

Grass Roots

Number 9

Nottingham, August, 1974

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BACK PAGE

**MERRY
GO
ROUND**

Is Nottingham fair to its kids?

Story on page 2



Case for play space

THERE ARE FOUR ACRES of open space per thousand people in Nottingham. On paper that is quite impressive, but it includes huge parks like Wollaton Park and the Forest Recreation Ground. There is precious little local community play space. Nottingham has only one adventure play ground (in St. Ann's). Not a very impressive showing considering that there are more than 70,000 children between the ages of 2½ and 16 in the City.

The problem is that the provision of local play space has not been recognised by the District Council's Leisure Services Committee as a priority. Their emphasis has been on big prestige leisure projects - sports centres and the like - and while such projects are undoubtedly worthwhile, the net effect has been to push local play space firmly into the background.

There are some parks dotted around, of course, some with traditional playgrounds with swings and slides, but the arguments for the establishment of adventure playgrounds in a

to raise themselves - which underlines the necessity of getting Council commitment to the idea. Site costs and a play-leader's salary alone demand Council involvement. It is time for the Council to face up to its responsibility for its children and to be prepared to put more into such projects than mere planning permission.

Forcing local community groups to depend on the pot luck of the Urban Aid scheme, as Raleigh Street, Balloon Woods, the Meadows, Edwards Land and Fisher Street are having to do, indicates a dangerous lack of concern from the Council for the welfare of youngsters in the City - many of whom daily run the risk of serious injury on the roads because there is nowhere else for them to play. Local play space, hopefully adventure playgrounds, must become a top priority of the Leisure Services Committee.

Adventure playgrounds are essentially community projects and the enthusiastic involvement of families in an area is vital to their success. So,



Crossing Raleigh

Street (Cover:

Portland Road)

city like Nottingham are strong. In aiming to provide opportunities for the physical, educational and social development of children the range of activities adventure playground can offer include many not otherwise available to urban children - climbing trees, building dens, lighting fires, growing flowers and vegetables, as well as painting, dressing-up and playing impromptu games.

It is more expensive to set up an adventure playground than a conventional playground, although a smallish one (the smallest would be about half an acre) could be set up for £10,000 - £15,000. A site must be found, water and electricity laid on, a fence erected, and a sturdy and sizeable hut is essential for activities, especially in the Winter and when it rains. The salary of a play-leader is, however, the only major running cost, since adventure playgrounds are community projects, and local traders and families will often provide many of the materials used by the kids in their play.

These sums of money are relatively small in terms of local authority expenditure, but are daunting amounts for communities, often poor,

in calling for the Leisure Services Committee to earmark money in its capital programme for adventure playgrounds, it is also necessary to call for a very different attitude to the provision of local play space.

Community (and that includes the kids, of course) participation and discussion are essential - a playground of this type foisted on a community is almost certainly doomed to failure. The playground must be an integral part of the neighbourhood and will take on the neighbourhood's character - for this reason it must be a fairly permanent set-up, for although summer play-schemes are in many ways to be welcomed (Nottingham has seven this year), it can be very disillusioning for a child to see the summer playground packed up at the end of the holiday, and too often he feels "I knew it couldn't last".

It is difficult to quantify the success of adventure playgrounds in terms of money, but towns and cities all over Britain - indeed, all over the world - have recognised their value in social terms. It is time that Nottingham made them a top priority.

On target



Dead shots ...

ALARMING RUMOURS have been reaching us of total chaos and collapse in last month's delivery service of the "Nottingham Arrow" (news-sheet of your friendly neighbourhood Council). Not only have copies been arriving late, but in many cases were not delivered at all. This may or may not be connected with the dateline on earlier copies reading "June" instead of "July". On the other hand, it may have something to do with the unexpected discovery in a little-used corner of the distributors' premises of 8,000 copies which had somehow been overlooked. No doubt the Council will now consider shooting future Arrows themselves instead of paying a private firm to leave them in the quiver.

... and lead shots

EVEN MORE ALARMING is the ghastly dullness which has settled over the Council's organ. There is even a Corporation agony column, where "Marian Sherwood" doles out sedatives for municipal neuroses (one suspects her correspondents have as much real existence as those Star Questioners in the Evening Post who are always thirsting to know how earless snakes can be charmed with music, and how many ways Shakespeare spelled his name). In fact, the Arrow is much less interesting than its predecessor the City News, and in one important respect is less informative: it does not publish summaries of the main Council committee decisions. So, under a veneer of providing more information, the Arrow only lets its readers know what the Council wants them to know - which isn't all that much.

Let's take a test case for the future. The July Arrow mentions the imminent revision of local government boundaries. The City Council's suggestions for redrawing ward boundaries will be displayed (and publicised in the Arrow?) in September. The public's comments are invited - but this is a highly complicated business which a properly informative Council news-sheet could do a lot to explain. Though the word "gerrymandering" will be far from the lips of everyone in Nottingham, it will be interesting never-

theless to see just how adequately the Arrow explains the issues involved - and just which councillors suddenly find themselves with unexpectedly safe or marginal seats. On Target will be keeping in touch!

Still talk-in

FEARLESS COLUMNIST David Levine struggles on manfully with his hard-hitting "Talk-in" column in the Evening Post. He has our sympathy - writing politics for the Post must be almost as easy as writing a Family Planning column for the Catholic Herald. Worried, no doubt, that weekly savagings of the Labour group on the County Council were giving a false impression of bias, Mr Levine has taken to producing long and painfully impartial articles (there was even a good word for Councillor Foster) on such topics as public participation and the loss of local government autonomy. Worthy though these subjects are, unfortunately the column is now rather boring. Nostalgia must occasionally overwhelm Mr Levine for the halcyon days of Alderman Mrs Anne Yates, Conservative Chairman of the old County Council - a self-effacing lady, whose unconceited concept of her public role involved fitting ANN 1 registration plates to the official limousine. These were loyally offered to Princess Anne on the simultaneous demise of the old County Council, the Tory majority, and Mrs Yates' Chairmanship. Sadly, the new Labour Chairman's first name is Dick.

Catch-22?

IT'S A GOOD IDEA not to arrive in Nottingham penniless and homeless. If you haven't somewhere to live, the D.H.S.S. won't pay you any money - and if you haven't got any money, you can't get somewhere to live!

Even in the Post

OUR LOCAL DAILY was evidently suffering from bad vibes on July 11th. The lead story featured protests by Mr David Jackson against attempts by the Labour-controlled City Council to infiltrate the governing body of Nottingham High School. Mr Jackson is perhaps best known as landlord of the Bell Inn, Angel Row, and doubtless appreciated the Post quoting him talking about "this fine shcool", thus giving the impression that he'd been sampling too many of his own wares. And in the very next column the Post discovered between editions that some peanuts are just peanuts compared with other peanuts:

£4m. tonic for NHS is 'just peanuts'	£40m. tonic for NHS is 'just peanuts'
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Interesting landlords (1)

THE NOTTINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL Foundation owns a large number of slum houses in Phase 4 of the Meadows, 82 all told. The Foundation

that such action was not necessary, since the buildings concerned were in a clearance area and were to come down anyway. The court found - I applaud its findings - that the fact that the dwellings had a limited life did not remove from the local authority the necessity to make them

HOMELESS FAMILIES: POLICE ACT!



owns both Waterway Terrace and Wilford Terrace, the former being unusual only in the ability of the drains to block and regurgitate sewerage into everyone's backyard. It also owns the majority of Waterway Street (47 houses) and three properties in Wilford Road. The Foundation is notable for its spirited defence against a summons from the tenant of 25 Wilford Road on repairs. Pausing only to complete 45 items of repair, the Foundation sprang into court and claimed that the action was totally unnecessary. Still, Official Custodian for Charities as trustee for the Foundation is R. Seely Whitby, who also happens to be President of the Nottingham Law Society.

Section 99

From "Hansard", 13th June, 1974.

Mr Kaufman (replying to a proposed amendment to the 1957 Housing Act):

"It has not been demonstrated that the powers available to tenants in Section 99 of the Public Health Act 1936, little used though those powers have been so far, are insufficient to deal with the problems that can arise. I for one am glad about the test case which occurred in Nottingham a few months ago, which gave that former local authority a shock. I only wish that other local authorities could be given a similar shock when they fall down on their responsibilities ...

"The heartening aspect of the Nottingham case was that it was the Nottingham local authority which was compelled to act, despite its claim

recently habitable as long as they were lived in."

'Arrowing tale

THE CASTLE'S CELEBRATED arrowless - and stringless - Robin Hood (tourist magnet and emblem of this column) has never been popular in Nottingham because it has a pixie hat, suffers from elephantiasis, and doesn't look like Errol Flynn (compare the much more satisfactory Home Ales trademark). But fierce civic pride still erupts from time to time in the correspondence columns of the Evening Post over the best deterrent against arrow-snatchers. Suggestions range from the simple and fairly sensible (thorn bushes, sticking it on better) to the slightly extravagant (moats, barbed wire, spiked railings, blue dye) and the frankly paranoid (electrification - thus rendering the prospective thief shocked, concussed or dead, man-traps, elephant-pits). On Target would be interested to hear from local patriots with further suggestions.

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UP THE STEPS

WHAT DO THE LETTERS "N.F.A." mean to you? Nothing? They mean a lot if they are on your charge sheet and you are in Police custody, because they signify "No Fixed Abode". And if you haven't got somewhere to live, you are not going to get bail, and you will be going back to Lincoln on the prison bus.

Think of it. People are coming before the Courts in Nottingham week in and week out, and are going to prison not as a sentence (because their cases haven't been dealt with) but simply because there is nowhere else to go while they await the outcome of their cases, and are on remand.

No provision

In other cities they order these things better. In Derby, for instance, there is a D.H.S.S. Reception Centre, which can accommodate as many as 104 people, and which provides "temporary board and lodgings". This can and does take people on bail from the Magistrates' Courts. In other cities there are bail hostels. In Nottingham there is no provision, except for the Salvation Army Hostels, which are often full, and cannot be relied upon to take all-comers, especially when the trail leads from the Magistrates' Court. The result in Nottingham is that a whole lot more people go to Lincoln than should ever in all humanity be there at all.

Take Paddy, for example. Paddy was in Court the other day. Paddy is an Irishman and sleeps rough. He is 58 years of age, and booze has had hold of him for many years. In the last year he has had 12 convictions for

drunk and disorderly, or like offences. As in the past, so in the last 12 months, the Magistrates have fined him, or they have sent him to prison. The effect is the same, because Paddy spends all his spare Security money on drink, so he can't pay fines, so each time he gets a fine he is going to serve a prison sentence for default in paying the fine. Each spell in prison makes the situation a little bit worse.

Paddy is on his own; really on his own in Nottingham because there is nowhere where he can live, not even stay for the night. Lodgings won't have him, nor will the Salvation Army.

There is no refuge for people like Paddy. Homeless, itinerant, and sometimes alcoholic. There is no hostel, there is no reception centre, there is only the river embankment or derelict houses in the Meadows or elsewhere.

The answer?

Is prison the answer for the homeless alcoholic? Here is the Governor of Kingston upon Hull Prison replying to a question from a House of Commons Select Committee.

Question: In your opinion, what is the effect of the existing method of punishing the drunken by short terms of imprisonment?

Prison Governor: I think it is quite useless; I think that it does more harm than good.

That exchange took place in 1872.

("Up the steps" is an expression used in Norfolk, and maybe in other parts, and denotes that you are going up before the beaks, i.e. the Magistrates.)

Developments

Cox's box

CONNOISSEURS OF NEW office blocks may soon be able to savour a brand-new 20,700 square foot specimen at 3-9 Goldsmith Street (next to Rank's new 64,000 square foot development on the former Gaumont site). There doesn't seem much wrong with the existing premises, except that they are probably rather older than they ought to be. The beautiful new block will be a five-storey cliff of prestigious dark glass with a tasteful zig-zag frontage and a stepped roof-line. Unlike the present premises, it will not include shops, but will feature attractive offices at ground-floor level too. The architect's drawing includes Lost World type greenery sprouting from the cliff top, though plans don't make it clear whether this indicates a jungle on the roof or merely a feeble attempt to soften the roof-line (a well-placed thumb reduces the appeal of the building by about 500%). Prospective developers are Cox Industries, who seem to specialise in "acquiring" small and unobtrusive parts of older Nottingham which nobody else seems to notice - a few old houses on Standard Hill, for example, and a number of properties on Bridlesmith Gate. They do have bigger fish to fry, though, having recently flogged a 120,000 square foot development in Derby to Norwich Union for over £2 million.

Lace Market plan

THE COUNCIL'S COMPREHENSIVE plan for the Lace Market Conservation Area has apparently been delayed at the printer's, but should be available soon. Advance reports suggest that it contains an enlightened mixture of preserving the best features of the area while encouraging sympathetic development of the many derelict sites. Crucial to the success of the plan (and to the fate of other parts of Nottingham) will be finding new uses for old buildings, the intention being to turn the Lace Market into an area of "prestige" activities, such as the law and the arts (e.g. the new Festival Hall). There are still a few hang-overs from the bad old days of about three years ago, however. Passers-by may have wondered vaguely about the feverish churning of concrete mixers at the corner of Pilcher Gate and the sadly deformed Fletcher Gate - yes, it is a multi-storey car park!

Bendigo

BENDIGO, CELEBRATED NOTTINGHAM strong-man, pugilist, all-round sportsman, all-round drunk, and in his latter days reformed character and revivalist preacher, seems to be enjoying something of a revival himself, with the Playhouse's highly successful music-hall account of his life returning for a second run on October 2nd. Fans of Bendigo, old or recent, may be interested to learn that the house where the local hero was born in 1811 was knocked

down a few weeks ago. The premises in question were on the east side of Trinity Walk (formerly New Yard), were rather decrepit, and had long been converted into shops on the ground floor. There was very little to be said for them really, though apparently the fact that Bendigo was born there was not taken into consideration because nobody seems to have quite realised it. The new development is nothing special. The only thing that can positively be said against it is that, on the Parliament Street frontage, its flat roof will look rather uncomfortable at the side of its neighbour, which has a pitched roof. There may at least be the chance of a commemorative plaque, since the new City Planning Officer seems quite keen on that sort of thing.

Point not taken

RUMOURS FROM DEEP within the local authority establishment suggest that dancing in the (Raleigh?) street over the death of "Theatre Point" may be a little premature. Once the powers-that-be have got over their embarrassing little set-back, intentions are to press on again with the whole silly scheme (and don't ask stupid questions like isn't the site too small for the Council's needs? do we really need more office blocks? can we afford it?). It's important, therefore, that people start coming up pretty rapidly with specific ideas about what to do with the site, so that the concrete and glass Pharaohs don't win by default. One excellent suggestion is that the site should not be developed completely at all, but that buildings (housing, shops, community centre - as you please) should be erected around the backs of the existing buildings, leaving a small, attractively laid-out square in front of the Polytechnic. This might also compensate a little for the traffic boys' obliteration of Theatre Square for their Parliament Street Indianapolis 500, and furthermore should appeal to the prestige-conscious Poly (who were said at one stage to covet the Arboretum as centre-piece of their Greater Nottingham Campus).

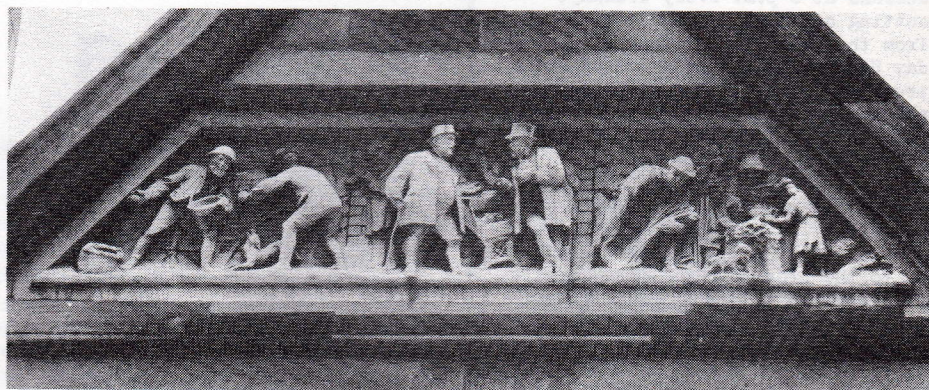
Knock knock

WHY MANY TENANTS in clearance areas don't know what's going on:

- Knock knock.
- Who's there?
- Housing Visitor.
- Oh, come in.
- Name? ... Date of birth? ... How long have you been living here? ... How many people live here? ... Who's your employer?
- I don't see why you need to know that, and anyway I don't need rehousing.
- Oh ... well ... er ... Date of birth? ... How long have you been living here? ... How many people live here? ... Who's your ...

If this interview is typical, with no explanation to those who didn't know that this was all to do with rehousing, no wonder people are confused!

Details of the threatened Thurland Street Bank



Grass Roots

Whose centre?

"THE REAL CENTRE around which the life of the city revolves." This is how Capital and Counties Property Company have described the Victoria Centre. With a £16 million mortgage on the place it is perhaps difficult for them to be entirely objective about the Centre's merits.

In contrast to the public relations image fostered by Capital and Counties, Grass Roots features on this page some of the real-life problems encountered by the Victoria Centre tenants. In part these problems stem from the history of the Centre itself.

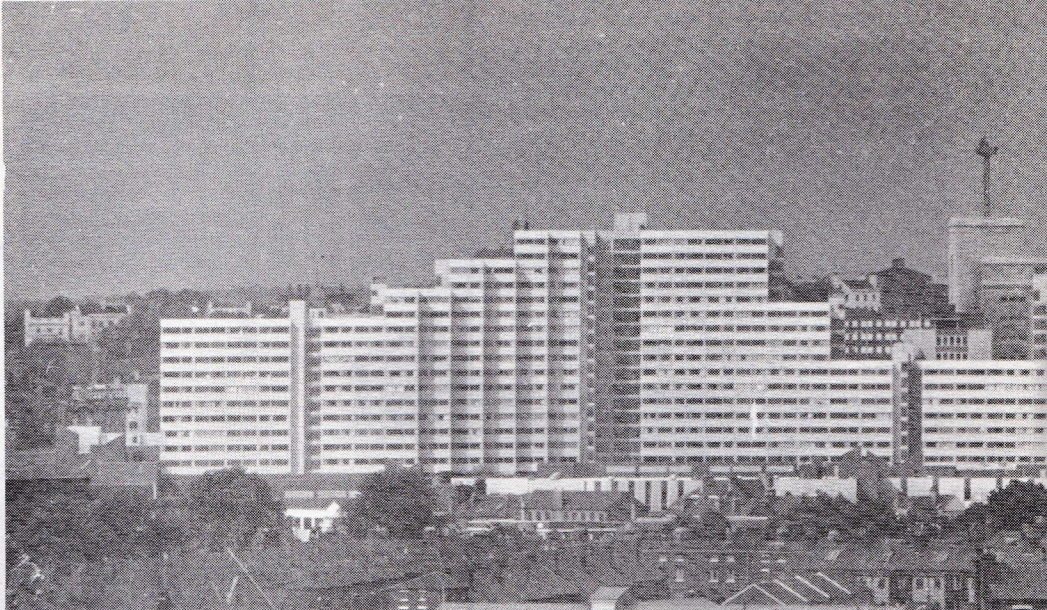
The 464 flats, along with the new bus station and market, were part of the "gains" negotiated by the City Council from Capital and Counties in exchange for granting planning permission for the shopping centre. It would appear that the negotiating position of the Council was not strong. Original plans for the Victoria Centre contained a swimming pool, sports centre, theatre and cinema - all of which were discarded by the time the scheme was built. What mattered to Capital and Counties were the capital value and rents of the shopping centre.

In further pursuit of these twin aims, a series of metal grilles was installed at the end of 1972. These descend at 8 p.m. every weekday, cutting off the main shopping malls from the public each evening and all day Sunday. Not only are the public prevented from strolling through the shops, but tenants of the flats can only use the lifts at each end of the Centre. Delays result, and these lifts are over-used and break down regularly despite frequent maintenance. The needs of both the tenants and the public are sacrificed to the protection of commercial property and a concern to keep down insurance premiums for the shops.

Another dubious aspect of the Victoria Centre development lies in the handing over of the control of a public place (a shopping centre) to a private police force. Who controls the behaviour of the security staff? Are they accountable to the public in any way? What procedure exists to investigate complaints against security staff by members of the public?

Were the members of the old City Council aware of the environment of closed circuit TV cameras, private police patrols and poorly trained alsatians that would emerge from their decisions?

While there is no doubt that Nottingham now has more than its fair share of new shops, Grass Roots feels that important questions of civil liberty have been overlooked in the process.



Yes, people live here

THE VICTORIA CENTRE was opened on June 2nd, 1972. Since then much attention has been given to it as a paradise for shoppers by local and national press alike. The Times, on February 28th, 1973, struck a characteristic note with its headline - "£10m landmark in planning offers valuable pointer to future shopping trends". The press's concern with how we might be persuaded the most easily to relieve ourselves of our money seems to have overshadowed the fact that the Victoria Centre houses some 700 individuals as residents.

Unknown

From St Ann's, the Victoria Centre flats dominate the city skyline, rather like an empty cigarette packet dominates an ash-tray. Yet, despite its awesome presence, the Victoria Centre is to many an unknown quantity. With carefully nurtured press reports of wild parties, vandalism and teenage prostitution, tenants of the Victoria Centre dwell under a rather tarnished cloud. Perhaps the time is now ripe for the tenants to take their appropriate place in the Nottingham community.

A tenants' association, VICTA, has been functioning within the flats for nearly two years. An association in a high-rise block meets with difficulties other than those experienced by associations which operate only at street level. In a high-rise block the chances of meeting your immediate neighbours are slim. There are no windows facing onto a common area. Beyond each front door there are miles of clinically empty corridors.

In addition, there are no local shops used solely by tenants. In the Victoria Centre, tenants shop impersonally with the whole of Nottingham. It may be argued that the shops in the Victoria Centre

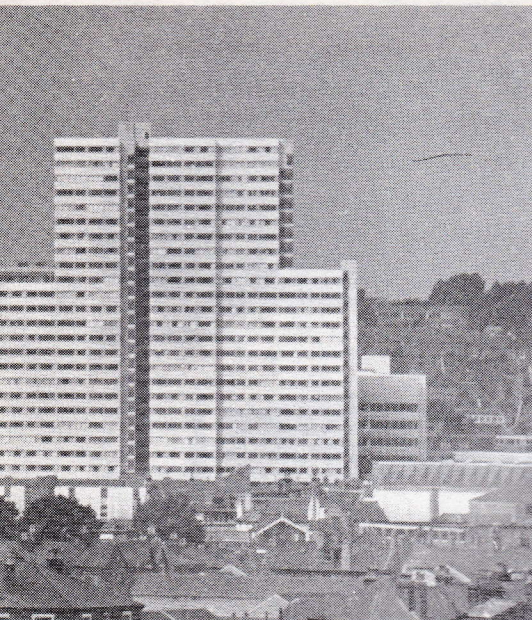
offer a greater variety than any "corner shop". This, however, is no substitute for the community services offered by the local shop. Since the flats are linked to the outside world by lifts which, unfortunately, open upon the city shopping centre, the tenants have a few precious seconds in which to experience any degree of community consciousness.

In terms of social facilities, the 700 tenants were provided with a roof "garden" (above the shopping centre), an area punctuated with ventilation shafts and the occasional "flower" bed. An association of tenants depends upon immediate communication. The basic design of the Victoria Centre flats prohibits immediacy or corporate involvement. The representative of the tenants' association must feel like a slightly wary prison visitor.

Communication

Any complaints or problems which individual tenants might have cannot be dealt with effectively by the association without an immediate communication network. It is paradoxical that a community so densely spaced should be unable to find its voice. In an effort to establish contact, VICTA began to produce a monthly newsletter, seeking to keep tenants informed while hoping to provoke feedback, comment and a general sense of involvement. However, a typewritten sheet falling on the doormat once a month does not produce the same involvement as person-to-person contact. Clearly, what the tenants suffer from most is the lack of a social centre or meeting place.

However, in the past two months circumstances have changed for the better. Thanks to the efforts of the Superintendent of the flats, the tenants have managed to secure a



ere too!

small but effective meeting place within the area of the flats. This is a room suitable for committee meetings, the monthly "forum" of tenants and any small group activities. Since the advent of this meeting place the Association has experienced a greater degree of feedback over immediate issues, while a considerable number of activities have proliferated.

Common problems

Tenants are now beginning to take over some responsibility for the roof garden, old-age pensioners are becoming more involved with the life of the community, young mothers are arranging baby-sitting groups and, after two years, children are beginning to use the amenities deck as a play area. The tenants of the Victoria Centre are beginning to identify themselves as a body with common problems and interests. The new meeting-place doesn't answer all the problems, rather does it indicate the nature of the problems of high-rise living.

In addition to communication between tenants, the Association needs to establish links with other groups and associations within the city. In September, a Consumers' Council concerned with the District Heating Scheme is to start. City Council representatives as well as consumers' representatives from SATRA, MATAR and VICTA will meet quarterly to deal collectively with individual or group problems over the heating scheme. "Grass Roots" will watch this consumer council with interest. It is to be hoped that this is the start of a process by which the Victoria Centre will lose its aura of mystery and become a part of the Nottingham community network.

The Victoria Centre development may say much for future shopping trends. It says a lot more about the weaknesses of high-rise development.

Know your rights

School meals & uniform

FREE SCHOOL MEALS & UNIFORM GRANT

Who can apply?

You can apply for free school meals and a uniform grant if your kids are either going to state schools or have a free place at a direct grant school.

Who qualifies?

You qualify automatically if you are receiving Family Income Supplement or Supplementary Benefit. You also qualify if your income is below a certain amount.

No. of kids	Net income
1	£16.05
2	£19.70
3	£23.35
4	£27.00
5	£30.65

(and + £3.65 for each extra kid).

Check the table. If your net weekly income is below the amount shown above then at least one kid will be able to receive these benefits.

What is net weekly income?

This can be a bit difficult to work out - but basically is worked out for most people like this:

1. Income after all deductions - include income from all sources.
2. Take away the first £1 of any family allowance.
3. Take away the first £2 of mum's earnings.
4. Take away rent and rates.
5. Do not include any maintenance paid to you.

Now check your income that counts against the number of kids that count. Your kids count if they are dependent on you and under 19 years.

How to apply

Apply at the Education Office, County Hall, West Bridgford. If in doubt about how to work it out, check at the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road (Tel. 411227), or write to the People's Centre for free information on Free School Meals and Uniform. Ask for WR 9, and enclose a stamped and addressed envelope.

SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT: NEW RATES

The new rates started on 22nd July, and you should now be getting the following basic rates:

Married couple	£13.65
Single householder	£ 8.40
Kids:	
under 5 years	£ 2.40
5 - 10 years	£ 2.90
11 - 12 years	£ 3.55
13 - 15 years	£ 4.35
16 - 17 years	£ 5.15
over 18 years	£ 6.70
(plus, or course, your rent & rates)	

For further information on Supplementary Benefit, basic rates, send a stamped, addressed envelope to the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road, and ask for WR 1.

Fair play

Living on a new estate?

Local authorities may obtain a grant of £18 for each child (or to be more precise for each child bed space), providing they provide a minimum of three square metres for each child.

Grass Roots asks how much room to play is there on your estate - and we don't count play space by pensioners' flats!

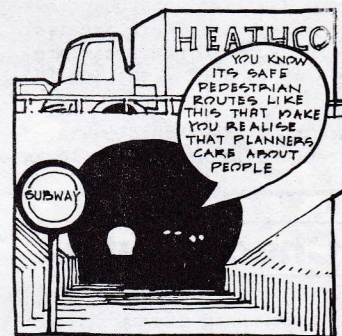
So, for example, if your estate was built with bed spaces for 100 children, the Department of the Environment recommend at least:

one play area of 150 square metres with at least three pieces of equipment from their list (unless it is planned for ball games).

They don't give grants if the standards aren't high enough!

Living on an older estate?

Well, now you know what the Department of the Environment think is needed for new estates, perhaps you'll find their "expert" opinion on what is fair will help you persuade your local councillors that it should be someone's job to buy and equip a place for your children to play.



If someone tells you this is nonsense, ask to see their copy of Department of the Environment Circular 79/72. In the guidance notes it says this:

- a) Neighbourhood play provision should not be regarded as a substitute for play space within housing areas.
- b) Play space - near family dwellings, not near dwellings designed for the elderly.
- c) It's not a good idea to build younger children's play areas right away from those used by their older brothers and sisters who may be watching them. Etc.

Perhaps next time you talk to a local government officer or Councillor, it will help to know the expert is on your side.

Balloon goes up

THREE YEARS' CAMPAIGNING by tenants and their representatives was rewarded at the beginning of July with the opening of the Balloon Woods Centre. The Centre is a Tenants' Hall, built on similar lines to the Hall in Hyson Green. Such an amenity has long been needed on an estate which is only served by a caravan shop and a public house. The Social Services Department provided a flat, which houses the Play Group and until July was a base for some activities which have since moved to the Centre.

The Tenants' Association is organising a variety of activities to cover a wide age range in order to encourage maximum use of the Centre by the tenants. So far, the response has been encouraging. The regular activities at the Centre include an old people's club (and Care Group), a young wives' group, gymnastics and keep fit sessions, a youth club, bingo, dances and discos, and, in the autumn, evensong and Sunday School.

Elisabeth Funning,
Student Community Worker, CVS

Finer Report

THE EVENT OF THE MONTH for one-parent families was the publication of the report by the Finer Committee, which was set up four years ago by Sir Morris Finer to look into the problems experienced by one-parent families. Nottingham's branch of Gingerbread, the self-help group for one-parent families, has been looking at the report. There are two main points which Gingerbread are particularly pleased with, and they are:

1. That the state should pay a guaranteed maintenance allowance



of £9.50 for the adult, and £1.00 for each child, weekly. All one-parent families are eligible.

2. That a Family Court should come into being which would help with housing and child care problems.

It is startling when you realise that one tenth of the population are one-parent families, which includes 620,000 adults and 1 million children. Of this figure, 520,000 are without fathers and 120,000 without mothers.

Gingerbread would like to point out, however, that these are only recommendations, and could be ignored by the powers that be. Hopefully this will not be so!

Vicki Stevens
Secretary, Gingerbread

N.B. Gingerbread has now been in existence for three busy months. It meets every Monday evening at 7.30 p.m. in the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road, and in addition members are present every weekday evening to give information about Gingerbread and to offer help to one-parent families. Events planned are

a day trip to Wicksteed Park and a fund-raising evening at the Heart of the Midlands on Monday, 14th October. The current campaign is for provision for children outside school opening hours to help parents who go to work. All one-parent families are welcome. There is no membership fee.

Clifton news

Mr Reg Davies (editor, "Clifton Circle") and Mr Hadfield (a teacher at Charnwood School) were co-opted onto the Executive of the Community Association last month. Both men are active in the Labour Party and are keen workers for the benefit of the Clifton Estate.

* * * * *

Mrs U.Roper, Secretary of Clifton Old People's Welfare and the Care Group, has been elected as a representative on the North Nottingham Community Health Council.

* * * * *

Clifton Adventure Playground Association are presenting a petition in support of their claim for Urban Aid to the City Council. A public meeting will follow on September 11th, when plans will be made for an independent association (which is at present sponsored by the Care Group).

Battered wives

THERE HAS BEEN A lot of talk about battered wives, and there have been many articles in newspapers, magazines and journals. But very little has been done. In Nottingham the situation is the same. The Evening Post has featured the problem and Radio Nottingham has had programmes about it, there have been conferences and meetings, and various groups have been set up, but there is still no refuge in either City or County. A conservative estimate of the number of women in Nottingham who suffer violence in their own homes is 1,400.

There is now to be a big public campaign around this issue which

Check-out

The Nottingham Campaign Against Rising Prices continue their watch on the price of food in a selection of Nottingham supermarkets. The following items from the family shopping basket

are the same as those recorded last month. Differences from last month's prices are shown in brackets. Scan replaces Azda, and so no differences are shown. Prices are given in pence.

(Week ending 20.7.74)	Burt	MacF	Sain	Scan
2lb sugar	14*	11*(+1)	15*	11*
1lb tea (cheapest)	8*(+1)	8 (+)	7*(+1)	8
8oz coffee (Nescafe)	63 (+3)	53 (-9)	68 (+8)	62
1lb marmarine (Blue Band)	24	---	24	23
15oz tin soup (Heinz)	9*	9	9	9
15oz tin baked beans (Heinz)	13*	---	12	10
1doz standard eggs	32	29 (+1)	26 (-1)	38
1lb cheapest cheddar cheese	36	35	34 (+1)	29
Shoulder of lamb (per lb)	23 (-33)	42 (-7)	31 (-14)	38
Mince (per lb)	50	36 (-1)	39 (-4)	34
Sausage, large beef (per lb)	---	31 (+1)	29	25*
Bacon, middle cut (per lb)	42 (-14)	60 (+17)	56*(+6*)	52

*Owing to the sugar shortage, only castor sugar was available in these places.

aims at getting the District Council to provide an emergency refuge for women in this predicament. A meeting held at the People's Centre on 17th July, attended by the representatives from the Salvation Army, Samaritans, Council for Voluntary Service, Midland Women's Aid, Nottingham Women's Liberation Group, Gingerbread and the People's Centre, decided that an intensive campaign with a rally on Saturday, 14th September should be launched. Everyone's support is called for. Petition forms, posters and car stickers are available from the People's Centre. We can arrange speakers for meetings, and we urgently need funds.

Please contact Carole Taylor or Teresa Woodcraft at the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham, Tel. 411227.

Join in!

Playscheme for Kendale Court and Kingsthorpe Close.

August 5th-16th on weekdays, for children over five years old. To be held on the lower field of Elliot Durham School, under the supervision of an experienced playleader. Mums, dads and teenagers also welcome to join in AND HELP OUT! The more the better.

Keep your eyes open for more news.

Bridget Speaight,
Council for Voluntary Service

Planning advice

NO DOUBT SOME READERS attended the meeting in May on "Participation in Planning" organised by the Nottingham Council of Social Service. One of the ideas put forward was that community workers and planners employed by organisations other than local government should give help to local voluntary organisations involved with planning and environmental issues.

Although such a full-time worker does not exist in the City, the Community Council for Nottinghamshire (a co-ordinating organisation concerned primarily with the problems of rural areas, and with servicing a range of amenity associations) was able to appoint a Countryside Officer in December, 1973, whose role is rather similar to that described during the meeting. The money for this post comes from the Department of the Environment, who expect that the Countryside Officer will help rural communities to formulate views on their needs and to take account of plans and strategies affecting their future.

In detail, this involves, among other things, helping parish councils and local amenity associations with local planning proposals and specific planning applications. Since April, parish councils have been able to claim the right to be consulted on all applications within their parish areas. Another aspect of the work has been the organisation of a conference of all the

Cont. overleaf

HELP WANTED

The C.V.S. Adult Literacy Scheme, which has voluntary tutors for adults with reading and writing difficulties, has come upon an unusual problem - to find a tutor with the special skill required to help a young man of 19 who is deaf.

Will anyone who can help please get in touch with Mrs Kilpatrick at the C.V.S., 31A Mansfield Road, Nottingham. Tel. 46714.

Nottingham Hearing Aid Service

Supplies and services for the hard of hearing and the hearing aid user.



5 SAVAGES ROAD
PUDDINGTON
NOTTINGHAM

25
viennaloud

...making aid for happy life

Home Appointments
Phone Notrm. 213065 - 285596

WANTED...

People who care

Throughout Nottingham, voluntary groups have sprung up to meet a variety of different needs. The range of groups is vast. It includes helping at clubs for the elderly, playgroups, the physically and mentally handicapped, entertaining in hospitals, decorating, gardening, helping families, and befriending the housebound or lonely. Most of all, groups depend on the help of people like you. So if you've got some time to spare and you would like to help out in some way, then why don't you contact us and find out about the various opportunities that exist.

The Voluntary Work Agency,
Notrm. Council of Social Service,
31a Mansfield Road,
Nottingham.
Tel. 46714.

WILL YOU SLEEP ALONE TONIGHT?

HAVE YOU A SPARE ROOM?
COULD YOU TAKE AN ELDERLY PERSON?
AGE CONCERN: TEL. NOTTM. 46714

YOU CAN READ THIS

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO CANNOT?
HE CAN BE HELPED TO READ AND WRITE.
LESSONS ARE FREE AND CAN BE ARRANGED
IN HIS OWN HOME.

DETAILS FROM:

M. D. KILPATRICK,
31a MANSFIELD ROAD,
NOTTINGHAM.
TEL. NOTTM. 46714.



THIS IS THE SIGN OF **HOME BREWERY CO. LTD.**

Most families in
Nottingham*
find CO-OP
membership
pays!

* And in Long Eaton,
Grantham, Hucknall, Pinxton,
Retford, Stapleford,
Sandiacre, Boston & Skegness.

Application forms in all shops,
or from Greater Nottingham
Co-operative Society,
Public Relations Department,
243 Derby Road, Lenton,
Nottingham. Telephone: 44021.



amenity associations in the County to enable them to comment on the County Structure Plan in a relevant and constructive way.

It could be that a person doing similar work is needed within the City to assist residents' associations and other voluntary bodies. Help of this kind is already given by a group of planning students at the People's Centre, but there are many advantages in employing someone who is able to work full-time, and is able to use practical experience of planning.

Birmingham is one example of a city where residents' associations are able to call on the services of a trained planner who has no direct involvement with the local planning department. A similar experiment might be considered for this city.

Tom Miller,
Countryside Officer,
Community Council
for Nottinghamshire.

Up the Supp!

Subject: Supplementary Officers.
Object: How to make their visit as painful as possible.
Reason: When they become too nosey, such as trying to prove cohabitating.

Remember that the dullest day can be one of the happiest with a visit from the Supplementary Officer. Catch him off guard right from the start: smile at him. Give him a cup of tea, then another. After he has had about five and he asks to use the toilet tell him "NO".

Sit him in the chair with the wobbly leg. If it does not fall away under him without any help, kick it away from under him.

Let him hold the baby when it has just filled its nappy. It's better still if the baby has the runny variety - this is always good for a laugh as the facial expression of the Supp. Officer has to be seen to be believed. The look of utter

anguish should be seen by all your friends, so invite them in to watch.

If you feel like being spiteful get him to hold a cup of tea in each hand and then tear up all his notes, warning him that if he dares drop the cups on your new carpet you will claim for a new one.

If his pencil breaks don't loan him one of yours.

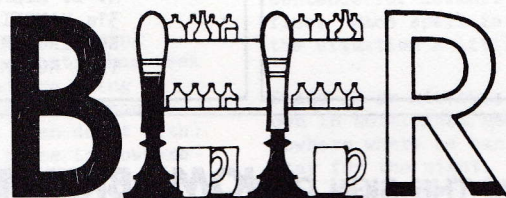
Sit him in a metal-framed chair, wired to the mains. (Whoever said "That's shocking" remember I am doing the funnies.)

This one gets the whole street laughing. While he is in, call the police and swear blind that his car has been abandoned there for weeks and get them to tow it away.

This Government White Paper is issued by "UNIT" for your help and guidance. None of the above helpful hints must be used on any Supp. Officer who may give you any help, no matter how tempted you may be. Remember, there is always next time.

(Found pinned to a notice board at the People's Centre.)

DRINK



STEPHEN MORRIS

Concern at Clifton

NOTTINGHAM IS IN the middle of its biggest educational upheaval of recent years. Soon all secondary education will be fully comprehensive, with a two-tier system of schools taking 11-16 year-olds, and open access sixth-form colleges.

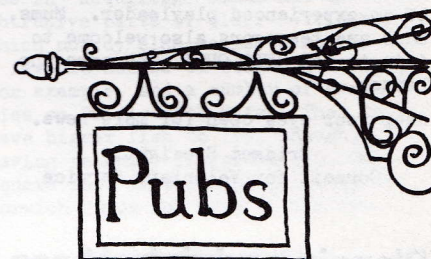
Clifton has always been unique, with Fairham Comprehensive School for its boys, and selection at 11 plus for their sisters. Clifton Hall Grammar School for girls has therefore occupied a rather privileged position for some time, and naturally there have been violent protests at plans for its closure. This concern may be a little selective, however, as the following comment from the Clifton Estate suggests:

"The City Council must be very pleased that hundreds of parents turned up in pouring rain on July 2nd to oppose the plan to close

Clifton Hall School in Clifton Village. On 14th August, 1973, at a public meeting called by the Community Facilities Committee at Farnborough School there was less than a handful of residents, and one Councillor was overheard expressing disgust at this lack of interest in Clifton by residents.

"Now that there is such a phenomenal increase in interest in the future shape of Clifton, perhaps the Community Facilities Committee will call another public meeting (and not during the holidays when no-one will be there).

"One naively presumes, of course, that all of those interested in Clifton Hall are also interested in the rest of Clifton, and one wonders where the parents of boys at Fairham Comprehensive stand - in total silence?"



THE ORIGINAL SPREAD EAGLE stood at the corner of Burton Street and Goldsmith Street on a spot now occupied by a bit of wall, a bit of grass and the Trent Polytechnic. When the site was cleared in the fifties, the title moved across the road to the present incumbent, a Bass-Worthington house tucked in between the Masonic Hall and the old Playhouse.

It could be that the landlord hasn't found out yet that the Playhouse has moved to Wellington Circus, since he seems surprisingly keen to keep the front part of his bar empty for use at the interval by "people coming in from the play". As these never materialise, this could be just a ploy to keep the bar empty - one of the Spread's peculiarities is that the landlord seems offended if his pub gets too full.

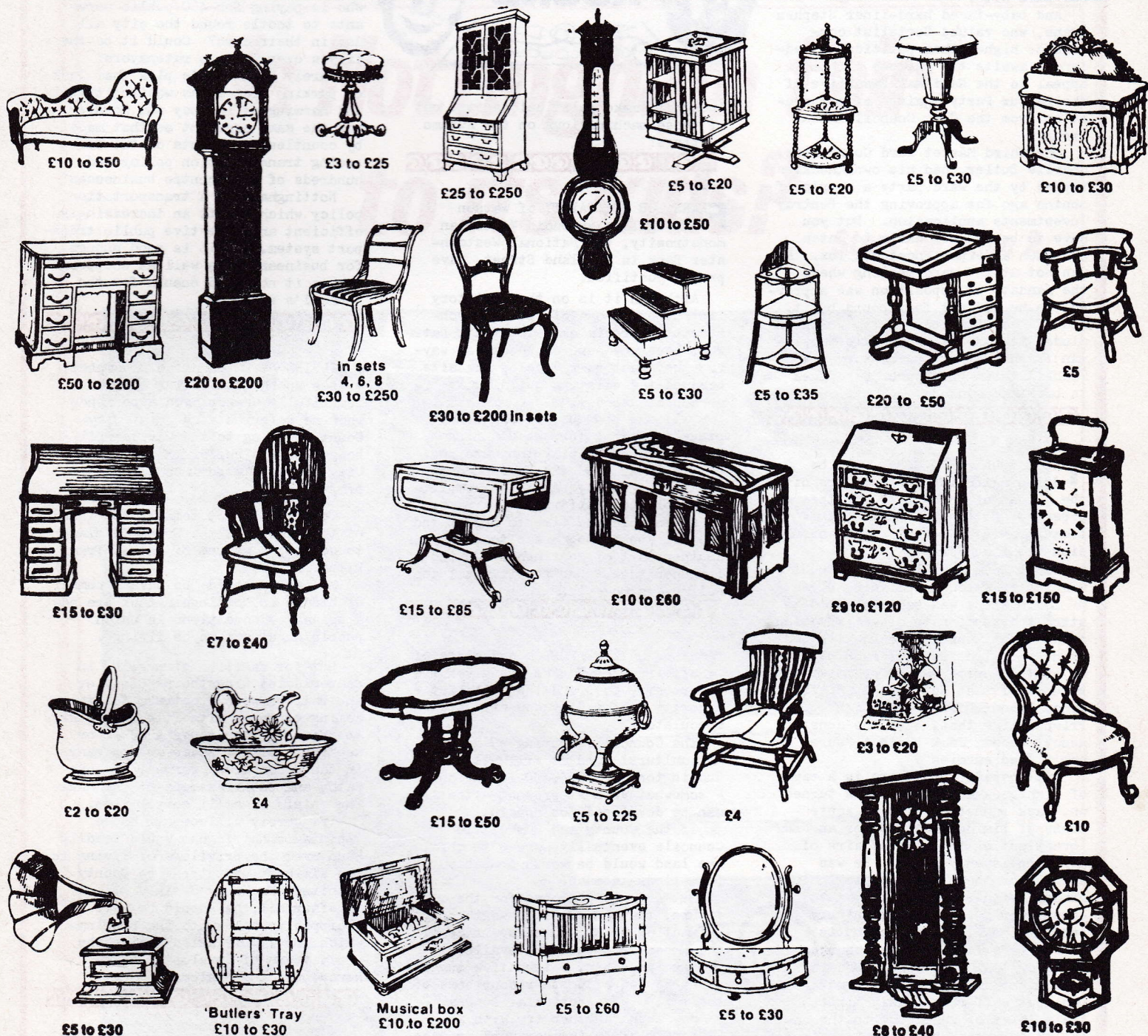
This may explain its slightly off-putting reputation for being inhospitable, but it does make the Spread a safe bet for a quiet drink in comfort even on a Friday or Saturday night, since the bar is rarely full and there's usually room to sit down.

There's not much wrong with the beer either (Bass at 18p and Worthington 'E' at 19p a pint), and as long as you don't intend to talk too loudly or move two tables together (very provocative this, suggesting, no doubt, sociability and, therefore, possibly noise), it's quite a civilised place to go for a drink. But then civilisation isn't what everyone demands from a pub ...

WANTED

We urgently require to purchase items as illustrated below in any condition. We also require any old Barometers, Mechanical Money Boxes, pieces of Porcelain, China, Pewter Plates, Furniture, etc., in fact, anything which is old. Our Buyers will be pleased to call any time to value or buy.

(We will also purchase any parts of Clocks, Music Boxes, Mechanical Toys, etc.)



The Jug & Bowl

5b ARKWRIGHT STREET, NOTTINGHAM

RING NOTTINGHAM 864077

MEANWHILE, back at the East Nottingham ranch ... cattle baron Jack Dunnett is still having trouble with some of his cowboys.

The political repercussions of the Theatre Point affair rumble on in ever-widening circles. Market Ward Labour Party now demand the heads of their chairman Coun. Harold Roe and secretary Coun. Denis Carroll on a plate for ignoring their "mandate" to oppose the application for a huge all-purpose council office block on the Theatre Royal car park site.

And baby-faced hard-liner Stephen Evans, who valued Socialist conscience higher than political expediency, awaits the outcome of his appeal to the National Executive of the Labour Party against excommunication from the City Council Labour Group.

The third Market Ward Councillor, Charlie Butler, had his own knuckles rapped by the ward party a couple of months ago for approving the Bentray Investments application. But you have to be up very early to catch out such an experienced old fox. He was not at the ward meeting where the mandate of opposition was approved, so he did not feel bound by it. And the constituency party, which includes Messrs Bill Dinwoodie (chairman), John Carroll (secretary), and Frank Higgins (treasurer), refused to back the censure.

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**T**HE LABOUR PARTY'S NEC will be drawn again into the affairs of the "Vegas of the North" for the appeal by Nottingham University lecturer Dieter Peetz against expulsion from the Party.

Apart from a badly-handled public meeting at which campaigning Blyth MP Eddie Milne was sadly misused to attract attention to dissatisfaction among constituency members with the grandly-called "Dunnett machine", Mr Peetz's crime was to promote the Friends of East Nottingham Constituency Labour Party - and with Friends like that, says the constituency caucus, Jack Dunnett "sure don't need enemies".

But despair not, there is a ray of light. When the heat was turned on, Jack Dunnett - with an acute sense of timing - called for an NEC investigation into the affairs of his constituency party. He was astute, or honest, enough to include himself with everyone else in the constituency political machinery for scrutiny to clear public doubts.

And this is more than can be said for the local leadership, who the same night called for an investigation, but self-righteously limited their terms of reference to the so-called "disruptive element" in their ranks.

Thus an inquiry is on the cards. And those people concerned about the direction of Socialist politics in East Nottingham - like Lenton Ward Labour Party, who called for a probe after the February election - have seen their wish come true. However, the outcome is unlikely to be known before Harold Wilson goes to the country.

Surely Mr Dunnett's new Tory opponent will not be unscrupulous



enough to make political capital out of these machinations on the Autumn hustings?

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FEARS FOR THE SAFETY of Watson Fothergill's splendid Victorian monstrosity, the National Westminster Bank in Thurland Street, have proved justified.

Although it is on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, Nat West have now gone on record as saying they want to redevelop the site because the existing building is uneconomic to use.

Will the pressure of big money prove too great for the Planning Committee? Hopefully they are too enlightened. And the Environment Department rarely sanctions demolition of listed buildings.

But now is the time to object and protest about the threat to yet another part of Nottingham's dwindling heritage. Don't wait until the bulldozers move in.

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**T**HINGS HAVE REACHED a sad state of affairs when Tories are given the opportunity to brand the Socialist majority on the City Council as land speculators.

The Council is buying 39 acres of agricultural land at Willwell Farm, Ruddington for £224,400 in the hope - somewhat vain at present - that it can be developed for housing.

If the County and Rushcliffe Councils eventually agreed to this, the land would be worth probably four times as much.

But as an investment for the future, the land will be worth only a fraction of the purchase price if the Green Belt policy prevails.

Perhaps, then, alternative suggestions are in order to recoup some of the ratepayers' potential losses.

How about another try with an Eastcroft-style incinerator? Or some brand new all-purpose council offices? Even a gambling complex in tribute to the Council's strategy and the performance of the former owners who successfully pumped up the land's value beyond recognition in the comparatively short time they owned it?

Or if all else fails, what about Britain's first experimental local government brothels - a golden opportunity to get the totties out of the Forest Road area for good.

**T**HE MONTH'S black mark for bad diplomacy is awarded to John C. Haslam, the City's Director of Technical Services.

While the City and County Councils wage war on the commuter motorist, he pleaded with Nottingham Policy and Resources Committee for an allocation of 460 car parking spaces for council staff - 237 of them in public car parks.

He is backing a loser either way. If they are really necessary for staff to carry out council business, who is paying for 460 public servants to tootle round the city all day in their cars? Could it be the city's overgenerous ratepayers?

Surely Mr Haslam's plea that lack of parking spaces was wasting time and harming efficiency and morale was the same argument as that made by countless opponents of the far-seeing transportation policy and hundreds of city centre businesses?

Nottingham has a transportation policy which boasts an increasingly efficient and effective public transport system. If it is good enough for businessmen as well as shoppers, why is it not good enough for the Council's staff?

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HOUSING DIRECTOR Malcolm Campbell Lee spoke from bitter though beautifully underplayed experience when he referred at a joint City-County meeting to the way council house tenants suffer in some of the City's newer "experimental" housing projects.

The City is not totally convinced of the virtue in the County's plans to develop a system of "homes from kits".

Mr Lee admitted "We have a number of blocks in Nottingham that are now a tragedy - conditions in which people ought not to be living".

But for families struggling in damp-riddled Kingsthorpe Close or the Balloon Wood Alcatraz, for those coming to terms with life in the sky in the notorious tower blocks, or seeking a bit of peace and privacy in the Hyson Green warren, the sympathy and embarrassment of the housing chiefs is small consolation.

Yet surely all council house tenants in Nottingham would readily hand over the privilege of living in the kit-home prototypes to County Architect Mr Henry Swain.

After all, he should be well equipped to cope with the problems which inevitably arise during the early years of developing a new house-building system.

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**G**RASS ROOTS achieves a new dimension in notoriety - Coun. John Carroll, City Council Leader, recently branded it "seditious literature which bites the hand that feeds it".

At least he must read it. Some of his colleagues would do well to follow suit. It may give them real insight on "rank and file" thinking among those the political theorists tell us they represent.

**Barker**