big-band and small-group jazz can't be ignored.

The Nottingham jazz audience has been slow to recognise bands featuring a rock/jazz approach, and the only group to enjoy any success in this idiom has been the nine-piece Cisco, whose style is closer to pure rock rather than to jazz. Nevertheless, they have broken new ground in the city and have recognised the need to develop musically rather than rest on old laurels.

CISCO

NOTTINGHAM'S JAZZ-ROCKERS

When I heard them just before Christmas they were beginning to put things together again after losing star vocalist Steve Saxon, whose Joe Cocker style approach had made a big contribution to the group's success. Most of the material they featured was from the standard repertoire developed over the previous year of operations, with Dave Sharp and Chuck Berry sharing the vocals. "Sunshine of your life", "Cisco Kid" and Tower of Power's "Don't change horses" were all handled with the confidence which comes from long familiarity. Backing arrangements for trumpeter Dave Leithead and saxist John Northfield contributed to the powerful sound which is the group's main attraction.

Drummer Ray Marshall provided the humour with a raving "Who's got the paper who's got the match", the Osibisa standard which this time was augmented by several dozen kazooos which were distributed among the audience. Like several other numbers featured by the group this one was played strictly for laughs.

Potential

But the band is beginning to branch out into more musically ambitious areas for its second phase of existence, and this fresh aspect of its operations seems to me to offer the most potential. The Climax Blues Band's "Amarita" represented this new phase, an ambitious arrangement with rapid shifts of tempo and mood constituting a fruitful and musically satisfying new direction for the group.

It is when Cisco begin to develop further along these lines that they will come to offer the greatest satisfaction to the widest audience. Rock fans will come along for the standard vocal material which they seem to prefer, and jazz fans will gain something from the longer, more complex scores which offer opportunities for thoughtful improvisation.

At present Cisco is the only group in the area which has the experience and the ability to make a real impact on the local scene, and the range of the audience they can command depends on how they develop during the next few months. In a sense, the success or failure of the jazz/rock marriage depends to a large extent on the nine musicians who comprise the group.

CLIFF LEE



(Just as we were going to press, we heard that PFM's British tour has been postponed yet again in order to extend their present successful tour of the States. It was too late to change the following article - but the competition to win the group's latest album, "PFM Cook", still stands!)

THE MONTH AHEAD PRESENTS US WITH ONE or two very good concerts in the area - if you're prepared to travel thirty or forty miles. The only impressive rock band appearing locally is PFM, who perform at the University in the middle of the month. We'll be giving away two copies of PFM's new live album in this month's competition.

As a change from writing about rock bands and their music, I thought it would be an idea to take a look at a few record shops in the area. So, this month we begin an occasional series with Selectadisc.

For some years now Selectadisc has enjoyed the distinction of being the record shop, where every true eclectic rock fan meanders of a Saturday morning to purchase his weekly ration of vinyl. As most of you will know, the Arkwright Street branch of Selectadisc moved to 162 Canal Street some months ago, and it is here that one of the best selections of soul music in the country can be found. "Advance" on Bridlesmith Gate is a recent addition to the Selectadisc group. Albums are priced well below r.r.p. and there's a good second-hand selection.

Discount

Another branch of Selectadisc, on Goldsmith Street, caters mainly for the rock enthusiast. Many rock albums can be bought there days before their theoretical release date and weeks before other shops have even considered ordering them. Every current single album is offered with 25-40p off the recommended price (a trend set by Selectadisc when the shops were initiated and since dabbled at by Boots and W.H. Smith). Deleted albums are usually offered at half price or less and there are hundreds of second-hand albums for sale, mainly at £1.25 or less.

There's plenty to attract the average Joe Cool to Selectadisc, be it the foetid odour of some new and exotic joss stick, the chic chick behind the counter, the thousands of albums at bargain prices, or the copies of Nottingham Voice (which you'll find at the Goldsmith Street branch on the revolving display stand). Whatever it is, Selectadisc is one helluva good record shop, and a valuable asset to



Argent

Nottingham's somewhat dormant rock music scene.

Argent open a tour at Leicester Polytechnic this month to promote their new album "Encore", just released on Epic. Although the album features Russ Ballard on guitar, he left the band a couple of months ago to be replaced by John Grimaldi (lead guitar) and John Verity (vocals). This album does little to promote confidence in Argent's future and is in keeping with a general downward swing in their music since the "All Together Now" album. If reports are correct, however, the new Argent promises to be quite an improvement. Another album is released in March titled "Circus". Let's hope that it's more original than "Encore".

Great gig

The New Mahavishnu Orchestra are on view at Sheffield at the end of the month, and judging by the present line-up of the band, it should be a great gig. The Sheffield date is the final one on the tour, which is their first in Britain with the present line-up. The band will be playing tracks from their new album, "Visions of the Emerald Beyond", which is released by CBS on January 17th.

The best concert of the month promises to be at Nottingham University on the 18th, when the Italian band PFM will be appearing. With two studio albums on release and a live album on the way, PFM have made quite an impact on Britain's rock music scene.

Deriving their name from a first-class patisserie in Northern Italy, PFM were formed three years ago, and having received almost every accolade the Italian public and Rock industry could bestow upon them, soon set their sights further afield. PFM are now in a position to break through on a world-wide scale with their unique blend of classical/rock music.

They have recently completed an extended American tour, which resulted in the postponement of this British tour from last November until now.

It was Emerson, Lake and Palmer who realised PFM's potential and signed them to their own Manticore records. Their first album, "Photos of Ghosts", was produced from the synthesis of Pete Sinfield's words and production prowess and PFM's tape of their Italian album "Per Un Amico". In many ways the album bears a remarkable resemblance to ELP's own style, yet some tracks are strikingly original: take a listen to "River of Life" and

"Promenade the Puzzle", both really fine tracks.

The second album, "The World Became the World", again features lyrics penned by Pete Sinfield. It is a more complex album and as such is somewhat harder to "get into", but after a few listens the high spots come to light, notably "Four Holes in the Ground", "The World Became the World" and "Have Your Cake and Beat It", which is the climax to the album and features impeccable guitar work from Franco Mussida.

PFM are well worth seeing live.

Competition

This month we're giving away two copies of the new PFM live album.

- (1) What do the letters PFM stand for?
- (2) What is the title of their first British album?
- (3) Who writes PFM's English lyrics?

Send your answers on a postcard to Nottingham Voice Competition, People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, to arrive no later than 27th January.

Last month's winners were: Rob Hayes, Woodthorpe (Genesis Double); D. Meads, Ilkeston (Seventh Wave). DAVE BRETT

EATING OUT



FOR A CITY OF ITS SIZE, NOTTINGHAM has disappointingly few eating places where one can be sure of getting a well-prepared meal for two reasonably hungry diners for less than £5. The central area of the city is a particularly poor hunting ground for the relatively impoverished gastronome - one wonders where the city's office and shop staff buy their lunchtime sandwiches.

The Bell on Angel Row does the best sit-down meal at a reasonable price, but, frankly, its restaurant is a place to be avoided at lunchtimes. The service, though polite and helpful enough, is appallingly slow - on my last visit the par time from the beginning of the soup to the coffee and cheese appeared to be 1½ hours. I have little time for those who try to increase the profit margin on the food they sell by paying too few people to dish it out. However, the bar snacks in the evening are ideal for a pre-cinema tuck-in: the steak and chips (in a basket - why?) is the best bet and excellent value at 75p.

Value

As with most towns, Nottingham's Indian and Pakistani restaurants give good value for money, if rather boring and predictable fare. The Darjeeling restaurant on Derby Road, however, is by no means boring. In my opinion, it's the best and most consistent in town, an opinion presumably shared by the Asian medical staff of the General Hospital, who are frequently to be seen eating there.

One of the most popular dishes is the Pathia. This is a particularly good meat or chicken dish, prepared with green peppers and onion, discreetly spiced. It is not by nature a fierce dish, but like all curries served at the Darjeeling it can be varied to suit the diner's palate. Those with an Anglo-Indian taste for hot curries should try an extra-hot Madras - guaranteed to bring tears to the eyes. The mulligatawny and dal soups are excellent. The vegetables, as in all but the very best restaurants, are disappointing. Even in a bajeer preparation they should be treated with due deference and not endlessly stewed. Also, the absence of spinach from the menu is a sad fact. However, these are minor quibbles, and should be taken in the context of the overall high standard of meals.

The decor and layout of the restaurant are uninspired but inoffensive, the service superb. All the staff, from the proprietor down, are friendly and courteous, and even at the busiest times no-one will have difficulty in catching a waiter's eye. Children, too, are well accommodated.

(continued on page 14)



THE VERNON ARMS IS ON THE CORNER OF Waverley Street and Forest Road, and is a Mansfield Brewery pub. As you may have realised from previous comments, Mansfield Brewery is not my favourite brewer, but I have attempted to be objective about the Vernon Arms!

It is certainly an attractive pub from the outside and gives a welcoming appearance. This is soon dispelled when one gets to the front door to be confronted with the message:

NO HIPPIES
NO WIERDIES
THANKYOU

Well, at least you know where you stand, and can get a rough idea about the landlord's general attitudes.

Gin and tonic

There are two rooms in the pub and there doesn't appear to be any difference between them. Both are carpeted and comfortably furnished. Presumably one of the two rooms was previously the public bar which the landlord or the brewery in their wisdom have removed, enabling them to put up the prices and go for the gin and tonic set rather than pints of mild.

Because of the ban on hippies and wierdies, the clientele could be described as "smooth", and I got the impression that many of them were the forty-plus exiles who can no longer get in the Newcastle Arms.

Another thing I found surprising was that, in an area that is generally considered as one for immigrants, there was a lack of black faces in the Vernon Arms. If any readers can give me reasons for this, I would be very interested to hear from them.

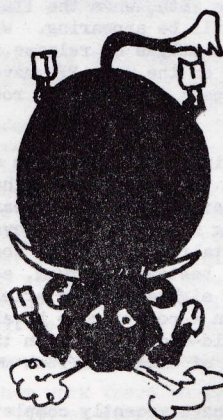
Didn't care

Finally, the beer. There is the standard keg Guinness and lager, and the famous Mansfield bitter that no longer resembles the product that used to be produced by the brewery. I don't want to offend the devotees of Mansfield bitter, but in my opinion it tastes like most other filtered and pressurised beer. Another thing was the temperature of the beer. It was cold, which is alright for drinking on Bondi Beach, but not for Nottingham in December. It costs 18p a pint.

There is some justification for my remarks about Mansfield bitter. The Nottingham branch of CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale) carried out a survey in Mansfield. 35% of Mansfield draught drinkers thought that the product had deteriorated in the twelve months up to July 1974. When asked about this by myself at the AGM of Mansfield Brewery, the Chairman of the company said that he didn't care about it.

CHRIS HOLMES

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RACING RACING

BETTING TO WIN

MILLIONS OF US BET, BUT ONLY A handful win in the long run. You could draw up a list of gamblers' "diseases" to explain such apparently masochistic behaviour - chasing your losses, playing up winnings, being a "soft touch" for tips, backing your favourite jockeys, following your favourite horses which are long past their best, etc. etc. If you can break all these habits there is at least some chance of winning.

Obviously, the most important asset for the serious gambler is a profound knowledge and understanding of form. Apart from noting the placings a horse has achieved in previous outings, the following should be considered when assessing a race or a particular horse's chance in it (read the form of all the horses in any race, not just that of your own fancy):

- (1) The form analysis in the racing papers and form books includes comments on the running of the first six finishers in every race. This information can be vital.
- (2) Distance of previous races. Most horses are bred to race over a particular distance and it is as well to be wary if a horse is suddenly put to a new distance, and probably best not to back it until it has proved itself (unless the breeding firmly indicates that the horse will be able to cope with the distance of the race).

Preferences

- (3) Going. This cannot be underestimated. By far the majority of horses have definite preferences for under-foot conditions. When the ground becomes hard or very soft be careful to check that your selection has performed well on that going.
- (4) Course. Although some horses have a definite liking for particular courses, the majority seem relatively indifferent. Of more importance is the type of course - e.g. the tricky gradients on the turn at Epsom have been the graveyard for the hopes of many punters. It is often useful to note if a horse has shown a marked liking for right- or left-handed tracks.
- (5) Time. Contrary to some opinion, I do not consider time of very great importance, particularly in this country where the courses and going vary to such a great extent. However, it can be useful to note times for sprint distances, and more especially for two year olds which do tend to run their sprint races flat out from pillar to post.
- (6) Draw. The importance of where a horse is drawn to run varies from course to course, and on some (e.g. Doncaster and Chester) can be crucial. The importance, or otherwise, of the draw is indicated in the majority of newspapers.
- (7) Value of race. The value of the race (the amount of prize money offered) when noted in conjunction with

the horse's performance can be fairly useful as a form guide, particularly with reference to the animal's class - though this is not a golden rule by any means: for instance a horse which has narrowly won a maiden race at Catterick for £350 will probably be out of its depth in a £5,000 classic trial at York.

(8) Blinkers. Blinkers fitted for the first time can improve a horse's performance quite remarkably - but the trick often works only once. Some horses regularly wear blinkers and in some cases this is an indication of their unwillingness to race, but, again, this is not by any means a hard and fast rule.

Not infallible

(9) Jockeys and Trainers. Assuming a competent jockey is riding your fancy, you should have nothing to worry about. Lester Piggott is a great jockey who, perhaps, once in twenty rides wins where the normal mortal would have been second. It is worth noticing a top jockey's riding plans, but even so an Epsom jockey might travel to Newcastle for one losing ride and miss four winners on his home course. Trainers often specialise in particular types of horse and race, and noting this can be useful additional information in making your selections. However, jockeys and trainers are not infallible and if the horse has the form not too much attention should be paid to them.

Having assessed all this information for any given race, you are in a position to know whether a sound selection can be made. Remember that in at least 95% of races there is no sound bet - a point most punters forget. If you think you have found a sound wager the next thing to think

about is getting value from the bookmaker - e.g. you may feel that a particular horse has a very good chance in a 20-runner sprint handicap, but in most races of this type one should be looking for a price of 4-1 upwards because the risks involved are so great. On the other hand, in an eight-runner level weight race over 1½ miles a bet at evens (or even odds on) could be a sound value wager.

The amount you should stake is an entirely personal matter (though I suspect not many readers are millionaires), but I would suggest betting from a special "pool" and in units of, say, 1/25 of that pool. The stake rises as the pool increases and decreases if losers begin to mount.

Although doubles, trebles, accumulators and many more complex bets are popular (I have not yet won the ITV 7), the serious gambler should stick, with perhaps an occasional double, to single horses and few of them. There are not many really sound form bets on any given week's racing, and certainly not two or three every day or four every Saturday.

Self-control

All this may sound over serious, but winning takes time, skill, patience and a great deal of self-control. In other words, the less you like a good old-fashioned gamble the better. The most successful gambler I know doesn't really like putting his hand in his pocket - I wish I were like him.

By the way, if you are really interested in your failings - try reading a new book called "The Psychology of Gambling" edited by Jon Halliday and Peter Fuller (Allen Lane, 1974, £4.50 - but look out for the paper back edition).

ALAN FOUNTAIN

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