

# Nottingham Voice



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Education Committee proposes to save £30,000 a year on heating bills by extending school holidays in the winter and cutting back on the long summer holiday instead.

The scheme, which would first take effect in 1977-8, would add two days to the Christmas holiday and three to the Easter holiday, reducing the summer holiday by five days to compensate.

Discussions with teaching unions will take place on March 17th.

There are a number of doubts about the scheme. The figure of £30,000 has been queried, for example. It is described by the Education Authority as the difference between the cost of heating schools during the winter and during the summer. But weather conditions are notoriously variable, and this figure may well be over-optimistic. And in the total education budget of over £60 million even this saving is negligible (0.05%).

Further problems arise with classes taking public examinations. At a crucial point in the course they will lose a week of teaching which cannot be made up by extending the summer term because by then the exams will be over and the students will have left school.

Nor are parents likely to welcome a scheme which restricts their choice of date for a summer holiday.

In fact, the scheme has all the marks of the silly bureaucratic doodling so familiar in a British "crisis".

For a petty and uncertain saving of £30,000, the quality of education will suffer, and students and teachers will have a week lopped off their summer break in exchange for the joys of an extra week in the balmy English winter.

It is to be hoped that, for once, Bill



Cairns and his spineless cronies on the Education Committee put their thumbs firmly down on the over-active mandarins of their autocratic department ●



MORE TROUBLE has broken out recently for the City Council over the Balloon Wood flats where complaints from tenants now include falling masonry and toilets regurgitating back into bathrooms as well as the old favourites of condensation and leaks. It is rapidly becoming apparent that the whole complex of flats, housing some two and a half thousand people, needs extensive remedial work (or blowing up?).

This is on top of difficulties the Council are facing on another block of flats, the Kildare Road complex, where the estimates for repairs now exceed the original cost of construction. And tenants at Balloon Wood may well find the Council reluctant to undertake similar expensive work.

However, Voice legal experts point out that tenants could encourage the Council to do something by the simple expedient of suing the Council for damages. Under Section 32 of the 1961 Housing Act, all tenants have an implied contract with their landlord to the effect that a dwelling should be in a reasonable state. This means that if any defects damage the property of tenants or cause them expense (by damaging decorations, etc.), then the tenants have

the right to claim damages in the County Court! ●



TWO "TEMPORARY" social work assistants, employed by the Social Services Department for over sixteen months now, are to be politely shown the door at the end of February. These social work assistants were appointed on a temporary basis until vacancies for actual social workers could be filled. These two vacancies have now been filled as a result of promotion within the Department and an outside appointment.

Despite attempts by social workers and assistants to influence management to define their role, the social work assistants have largely been performing the duties of social workers. Since they work at a lower rate of pay, their dismissal comes as a bitter blow. Sixteen months is rather a long time to be regarded as temporary and both assistants feel that they have been shabbily exploited now that they are to be dismissed at the convenience of management ●



THE UNREMITTING ambition of Michael Cowan has paid off. Unless he manages to fritter away a near-23,000 majority, he will soon be joining the corridors of power he has so long yearned for as the "honourable member for



Ashfield". After years as the big debating fish in the small pond of city, then county, politics, the former Trent Poly lecturer has capitalised admirably on the surprise departure of David Marquand for Brussels.

The short-list presented a formidable array of opposition: county and district councillor Frank Haynes, who collected the NUM nomination - usually a safe ticket to power; county Leisure Services Committee chairman and Labour chief whip Michael Gallagher, who also has strong connections in the Mansfield area and who apparently was convinced he was heading for Westminster; former Beeston constituency MP Tony Gardner; and another lecturer, former Parliamentary candidate, Josh Bamfield.

Despite his attempt at a shock-horror pit-closure dramatic-secret-report campaign, University lecturer and Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation heavy Ken Coates failed to make the final five, none of whom - ironic for an area with such staunch Socialist traditions - could be remotely considered left-wingers.

Cowan will follow the footsteps of his predecessor as county Finance Committee chairman, the affable Beeston MP Jim Lester although we hope our Michael remembers to sit on the opposite benches: things are always so confusing for a new boy.

Not that Bro. Cowan is short of a colleague or two in Whitehall. As Labour group finance spokesman on the Association of County

Councils, he has had frequent contact up to ministerial level and beyond.

David Marquand is expected to take the Chiltern Hundreds within the next few months to assume his role, full-time, with Jenkins's Eurocrats.

This should give Cowan time to mount his campaign, get a few more tips from friendly Jack Dunnett, in whose company he often now figures, and for the NUM to make up their mind about political and financial support for their new non-NUM comrade. Not that this should pose much of a hurdle for Nottingham's most eligible and singular bachelor.

In the meantime, Cowan has also been reselected to stand for Wollaton in this year's County Council elections. His earlier departure to higher things means he probably won't have to suffer the indignity of the Tories' takeover at West Bridgford Kremlin.

Already the smiles are broadening and the gait is more sprightly among the Tories he has harangued and insulted for four long years. And if their inscrutability slips a little, I am sure there's many an officer will admit at least a massive sigh of relief.

Meantime, Marquand's long-awaited biography of Ramsay MacDonald is supposed to be ready for publication in March. Only then can we judge if ten years of blood, sweat and tears over his idol have been worthwhile.

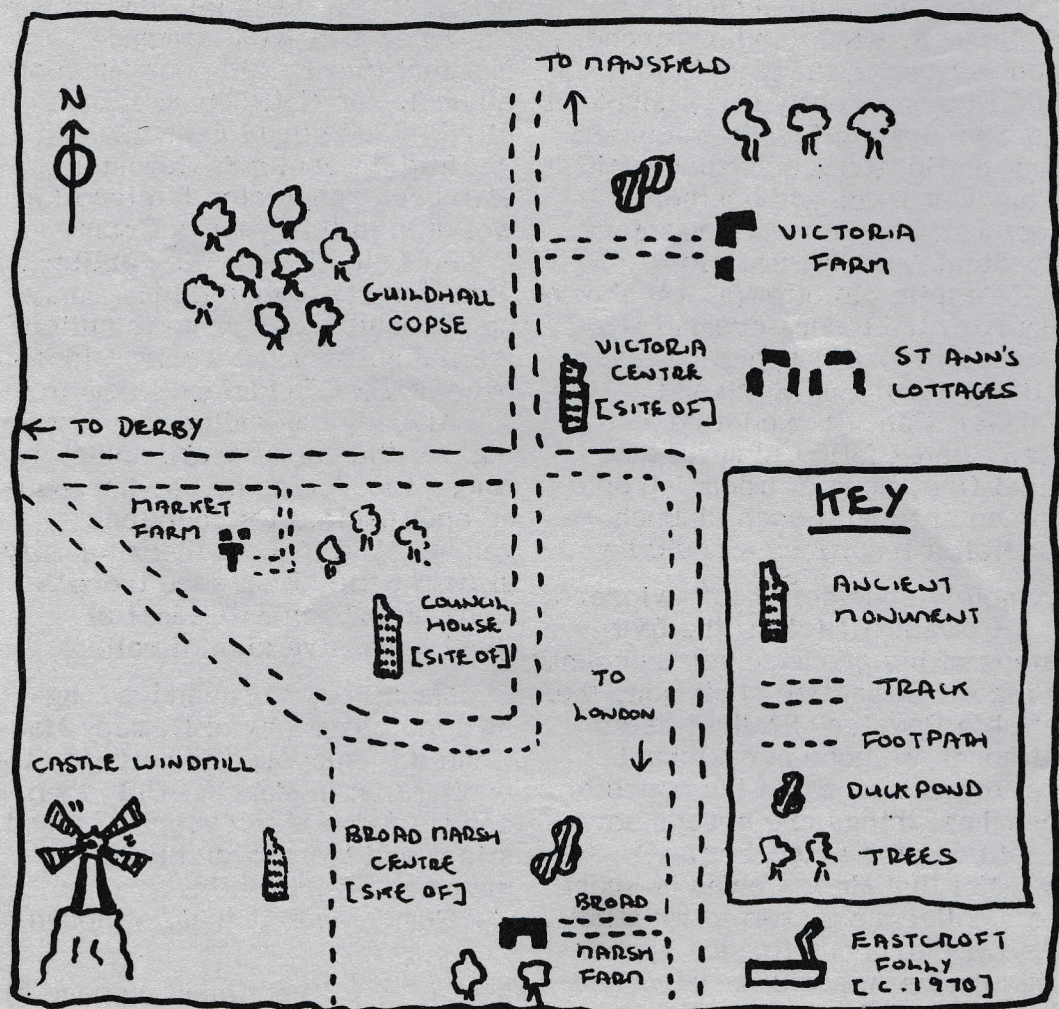
Rumour has it that, although

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# NOTTINGHAM A.D. 2077

FOLLOWING THE AMAZINGLY favourable reception given to the proposals to turn part of the Raleigh Street clearance area into an urban farm, plus reports that the population of Britain will take a nose-dive over the next few decades, is it too much to hope that future maps of Nottingham will look something like this?





# **PORTLAND ARMS**

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**PORTLAND ROAD, NOTTINGHAM**

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**BEST KIMBERLEY ALE**

**COOL GUINNESS & LAGER**

**CHIP BUTTIES**

**BACON COBS & SOUP**

**JUKE BOX**

**POOL TABLE**

**FRUIT MACHINES**

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**RUGBY PLAYERS WELCOME**

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(continued from page 3)

his Commons schedule apparently allowed him time to slave away on the great work, his new job will keep him too occupied. Good thing too . . . there's no saying what these overpaid wallahs will get up to when they're let loose on the Continent ●



### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jan 28: Trade gap shock. Now stands at £500,000,000 per day. Daily Express blames miners.

Jan 29: Ivor Richard flies to Geneva and back, thus saving weeks of expensive timewasting.

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#### Playground Association

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Playground Association,  
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Balloon Wood,  
Nottingham.

Promotion to cabinet now inevitable.

Feb 4: Trade gap up to £600m /day. Callaghan totally denies rumours of "taking a personal interest". Calls in Emil Savundra (dec'd) and Jim Slater.

Feb 6: President Vorster arrests everybody who ever was, has been, is, may be, or in the opinion of anybody else whatsoever, could be a member of any political organisation.

Feb 7: Idi Amin flies to Geneva; tricky landing in thick fog; slips and grazes his knee. Blames the miners.

Feb 12: Sterling finds parity with US dollar (for about 20 minutes in the early afternoon. Trading closes at £1.30p to the \$). Emil Savundra shows signs of life.

Feb 18: Raining. Daily Express blames the miners.

Feb 19: Vorster arrests everybody of skin shade equal to or darker than "Inda-Buff" (shade 63 in new Dulux Magicote Summer Shades Colour chart).

Feb 20: Ian Smith flies to Geneva. Amin won't let him land, so forced to roost in pine tree overnight.

Feb 21: Pound sterling finds parity with Italian lira . . . "in the interests of the Common Market". Ivor Richard defeats Jim Slater in tight struggle for job of Prime Minister.

Feb 24: Jim Slater buys Rhodesia.

Feb 26: Vorster arrests everybody whose name begins with M.



Feb 27: New £5 coins ridiculed in Parliament as "useless washers". Amin bites Ian Smith's leg - Emil Savundra flown to Geneva.

Feb 28: Jimmy Carter, Idi Amin and Ian Smith announce plans for a "70s-style" groundnut scheme for East Africa. Emil Savundra dies again.

Feb 29: Ivor Richard accepts Order of Lenin at his Canonisation Ceremony. Vorster arrests Emil Savundra. Pound sterling finds parity with the stars of the sky, sands of the shore.

Feb 30: Jim Slater buys Ivor Richard and establishes the 10,000 year Reich (after tax, say 9,500) with Rhodes Boyson at the helm.

Feb 31: Mountain flies to Mohamet.

P.J. GROB WORTH



INTERESTING TO note that busy Dr Joan Mitchell, wife of European Movement director and one-time Labour Party Regional Organiser in the East Midlands for two decades Jim Cattermole, has added another string to her bow.

Dr Mitchell, reader in economics at Nottingham University, has been picked for the 17-member committee looking into the workings of the City and financial institutions.

She was economic adviser to Shirley Williams, then Prices & Consumer Minister, from Febru-

ary 1974 until September 1976. She is also a member of the Labour Committee for Europe, the East Midlands Economic Planning Council, and a former member of the National Prices and Incomes Board.

The committee, chaired by Harold Wilson, looks for its worker-hero representation to TUC boss Len Murray and ASTMS overlord Clive Jenkins. Dr Mitchell and Coun. Cattermole are close friends and colleagues of Roy Jenkins.

So if the rest of the inquiry has the same political complexion, the cynics among us can rest assured that such "interesting" ideas as the nationalisation of the big banks will be unceremoniously

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for

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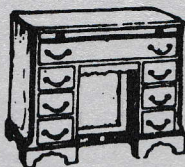
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A REPORT presented to the Education Policy Sub-Committee on 27th January makes mention of a letter from a government inspector concerning community teachers. The report comments: "I think that members will be interested to see a copy of a letter . . . about the work of Nottinghamshire's Community Teachers. I am sure it will be a source of pleasure to the Committee that the work of this part of the service . . . is now receiving national recognition."

It may be a source of pleasure to the Labour members of the committee, but hardly for the Conservatives. Their recently produced election manifesto promises to scrap Community Teachers if the Tories are returned to power in the May elections ●



THAMES TELEVISION has recently written to the City Council requesting the use of the Council House for recording a programme in the series "Matter of Morals".

"We are going to six different locations," says the letter, "to discuss the relevance or otherwise of the Ten Commandments to modern society. Each location has some connection with the content of the programme. For example, we are going to a school to discuss 'honour your father and mother' and a night club to discuss 'do not commit adultery'".

And for the commandment

"thou shall not steal", Thames wanted a location in Nottingham - on the grounds that Robin Hood was a local celebrity! ●



THE DISTRICT HEATING scheme has long been a thorn in the side of tenants in St Ann's. Despite mounting complaints (too expensive, unreliable, meters only read once a year, etc.) no-one has yet been seen to actually do anything. In fact the only ray of hope was when the Eastcroft incinerator (which provides the heat for the scheme) caught fire last year and nearly burnt down.

A more recent complaint to emerge, however, is that it is completely impossible to completely close down the heating system in an individual house. The thermostatically controlled radiator valves will not turn off completely - and so tenants continue to get hot water through the system even when they have tried to turn it off and, of course, they continue to pay for it.

However, one tenant has now achieved an important concession in his battle against the system. Mr Huxford of the District Heating Section of the Coal Board has agreed that this tenant can have the old valves replaced by ordinary manually operated valves so that he can fully control the system. And if they can do this for one tenant - why not for all?



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buried.

Indeed, the really jaded cynics among us are even more inclined to think this was Sunny Jim's reason for setting the whole extravagant jamboree up in the first place ●



THE TORY CITY COUNCIL seems to have got itself into a bit of a mess over the Theatre Royal modernisation scheme. The victims will be the staff of the theatre - and the ratepayers of Nottingham, whose interests the Tories so often claim to have at heart.

There are two reasons for the present difficulties. The first stems directly from the over-eager efforts of the newly elected Tory council last May to prune the budget wherever possible - however foolish and expensive this might prove in the long run.

So the 65-hour week contracted with the builders, Bovis, was rapidly renegotiated at a cut-price, no overtime 45 hours - in spite of the obvious fact that a closed theatre earns no money and the overtime was needed to get the theatre ready for the long and lucrative pantomime season next December. A third contract has now been negotiated - but almost certainly too late for the theatre to be ready in time.

So the new-look Royal will probably get off to a bad and

impecunious start. Efficient, business-like thinking, obviously.

Equally disastrous has been the dithering over who will actually run the modernised theatre. Nearly a year after taking power, the Tories have still not decided what form the management structure will take.

And further delays are inevitable - no decision will be taken before councillors have digested the lessons of a fact-finding mission to the Theatre Royal, Norwich on February 14th.

Meanwhile, over to Moss Empires, who have been running the theatre on very favourable terms since the city council bought it from them in 1969 (the council lease it to them for £100 a week). Open-handed Moss are sacking all fifty or so of the theatre's staff, apart from the manager Leonard Claxton, when the present pantomime season ends on 25th February.

The redundancy notices invite employees to re-apply for their old jobs when the theatre re-opens, but apart from complying with a union agreement on redundancy terms, the management makes no guarantees and takes no responsibility for any of its employees, even the half dozen who have been with the Theatre Royal for twenty to thirty years.

The excuse for this good old-fashioned meanness is that Moss do not know whether or not they will be the new managers of the theatre when it re-opens,



and so can hardly take responsibility for its employees. Added to which is the usual Moss refrain (heard oft in Nottingham) that they are only a poor little show-biz company who have fallen on hard times.

Not true, of course. Moss are a subsidiary of Lew Grade's disgustingly rich ATV, currently renowned for its Sunday night bio-pic co-starring Burt Lancaster and Moses. This modest little fable was filmed at a cost of £3 million.

All in all, then, a neat little example of how Tory freedom works. Fifty more in the local dole queue and a renovation scheme disastrously and expensively behind schedule.

Of considerable interest too will be the final agreement on the new management structure. Moss will no doubt continue to supply the bookings - but one trusts that, as good businessmen, our Tory leaders won't be too generous with the terms they offer the repugnant Moss ●



**DISTURBING SIGNS** of illiteracy hit the front page of the Evening Post on January 27th. In the lead article, on Sam Silkin versus miscellaneous High Court judges, the (admittedly rather difficult) word "prerogative" appeared four times - each time misspelt "perogative". And this after a screening process of (in ascending order?) reporter,

copy-taster, sub-editor, compositor, computer and proof-reader. We can forgive the rest (they're only human, after all), but we definitely think the computer should get the sack ●

**MORALISTS AMONG** our readers will have enjoyed a collector's item in the correspondence columns of the Evening Post on 28th January. Here, at feebly boring length, pious Radio Trent hack Bob Snyder tut-tutted at fellow journalists who had described Chesterfield mass-murderer William Hughes as a murderer. The point being that mass-murderer Hughes should not be labelled a murderer before his trial. And there wasn't going to be a trial because he was dead. See?

Fearless exposé spot: We have not yet heard Snyder's comments on the recent refusal of his own noble organisation to comply with a police request not to name the victim of an attempted rape. (A journalist comments: "Naming the victim in a case like this is completely against normal journalistic practice.") ●

A Valentine's Day Dance, organised by the People's Centre and Off the Record, will be held at the International Community Centre, 61b Mansfield Road, on Friday, 11th February, from p.m. to 2 a.m. (late bar). Tickets available from the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road for 50p (75p at the door) ●



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