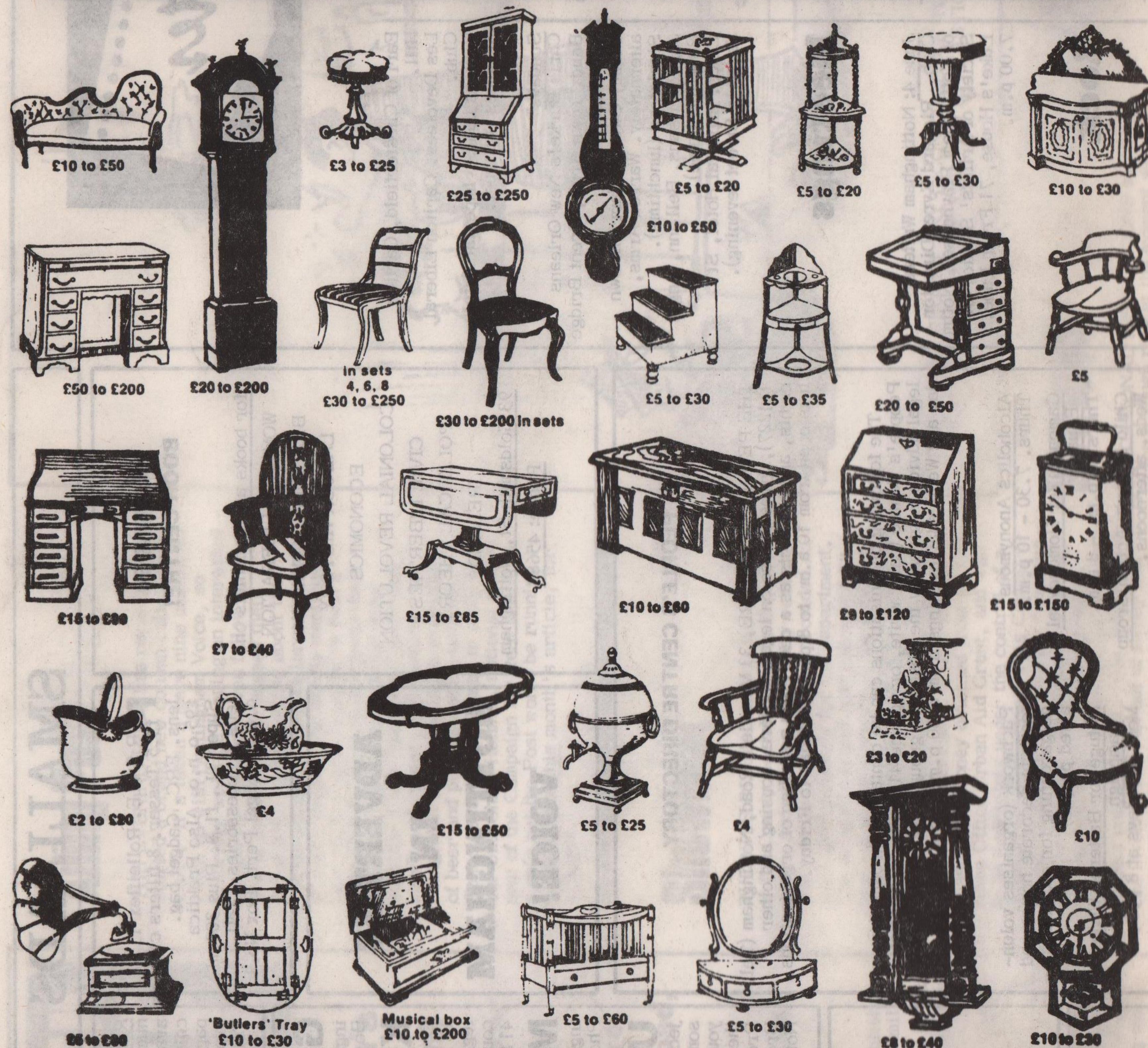


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No. 18 MAY 17 to JUNE 13, 1975 8p



# NOTTINGHAM VOICE

**Nottingham's  
independent  
monthly paper**

**People's Centre,  
33 Mansfield Road,  
Nottingham**

**Tel. Nottm 411676**

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## Collar no tie

COMMUTING MOTORISTS trapped in the queues resulting from the County Council's "Traffic Collar" scheme may like to amuse themselves with a new game - spot the Ford Granada.

The Ford Granada to look out for is a rich Tory blue in colour, registration number BPU 564L. This energy-saving 3000 c.c. model belongs to Councillor Frank Higgins, chairman of the County Council Environment Committee, and moving force behind the County's Traffic Collar proposals. More interesting still is the fact that this car is provided with Frank's recent directorship of the National Bus Company. However, rumours that the car has been specifically designed to fit Nottingham's newly introduced bus lanes must unfortunately be discounted.

## Disappearing act

OUR MARCH EDITION brought to light the strange disappearance of Dennis Carroll, Bridge Ward councillor and son of City Labour leader John Carroll. Dennis has now written from his Swansea retreat seeking the guidance of East Nottingham General Management Committee on whether to resign his Council seat. Not surprisingly, the electoral calculations made by the Management Committee advised against resignation, despite an expected absence of six months. During this time, Councillor Carroll expects to be absent from all Council Committees except the full monthly meetings of the Council. It might be worth keeping a wary eye on the travelling expenses claimed by a certain councillor in the coming months.

## Ailing Post

THE EVENING POST has recently started a brand new column called "Pub Call". It's taken a mere nine months to catch up with Nottingham Voice, so naturally we'll be keeping an interested eye on it. We might even follow up a few of the reports to assess their accuracy. Strange thing about the column is that it devotes large amounts of space to food and hardly mentions beer at all - usually no more than a column inch out of about twenty-four - and never gets beyond cotton-wool adjectives like "palatable" and "well-kept". Of course, the Evening Post being what it is, a genuine evaluation of beer and pubs is rather unlikely. Connoisseurs are advised to stick to our own Chris Holmes, national chairman of the Campaign for Real Ale: it's a safe bet the Post won't be running anything like this month's article, for example.

## Showboat

THERE IS DISSENSION in the ranks at the County Social Services Department - and all over who really controls that narrow boat which has provided so much good publicity for the department. The original project was conceived by several social workers in the City and the idea was to purchase and renovate a narrow boat which would then be used for kids in the community who were considered to be at risk. A boat was purchased with money obtained from a Home Office Urban Aid Grant, and was to be completely under the control of a Management Committee. This Committee collapsed last year during "reorganisation" in local government. The new hierarchy in County Social Services proceeded to ignore the existence of the project until recently. The social workers involved had run out of money and renovation was incomplete. Negotiations were begun to sort out the future of the project and a new constitution was drawn up. Unfortunately, the new constitution, after emerging from the depths of Social Services, was not quite what the social workers thought they had agreed to. The new constitution placed complete control of the project, including decisions on who should be allowed to use the boat, in the hands of the Director of Social Services. This is not compatible with the original Urban Aid application. Further, there are plans to use some of the Intermediate Treatment budget to complete the renovation and to employ a part-time worker for the boat. So instead of a low cost, informal project for the use of almost any kids the whole thing is rapidly turning into a rigid, bureaucratic, and rather expensive one. And no-one would suggest that it is because the boat has turned out to be such good publicity!

## Legal appeal

AN APPEAL HAS BEEN LAUNCHED following the lengthy trial of six paper sellers arrested for "obstruction" outside the Victoria Centre while selling Socialist Worker and Red Weekly. Legal aid was withdrawn from five defendants, so there are considerable legal costs. All donations should be sent c/o the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, and marked Legal Appeal.

The affair began last June when three sellers of Socialist Worker were arrested. Although the situation was discussed by Councillor Peter Price and Chief Superintendent Smedley, and an agreement was reached that there would be no further arrests if the sellers did not stand shoulder to shoulder, there were three more arrests the following Saturday. The first three arrested were fined and given costs to pay. If it had not been for photographic evidence, the same might well have happened to the other three. Despite this, legal aid was withdrawn from a total of five defendants.

This seems to be part of a general erosion of liberty at present. The Civil Rights Campaign has begun a campaign to combat this erosion, and details can be obtained from the People's Centre.



"WE REGRET ANY INCONVENIENCE TO OUR CUSTOMERS WHILE THE PUB IS PLASTICATED!"

## On a lead

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS may be in for a rough ride at the moment with cutbacks in educational spending, so it is nice to see them standing up for academic freedom. Recently a local paper (well, that's what they call us) contacted the Trent Polytechnic Surveying Department for a comment about the Traffic Collar scheme which is shortly being introduced. The intrepid Dr Ivor Seeley, Head of the Surveying Department, forthrightly announced that he would have to check with his bosses before saying anything. He checked with them and didn't say anything.

## Ombudsman

THE LOCAL OMBUDSMAN has now reported on the complaint made by the People's Centre against the County Council. His decision is that there was no maladministration on the part of the Policy Committee that deleted the People's Centre application for a grant under the Urban Aid Scheme. However, the ombudsman says in the report that two out of the three reasons given by the Council for turning down the application were not good enough - the fact that the Voice is published from the Centre is not relevant, and no evidence was produced to support the second reason, which was that the Centre provided poor quality advice. Indeed, the ombudsman was impressed with what the Centre was managing to achieve on a very limited budget. However, the final reason, that the Centre might be considered a duplication of the Council's own Citizens' Advice Bureau, was accepted by the ombudsman as having some validity.

Despite the rejection of the People's Centre complaint against the County Council, the City Council is obviously taking the ombudsman seriously. The City Solicitor has recently sent a letter to all councillors outlining some of the matters which could be investigated by the ombudsman. These include "allegations of bad faith in giving grants to voluntary bodies; allegations of improper allocation of Council houses; excessive delays in dealing with a particular matter".

None of this has helped the People's Centre, which continues to exist without any official funding at all. It may be that the Centre will be back with a new application for funds this year, and it will be interesting to see what the Policy Committee does with it.

## Letters

### Housing costs

Dear Sir,

I refer to the letter from Councillor Maynard, published in your April issue which, inter alia, stated that, "the (council) rent increases would have been larger had we not subsidised them by £1.8 million from the rates".

This implies that the ordinary ratepayers of this city subsidised the rents of council tenants by this huge amount.

Please allow me to make the following observations:

1. The General Rate Fund receives its revenue from the following sources (according to the April issue of the "Nottingham Arrow"):

Householders	32.3%
Shops, Offices, etc.	29.1%
Factories	19.7%
Other Sources	18.9%

2. It would seem from this breakdown that of the £1.8 million contribution to the Housing Revenue Account referred to by Councillor Maynard only 32.3% or £581,400 was paid by the domestic ratepayer.

3. But according to my information 52% of the total domestic rate comes from council tenants (in addition to rent increases).

4. It would appear therefore that the actual amount of the contribution by domestic ratepayers, other than council tenants, to council house subsidies is around £279,072 and not £1.8 million as had been implied.

5. As a council tenant it may be that I am over-sensitive about this but it would be interesting to know whether:

a) my interpretation of the figures is correct.

b) individual items are debited to the Housing Revenue Account which have little relevance to Housing as such (e.g. I understand a local tenants association recently made reference to an annual charge of £150,000 on the Housing Revenue Account for the cultivation of pensioners' gardens. O.K., but a proper charge on the Housing Revenue Account?).

c) rent rebates (surely a proper charge on social services) are debited to the Housing Revenue Account. One appreciates that items (b) and (c) have to be paid for but along with slum clearance they should be a charge on the whole community and not loaded (if this is so) on the Housing Revenue Account, which, when in deficit, is used as a stick with which to beat the council tenant.



6. You might, as the only truly independent paper in this city, undertake an investigation into the administration of the Housing Revenue Account so that all the facts and figures may be brought out into the open. The true situation might well show that the council tenant isn't being subsidised locally by quite so much as is generally believed.

Yours faithfully,  
C.F. Lynch,  
72 Abbey Court,  
Lenton,  
Nottingham.

(Editors' note. Your reasoning seems to be correct. However, we are not sure where the figure of £1.8 million comes from in the first place. According to the Report of the City Treasurer to the Housing Committee in January this year the estimated subsidy from the rates was in fact £1.2 million, rather less than Councillor Maynard suggested. The proportions borne by different sectors seem about right. We would also point out that owner/occupiers buying on a mortgage receive substantial subsidies in the form of tax allowances - paid by everyone from general taxes. The other startling figure to come from the Report is that, out of a total estimated expenditure in 1974/5 of £13.9 million, over £10.5 million went on debt charges - that is about 75%. The investigation continues - we hope to publish a full report on the Housing Revenue Account soon.)

## District heating

Dear Sir,

Your recent supplement of the Nottingham District Heating Scheme was obviously of considerable interest to me, as Chairman of the Victoria Centre Flats Tenants' and Residents' Association.

I would, however, like to make a few observations on it, as I feel that the article was rather one-sided, and very much in the nature of "crying over spilt milk". Whilst it is deplorable that Eastcroft is a failure (those who made extravagant claims for it owe the ratepayers some compensation), it is too late to remedy this, and those few courageous tenants who are hooked up to Eastcroft and have fought to be removed from the system have soon discovered that alternative sources of heating are just as expensive, or more so.

Rather than complaining about Eastcroft as a whole which, as I have said, is a nasty fact of life, I feel that considerably more emphasis should be laid upon the unfairness of the "standing charge" system. All Eastcroft consumers are bound to a standing payment of 50% of the monthly prepayments regardless of the fact that they may consume no heat at all during the course of a year. As far as I am aware, no other supplier of heat makes this sort of charge, and as in many cases the amount exceeds £50 per year simply for service and equipment which may not even have been used, I find this the most deplorable aspect of the system.

Yours faithfully,  
K. Booth,  
Chairman, VICTA.  
19-03 Victoria Centre,  
Nottingham.

## Violence in schools

Dear Sir,

In your last edition of Nottingham Voice you suggested, under the headline "Bashing kids", that the recent campaign by my association to expose violence in schools might be little more

than "a recruiting gimmick for the NAS". Far from it!

The problem in Nottingham was first forced upon our attention when in the autumn term a number of our members reported attacks upon them by pupils. As trade union officials it was our proper function to raise this matter with the employing authority; conditions of service are second only to salary in importance when you are negotiating on behalf of your members.

Increasing violence is a social problem. Education may be seen as a major influence upon society. If the NAS, through its initiative can help solve the problem of violence in schools, and thereby reduce the level of violence in the streets, it will have done this county a great service.

Yours faithfully,  
Pete Inskeep,  
Press Officer,  
Nottinghamshire Federation NAS,  
14 Ridsdale Road,  
Sherwood,  
Nottingham.

## Alcoholics and society

Dear Sir,

The suffering alcoholic and society's ignorance or laissez-faire attitude.

The juice of the hop and barley is produced and sold under Government licence, and the majority of society benefits from the sale of all kinds of alcohol. Yet society as a whole despises, ridicules, condemns and even kills the suffering alcoholic, a by-product of this "drug". We can recall that the babies who were born deformed as the result of a drug, namely Thalidomide, were, rightly so, "compensated". Yet the alcoholic, the product of a socially induced disease, is conveniently written off. It is my opinion, being an alcoholic, that society has a moral, if not a legal obligation, to the suffering alcoholic and no-one is big enough to write him or her off. We are constantly bombarded on television, advertising boards, newspapers, etc. to buy alcohol, and every trick known to the business world is employed to make the populace invest in this drug, whilst, except for the efforts of a small minority, nothing is done to warn society of the dangers of alcohol, or to help those who have become its victims.

If, instead of pressurising people to buy alcohol, they were shown the ones who finished up with "wet" brains, also the shivering, sweating, stinking hulks of human beings reduced to less than animals, the one-parent families broken on the rack of alcohol, the ones condemned to stagnate in prison on and off for the rest of their miserable lives, the mangled and torn bodies of alcohol-induced accidents and the graves of those who became alcohol's complete and final victims, much would have been done to arm them with the weapons of knowledge and awareness.

Apart from making the public aware of the dangers of alcohol, what about its present living victims? This country dispenses largesse to all and sundry yet very little is spent on derelict alcoholics. What can be done? Let's start with crash pads and from there to units of continuous help - no half measures, no expense spared - no buts or ifs - these are our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers. We owe them a chance to live and feel part of society, and what is more we need them to help the rising generation - to be the educators of the alcoholic who is being born as I write this letter. They too have a part to play in a better deal for a fair and just society.

In conclusion, may I ask all who read this article to remember this disease is no respecter of persons.

One back from hell,  
(Alcoholic) Sam.



## MERRY-GO-ROUND

DID YOU KNOW THAT 12,720 abnormal loads moved through Notts last year? That wife-battering is on the up and up but in these "permissive" days complaints about sexual offences are declining?

That Nottingham south division's vice squad was disbanded after wholesale demolition of the Meadows drove prostitutes to more lucrative pastures in the north of the city?

That the traffic cops now have three "plain clothes" Rover 3500S V8 saloons to "advise" motorists and catch the high-powered offenders?

And that 36 of the 326 complaints made against the police in 1974 were proved justified?

It's facts like these and the stirring right-wing iron-fisted pen of Chief Constable Rex Fletcher that made his latest report one of the most entertaining reads for many months.

And appropriately the 82 pages of propaganda, action and statistics are bound in a blue cover.

It gets down to the nitty-gritty organisation of each department. There are a sergeant, five constables and seven horses in the mounted section, for example. Sheriff, a bay gelding, is replacing the splendid "Little John" who is near retirement.

Last year the mounted section helped at football matches at Nottingham, Mansfield Town, Derby County, Matlock Town and at a demo in Leicestershire. They carried out daily patrols in Nottingham, regular tours of Clumber Park, Thieves Wood and Newstead Abbey grounds to combat vandalism and "misbehaviour" - is this to help out the busy vice squad?

They provided ceremonial escorts at ten parades, attended agricultural shows, point to point and race meetings, searched for missing people and escapers from Rampton and won prizes at police horse shows.

All life is writ large in the mounties.

## Lurid

The threats posed by overstretching the force are explained in lurid detail by the eloquent Mr Fletcher. If crime goes on increasing at 15 per cent a year - juvenile crime trebled since 1968 - investigation standards will drop. So will the detection rate, which incidentally is allegedly well above the national average.

This, says Mr Fletcher, means more criminals at large to commit more crimes, which will receive even less attention. The hellish fires of anarchy are just around the corner.

The Chief Constable goes into technical detail about notable crime squad arrests, about the coups achieved by the stolen vehicles squad - one gent, it appears, got two Rolls Royces and a Jaguar XJ 12 worth £31,000, by deception - and the heavy scenes blown apart by the drugs squad.

He relates, for example, the tales of the man with a cannabis bush worth £5,000 in his house, another man with 19 cannabis plants growing healthily in his greenhouse and the horrific case of a woman injecting opiates who gave birth to a baby addicted to morphine and suffering from a blood disease caused by dirty needles.

But he is strangely coy about complaints against the force. All we can glean is that 12 per cent proved correct compared with 15 per cent in 1973.

Crime rose overall by 15 per cent but complaints in 1974 rose by a third.

All we are told is that seven of the substantiated complaints related to "incivility" - does that include heavy-fisted third degree? - two led to officers being subject to disciplinary proceedings and advice or warning was given in the other cases.

What sort of things had these officers been doing? Do we assume the worst?

Protection rackets, brutality and other all-American stunts?

The good liberal he assuredly is not, Mr Fletcher does not like parole - it leads to more people with "proven criminal propensity" on the loose, and this gives society a higher crime potential.

He doesn't seem to like community service orders, abolition of approved schools, suspended and deferred sentences, nor for that matter anything that keeps offenders out of jail. But here he blames the problems of introducing these measures too hastily rather than attacking them in principle.

## Kerb crawl

Mr Fletcher doesn't like prostitutes either: "These women ply their trade in increasing numbers to the annoyance of residents and passers-by and male motorists kerb crawl with the object of picking women up, often mistaking respectable women for prostitutes."

"Considerable manpower is devoted to these areas and many prosecutions ensue but court penalties do not apparently deter".

Many motoring fines were higher than those imposed on prostitutes he declares, implying crime behind the wheel of a lethal weapon is the lesser of two evils.

And in grand Victorian puritan manner he states: "The whole question is under government review and one can only hope that the result will be increased penalties and new laws whereby both men and women offenders can be adequately dealt with".

Drive the problem underground and what the copper on the beat does not see the public's heart will not grieve over, apparently. Steps are now being taken, Mr Fletcher ominously states, to counter the migration of totties into north Nottingham.

So ladies of pleasure, kerb-crawlers and pimps alike, you have been warned.

Sadly, letters of appreciation from other Chief Constables, from magistrates' clerks and members of the public plummeted from 528 to 447 in 1974 - a tough year for the force's public image?

But now for the good news. Sgt P. Hind won the police national angling title, the force had to cope with almost 300 less stray dogs and there were no reported cases of foot and mouth disease, swine fever, anthrax or fowl pest.

## Questions

You can't win 'em all dept:

1. Excommunicated Coun. Stephen Evans, relegated to the two smallest-spending City Council committees, naturally finds it difficult to get information from other departments and about the activities of the important committees.

So he asks lots of questions. He can then tell his constituents the answers.

But in the process of asking ten at this month's council meeting he was slammed by Labour leader John Carroll for asking too many questions - shades of the Kremlin. This wasted officers' time and cost the ratepayers' money because the answers had to be printed in the minutes, said virtuous John.

Then Coun. Evans was told that other members were on as many as six committees because they had the right knowledge and understanding of procedures and departmental working.

They were also members of the ruling Labour group's powerful caucus - but somehow that got left out of Coun. Carroll's diatribe.

2. For all his failures as Notts Education Committee chairman and his inability to read out Tolstoy-length speeches, Bill Cairns is a long-

(continued on page 5)

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## West Radford

THE WEST RADFORD Action Group has been formed in the Salisbury Street area, which lies between the Raleigh Works and Ilkeston Road. This area has been earmarked for industrial use since 1953 and for clearance since 1972. There are still 1,700 people living there.

Recently, the Health Inspectors have appeared in the area seeking information but giving little in return. WRAG was formed as a result. On Thursday, May 1st, Bill Allitt from Guthrie Street and a few others formed a committee and contributed £11 to get things going. By Friday they had agreed to hold a public meeting which was fixed for Monday. Leaflets were printed and distributed over the weekend, with the result that 260 people turned out for the public meeting.

The meeting outlined what the Committee knew of the clearance proposals and the future programme of WRAG was decided. They would hold meetings with councillors and officials, start a newsletter, carry out a survey of the area, and work towards opening an Advice Centre. Most important, it was decided that no committee member of WRAG could be a member of a political party. Jean Crumley (chairwoman of MATAR) and Mel Russell (the first chairman of MATAR) passed on the experience of the Meadows tenants.

For an organisation which formed in only four days the success of WRAG is superb. From now on, issues like housing and planning won't just be left to the politicians and planners in West Radford.



Improved property at New Basford

## Raleigh Street

ORDINARY PEOPLE can make an effective stand against bureaucracy. This was proved when a group of local residents gave a fair trouncing to the assembled might of the local authority at the recent Public Inquiry into the City Council's Raleigh Street Area Compulsory Purchase Order.

The housing CPO consists of an area bounded by Alfreton Road, Forest Road, Oliver Street, Walter Street and Cromwell Street. Most of the houses in this area are of poor quality and in a state of extreme disrepair, and it is the Council's plan to demolish virtually all of them, and replace them with new housing. Also included in the CPO area, however, are two terraces of houses the residents of which believe should not be demolished, but retained and improved. These are numbers 22-59 Cromwell Street and numbers 2a-14, 30-90 Portland Road.

The campaign for the retention of these houses began in early 1974 when, in response to the wish of over two thirds of the residents of the terraces to stay in their homes, Family First Trust, a local housing association, carried out a feasibility study for their renovation. An outline plan was drawn up by a local firm of architects, which involved improving the houses to a high standard with a 30-40 year life in such a way as to allow all those residents who wanted to stay in the area to be able to do so. This scheme was considered by the Council's Housing Committee in October 1974 and rejected after what the residents considered to be a somewhat perfunctory hearing.

At this point the Family First Trust, because of commitments elsewhere, decided not to proceed with the scheme. The residents, however, did not lose interest in the future of their homes, and decided to bring their objections against the Council's redevelopment plans to the DoE Public Inquiry. Many of the residents had been told by Council officials "... there's nothing you can do. These houses are unfit, and they're going to come down". So they felt that there was no point in objecting formally.

By the time the residents met to discuss the implications of the Public Inquiry it was too late for statutory objections to be made. But by this time

they had decided that they had a good case despite what the Council had said, and decided to make a stand at the Inquiry. The DoE inspector, Mr Downing, agreed to hear the residents as non-statutory objectors. Some nineteen residents objected, and their overall case was presented by Brian Davey, a Cromwell Street resident and well-known local activist, who had the style and panache of a latter-day Norman Birrell.

Their reasons for retaining the terraces were: that most residents would prefer to stay in the area; that "unfitness" is not in itself a good reason for demolishing housing which could be improved; that improvement would be cheaper than renewal; that rehousing the residents displaced by a renewal scheme would lengthen the housing waiting list.

The Council's case for clearance of the area was presented by Stewart Dobson for the city solicitor, whose main witnesses were Roy Westerman, Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer, and Philip J. Mason, Assistant Director of Technical Services.

From the outset, Dobson had the air of a good advocate who knew his client had a weak case and would surely go to the gallows. It quickly became clear that his "expert" witnesses had not expected their testimonies to be subjected to the fierce cross-examination they received from the residents. Westerman, for example, was forced to admit that unfitness was a "subjective" concept; that there were houses in other parts of the city in a worse state of disrepair which were capable of improvement at reasonable cost; that his department had not made any attempt to cost improvements to the houses in the terraces; and, incredibly, that if one of the Cromwell Street houses were uprooted and replaced in an area of generally fit houses, then it would not be represented as unfit!

The residents accepted that in many cases the houses they were seeking to preserve were unfit by the legal definition of the term. It was their contention that they were capable of being made fit at reasonable cost, and they cited the estimates of improvement costs given in the Family First study to back up their case, comparing them with the cost of building new council houses in St Ann's and the Meadows.

The Council was reluctantly forced to admit that the figures proved that rehabilitation was much cheaper, with improvement costs averaging out at £4,800 per dwelling, as opposed to new building costs of in excess of £10,000 per dwelling.

In presenting their case, the residents took the unusual line of having each witness questioned by a fellow resident, and of sharing the cross-examination of Council witnesses between a number of residents. As a resident told me afterwards, "It made it much easier to present our case, knowing that we would be questioned by someone we knew well, rather than by a solicitor". And, as Mary Anderson, one of the residents' witnesses, said, "Public Inquiries may be commonplace events for officials, but they certainly aren't for ordinary people - it is a measure of how strongly we feel that we are here today".

Their tactics certainly seem to have paid off. Dobson afterwards admitted to one of the residents' spokesmen that he was taken aback by the strength of their case, and "very impressed" by their method of presenting it. The DoE inspector, too, was impressed, and he remarked that he'd enjoyed it more than any other inquiry he'd conducted.

It will be some months before the result of the inquiry is known but, whichever way the decision goes, the residents of Cromwell Street and Portland Road have demonstrated that ordinary people can themselves effectively do battle with the local authority.

IAN CUTHILL

## Windmill Lane

THE LIBERALS are always keen to talk about their belief in community action - or community involvement, which is really what it is - so it is nice to see them actually doing something. The East Nottingham Liberal Association has just produced a report on the Windmill Lane Estate modernisation scheme currently being carried out on the council houses in the area. The report claims that many tenants are dissatisfied with the way modernisation

has been carried out and lists a total of 163 complaints from 69 households. Among the things complained of were faulty and unfinished work, damage to existing fittings and furniture, and excessive delays. Although work was only supposed to take 6 weeks on each house, in some cases it has taken up to 21 weeks to complete work. One tenant went so far as to say he didn't want the contractors back to remedy defects because "they'll only break the place up again".

The report calls for an immediate investigation by the Council "into the methods of working, technical competence and work organisation of the Contractors". The contractors, HGS Ltd of Coventry, said that they had had no discussions with the compilers of the report and didn't wish to comment. They did confirm that they had obtained a copy, and the visit of the Divisional Manager to Nottingham recently was probably no coincidence. Meanwhile the Housing Department is saying nothing.

The Liberal Association have done an admirable and necessary job in bringing this situation to light, but it is a pity they don't appear to have grasped the basic premise of community action, which is that people themselves should take action to regain control over their own lives. The Liberal Association doesn't seem to be looking much beyond the idea of making contractors more efficient in future. Certainly their efforts to actually organise and inform people in the area are minimal. They are not even distributing copies of the report to the households that are affected. I sincerely hope that the next report that comes from Windmill Lane Estate will be written and produced by the residents.

Copies of the report from East Nottingham Liberal Association, 45 Brooklands Road, Bakersfield, Nottingham.

## New Basford

TENANTS IN NEW BASFORD are preparing to fight for the right to continue living in the area. The New Basford Residents Association has just published a report, "New Basford - Improvement is the Answer". The report says that the vast majority of residents want to stay in the area, and most of them in their present homes. And this is despite the Council's proposed Compulsory Purchase Order for their houses. The residents say that the houses should not be demolished, but should be improved. To support their case they quote the government's housing circulars which quite clearly say that housing should be improved rather than demolished wherever possible.

The report shows how houses could be improved more cheaply than the cost of new houses by quoting a conversion done by the Council themselves on a house in St Ann's for £3,000 - much less than the cost of new council houses. Improvement would also mean that community facilities would be retained, and the residents point to the thirty-nine shops that are included in the proposed clearance area.

The residents are therefore calling for improvement and gradual renewal as the answer to the area's housing "problem". They say that this would mean a continuous process of minor rebuilding and the provision of open space. But, most important, they say that a decision needs to be taken immediately that the area will not be demolished so that its decline is halted. And this decision, they say, would cost the Council nothing. The residents also call for the Council to consult them on the future of the area.

Copies of the report from New Basford Residents Association, 74 North Gate, New Basford, Nottingham.

CONTRIBUTIONS and letters for the Community Action page are most welcome. This page is intended as a forum for community groups attempting to take control of their own lives and the way they live them - paying particular attention to exchanging experiences and tactics of groups in Nottingham.



# NOTICES

FOR ITS SPRING MEETING on Thursday, June 12th (6.15 - 8.00 p.m.), Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service has invited organisers of both statutory and voluntary services to share the platform in an open forum on "Advice Giving Services". Interested groups and individuals are invited to attend.

AS AN ALTERNATIVE to the usual club scene the local Campaign for Homosexual Equality has decided to hold a regular disco which will appeal to the whole gay community. The disco is initially planned by CHE, but they hope that all local gay groups will get together with them. Heterosexuals who do not mock or oppress will be welcome. Tickets available from CHE, People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, for Saturday June 14th, Yorker Ale House, Mansfield Road.

A BILL (The Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1975) is now two-thirds of its way through Parliament. It will, in fact, prevent any legal abortions except in rare circumstances. It makes mere discussion of the subject illegal in many cases, effectively gagging all the channels of advice now open to women, including your next-door neighbour! Parliament will pass this Bill in the final vote this autumn if MPs think that you don't care. If you do care, you must act now.

1. Contact A Woman's Right to Choose, 186 King's Cross Road, London WC1 (Tel. 01 278 4575), for pamphlets, leaflets, stickers, posters, badges and general advice on what to do.

2. Contact The National Abortion Campaign, The Women's Centre, 26 Newcastle Chambers, Nottingham (Tel. 42808 evenings, 77451 daytime), for details of local action and information on a National Rally, 21st June. Assemble Charing Cross Embankment at 2.30 p.m. Leaflets can be obtained from Nottingham Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign at the Women's Centre.

## MERRY GO ROUND (continued)

working and conscientious individual.

To decry his efforts in the manner adopted by the County Federation of Ratepayers' Action Groups is typically petty and unimaginative.

They offered him an engraved wooden plaque because he had claimed the most by way of attendance allowances and expenses in 1974-5 - a total of £3,883.

Numerous engagements at schools throughout the county, meetings of outside bodies in other parts of the country and regular travelling between home in Warsop and County Hall account for the heavy travelling expenses of £1,119.

He is chairman of the county's largest committee, which has eight sub-committees - hence taxable attendance allowances in what is effectively a full-time job of £2,325.

There is no time limit on lodging claims for expenses and other members, even a Tory or two, may eventually surpass his total. Coun. Cairns is ultimately responsible for a committee spending nearly £113 million this year. For this he is getting £45 a week before tax with no holiday pay or pension arrangements.

So, Mr Michael Charlesworth, have a go at Bill Cairns's ability or his committee's policies, but carping over his somewhat meagre financial return serves only to confirm the small-minded attitude displayed by the majority of ratepayers' groups.

## Footnote

Now would have seemed an appropriate time to appraise the performance of Jack Green, dynamic new leader of the ten-man-band of Tories on the City Council.

But on his poor showing so far it would merely be akin to pounding a cold rice pudding. So more about sub-postmaster Green at a later date.

BARKER

# I live at Clifton ...



MY NAME is --- and my mate's name is ---. We go to school, and we don't like it very much. When we come out at 4.00, there isn't much to do, except on Thursday. Then we go to the Corpus Christi Youth Club and that isn't much good. All we do is play table tennis, and that is only open one night a week. There is also a place called YMCA which is open five days a week. That is not great except Thursday when there is a Disco and that isn't very good either. At night we usually hang about the streets getting cold. We used to go in this girl's house called ---. She comes from Margate and she doesn't like it up Clifton either. We live at the top end of Clifton. We would like to go to the pictures now and again, but we can't afford it. It is now 70p to get in. We have been trying for a job after school to get some money for amusing ourselves. We go to town nearly every Saturday and we spend all our pocket money there, because we go in cafes and buy something to eat and we have a cup of tea. There isn't much to do in town either, but we just get sick of stay-

ing up Clifton. I have got a park at the back of my house but we are too old to go on there now.

We have a swimming pool at Clifton but it isn't much cop, because there aren't any diving boards there. I would like to see a Youth Centre with lots of things to do, like snooker and football, table tennis and a shooting range and somewhere constructive where we can make go-carts and strip old cars down and build them up. A teacher at our school who takes us for metalwork, builds go-carts. However, he won't let us have a go in them until we are in the 5th form. He used to let the 5th formers drive them round the playground but he doesn't let them any more.

We know a bloke who is a Project Worker and he is organising a sea fishing trip every month. I am looking forward to going, because I have never been sea fishing before, only down the Trent coarse fishing. I think this is a very good idea because it will be a day out instead of hanging around the street. We've also been involved in delivering leaflets from door to door.



MY NAME is --- and I have a mate called ---. We both go to school and find it very boring. I think we should go out more often with the school and get involved with other people, and see more of the Estate.

In our form we have been doing a survey to prove the need of an adventure playground for the under 16s on Clifton Estate. We finished that one and now we are starting another survey on the need for lights and crossings for the youngsters and the elderly, and we find it very interesting.

After school my friend and I have nowhere to go, so I think lots of people would like to see a picture house, and somewhere on the Estate where we can do some sewing and needlework etc., because we get very bored hanging around street corners or hanging about

on a school field and even when we do that, we always get cleared off.

And if we want to go to the pictures we have to go all the way into Nottingham, which costs us 20p bus fare, and 70p to get in; so if we want to go to the pictures we would have to save all our spending money.

We have also looked for part-time jobs after school hours to get a bit of cash and because we think that passes the time away. We have a few clubs in Clifton but they are not very good ones. It's the same thing week after week. My mate --- used to live down the Meadows. She moved to Clifton about three years ago, and she wished she was back there, because she said there was much more to do.

We would like to finish by saying that we would like to see more in Clifton for the under 16s.

MY NAME is --- and I live at Clifton. I am eighteen years of age. I have only four friends in Clifton, there are no clubs in Clifton for me at eighteen. Some people think I am stupid and laugh at me, but I really want to get on with people; I used to live in the Meadows before moving to Clifton, where I used to go to the Meadows Boys' Club, where we could do archery, snooker, table tennis, basket-ball and football, but you can't do these things in Clifton.

Since living at Clifton I got myself into trouble and for the offence I got 120 hours community work, which I found very interesting, it also gave me a chance to meet people. After thinking why I got into trouble, it is now very clear to me that the reason for this is that there was nothing else to do. When I talk to other lads up here, the story is the same. With there being nothing for me to do in Clifton, it costs me a lot of money to go into town, in bus fares; the last bus is 11.30 and if I miss that, the

only way to get home is by taxi which is even more money all the way from town. What I would really like to see in Clifton is a club like the Meadows Boys', bowling alleys, cinemas, ice stadium; my feelings are, if this were possible, it would help people like myself, to stay out of trouble. I have three brothers and six sisters, and all I do at night is stay in and watch TV. Sometimes I go to my friend's house. All there is to do is mess about. I am now getting involved with someone who is doing different things in Clifton and who is also starting a sea fishing club. I am very excited about this because I have never been sea fishing before or fishing in rivers, so I don't really know what I am going to be like because I have never handled a fishing rod before. What I hope to get from this is more friends and involvement with other things. I hope that the things I have written about could become possible, not only for my sake, but for that of my brothers, sisters and everyone like us.



"Well, at least this is more interesting than Clifton!"





WHAT I SHOULD LIKE to write about this month is the thing that has probably caused most upset to the beer-drinker in the last few weeks, namely PRICE.

By the time this article is published the price of beer in Nottingham will be something like 40% higher than it was a year ago. This is way above the average inflation rate and is another classic example of the ordinary man suffering more than the better-off. (Spirit and wine prices have increased, but nowhere near as much as beer.)

The question that I should like to ask the brewers and their landlords is: To what extent are the price rises justified?

There have been three basic causes (or reasons offered) for the price increases:

1. Increase in price charged by brewers to their tenants, or direct to the public in their managed houses. In managed houses the brewery fixes the price, whereas in tenanted houses the tenant buys beer from the brewery and then fixes his own prices.

The reasons given for this sort of price increase are increased costs - materials, labour, overheads.

## Relaxation

2. Rent freeze relaxation has meant that the brewers have been able to increase the rents charged to their tenants. The response to this was obvious. The Licensed Victuallers Association (LVA), whose members are tenanted landlords, said that prices would have to go up by as much as 3p per pint in order to offset the rent increases.

3. Increase in duty payable by the brewer to the Government. This is calculated on the original gravity (O.G.) of the beer. O.G. is the specific gravity of the beer before fermentation starts and is a measure of the sugars in solution that may be converted to alcohol during fermentation. The higher the O.G. then the more sugars in solution.

Let's now look at these three points in turn. The price of beer to tenants (not including increase in duty) has gone up by about 3p in the last year, which naturally has all been passed on to the drinker.

The relaxation of the Rent Freeze is a difficult one to evaluate. The LVA is

complaining very loudly but will not give any information to justify its claims for 3p per pint increases. Let us take an example of a pub that is selling fifteen barrels of beer a week where the rent is increased by £2,000 p.a. This would only justify a price increase of 1p per pint in order to recoup all the increase in rent, and this does not allow for any increases in bottled beers or spirits. We have got to be careful here and make sure that we are not being conned by certain landlords. I am sure that most landlords are honest about it, but at the same time there will be others who will attempt to use the rent increase to their advantage. I would be very grateful if readers would send any examples that they might have of rent increases and the consequent price increases.

## Average

The increase in duty was stated by the Chancellor to be 2p per pint (this follows 1p in the last Healey package). This 2p is in fact the average figure. The actual increase is £4.32 per 36 gallons plus 14.4p for 36 gallons for every degree of original gravity over 1030 plus 8% VAT. I have calculated what the duty increases should be for the local beers. The original gravity figures are as calculated by analysts and published in "What's Brewing", CAMRA's monthly newspaper.

Bitters	Original Gravity	Increase in duty per pint
Home	1038.7	2.09p
H'dy & H'son	1038.6	2.08p
Shipstone	1038.0	2.05p
Milds		
Home	1036.1	1.95p
H'dy & H'son	1035.4	1.91p
Shipstone	1034.6	1.87p

From this it can be seen that there can be no reason for local breweries to go up by more than 2p per pint because of the latest duty increase.

One can only hope that prices will now stabilise - but to achieve this action will have to come from many areas, the most important being the brewers and the landlords. We, as consumers, can only watch, and shout like mad if they keep on pushing up prices. One other thing that we can do is to shop around and make sure we get relatively good value for money.

Finally, I am sure we are all waiting to see the next profit figures of the brewers to see to what extent they are attempting to absorb costs.

CHRIS HOLMES

## EATING OUT



IF YOU FIND yourself in the city centre at lunchtime feeling the need for something more substantial than pub grub, but unable to face a Wimpey or other variety of Beefburger (where, I've often wondered, is Beefburg?), then your best bet might well be the cafeteria of one of the large city centre stores. These establishments provide a good service to those of us without expense accounts by serving up lunches of reasonably good quality for round about £1 - and lets face it, which of us can afford to spend much more than that on lunch and still have some cash left for the evening's ale and fags at post-budget prices!

If you don't mind eating in somewhat rough and ready surroundings, then fight your way through the lingerie (sic) and soft furnishings to the British Home Stores, Lister Gate, cafeteria. It's self-service here, but the queue seems to move quickly even at the peak lunchtime period, and the food is always hot. A typical meal of steak and kidney pie with two vegetables, followed by apple pie and fresh cream and coffee, costs 76p - edible and reasonably tasty if somewhat uninspired fare. Attractively prepared salads are also a good bet here, ranging in price from 34-68p. Those with progeny will doubtless be delighted by the children's meals for the under 12s at 25p. BHS provide good basic food of a consistent standard

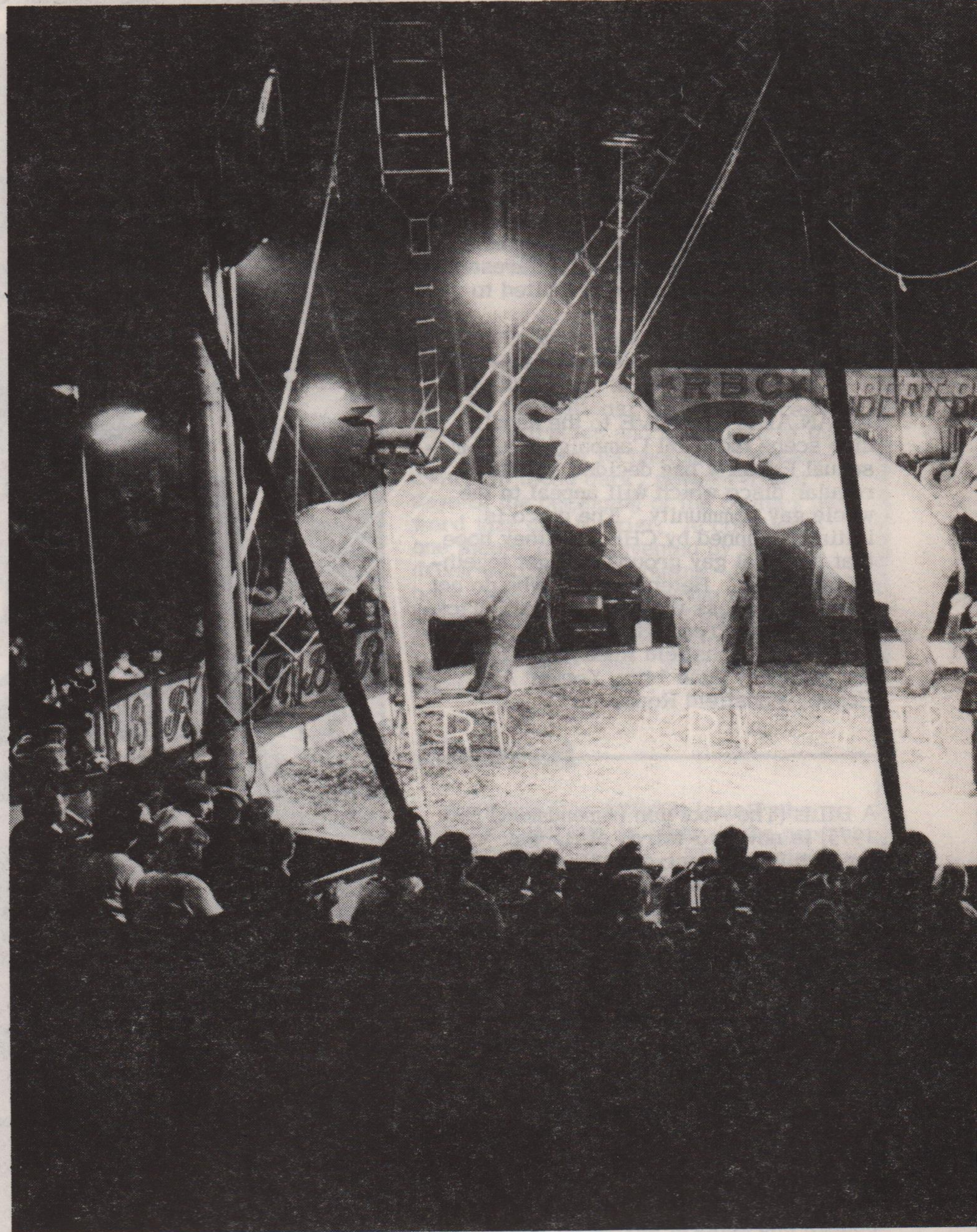
in a clean, though crowded and noisy setting.

Roughly comparable in price and quality is the Co-operative restaurant, on Upper Parliament Street. Things are a little less hectic here than in BHS. The restaurant is spacious and quiet with carpeted floors. The hot food is slightly more expensive (and sometimes less hot) than at BHS, with roast lamb and two vegetables, apple pie and cream and coffee costing 89p, but salads are similarly priced and equally good. Especially good value here are the sandwiches at 15p. The Co-op is certainly to be recommended as the best place for a mid-morning or afternoon coffee and snack, and my only real complaint about lunchtimes there is that one can find oneself sharing a table with the debris of a previously consumed lunch, since the staff who clean up the tables are none too quick at it.

## Luxury

For those who prefer more salubrious surroundings and a wider choice of fare Debenham's Terrace Restaurant is highly recommended. For only a relatively slight increase in price one can enjoy a better quality meal and the luxury of waitress service and white tablecloths. The restaurant is light and airy, and has rather a "fifties" atmosphere. A good buy here is the special lunch, typically fruit juice or soup, steak and kidney pie and three vegetables, with ice cream or cheese or coffee for £1.20. Good traditional food, well cooked, and plenty of it. Also recommended are the grills at around 90p, omelettes from 45-52p, and salads from 50-80p. Carafe wine is available at reasonable prices. The Terrace Restaurant is just the place to take mother to lunch.

G. NOME



# TOP P

## ROBERT BROTHERS CIRCUS



THE "BIG TOP" was pitched on the Forest. In contrast with the publicity, which boasted a procession featuring the largest herd of elephants and camels in Europe, it would be easy to imagine a certain disappointment with the group of half a dozen elephants and a few camels which ambled its way from the Midland Station to the site of the circus. The circus opened to the public on Monday, April 21st and stayed for two weeks giving two performances a day. A zoo was incorporated although admission for this was separate. Tickets were pricey, most of the seats being in the 80p to £1.20 range (children half price) - which certainly does not qualify it as a cheap form of entertainment.

The circus troupe offered a large variety of acts, from spectacular acrobatics on the high wire and trapeze to the inevitable clowns, and included plate-spinning, trained animal acts and impressive marksmanship with guns. As well as the Robert brothers themselves, artistes came from Hungary, Spain, Portugal and other countries.

The best acts were of traditional circus extraction, showing a high degree of professional skill without being in the least slick or casual. An artiste is always aware of the potential dangers to himself and his reputation which familiarity cannot completely erase. Few acts are ever perfect and several of the artistes made mistakes; rather than destroying an act, however, this increased the identification and tension of the audience.

## Clowns

Clowns have always catered for a sense of humour rarely found elsewhere - it's a type of humour which appeals directly to children. A lot of pantomime was incorporated along with the usual "falling-down" and "water-tricks". It's the sort of stuff you expect to see at a circus and the time allotted to these painted freaks was slightly limited.

Animal training is one of the special-





# PEOPLE

## CIRCUS IN NOTTINGHAM

ities of the Robert Brothers circus and, considering the practical difficulties of travelling, they have a large collection. It was obvious, however, that many of these animals are kept purely for the zoo: neither the camels nor some of the more unusual "big cats" appeared during the show.

One of the most impressively controlled performances was given by the Appaloosa Ponies who responded perfectly to every instruction and appeared to be enjoying their act. Skippy the "boxing" Kangaroo, on the other hand, was a big disappointment: he seemed to have no real inclination for boxing and had to be led by the nose throughout his piece.

There is no doubt that Robert Brothers are sensitive to some of the current criticisms of animal-training and the cramped conditions in which these animals live: no photography was allowed of the caged animals in the zoo. One is naturally suspicious of the actual training techniques and constantly aware that it is only the glossy side which is finally presented to the audience.

All in all, the show seemed to lack continuity - the programme (if you made the mistake of buying one) was grossly misleading, and no-one knew exactly what was coming next or when to jump up to be first in the hot-dog queue. The unnecessary commercialism may have been off-putting to some people: having paid for one's ticket one naturally wants to forget the cost and enjoy the show. There was also a damaging effect on the continuity - the interval was extended unnaturally while children had polaroid photographs taken sitting on one of the ponies, and the show was later interrupted for the raffling of a teddy bear. The price of refreshments and the exhortations by the ring-master to buy these and to visit the zoo for feeding time after the show gave the overall impression that a great deal of importance was set on these small side-profits. No doubt this can be justified by the dire financial straits of circuses.

Financially, a circus faces enormous overheads, the primary costs being travel, equipment, animal feedstuffs, and the wages and salaries paid to artistes and labourers. The artistes, especially those brought in under contract from abroad, are expensive assets which cannot be dispensed with, while a circus must obviously do a considerable amount of travelling, the length of stay in any particular place varying between one week and three. The rising costs of travel and animal feed make it difficult to see how it can survive in its present form. Many circuses have left Britain to find tax havens abroad and there are now only three left which qualify for the "big circus" bracket, the other two being Chipperfields and Fossetts.

### Traditional

Bobby Roberts maintains that the only type of circus which can survive is the family circus. He himself has family connections in the business which go back over two hundred years, while the circus itself has strong links with the past and a traditional culture which has changed little over the years. The nomadic life sets the circus people apart, and the international atmosphere of the artistes, some of whom speak no English, reinforces this. It is the co-operative existence of a small unit with a traditional aim which gives them the involvement and the pride to keep going. To the audience who see it, the circus is a form of entertainment, but, to those who live and work in it, it is perhaps the only way of life that they have ever known.

Many of the countries in the communist bloc have their state circuses which are directly subsidised by the state, and this encourages a standard unlikely to be met in our own travelling circuses. A point may well be reached when our own circuses become a "conservation piece".

HUGH DAVIES

# Academic gallery

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM takes a great deal from the city and one might argue that in turn it gives a great deal back in terms of prestige and what we can only hope will be one of the best hospitals in the world, outside the Middle East.

At one time the University was based in the heart of the city but, because of the need to expand, it spread its enormous wings and took off and landed next to Wollaton Hall along the Derby road. In so doing it inevitably became less important to the city, and because of its isolation became almost incestuous in its activities.

In these circumstances, it tended to provide for itself. Not only did it establish its own boating pool and sports fields but also its own concert hall and its own art gallery. Of course these are duplications of what the city already offers, and it is in a sense pandering to the students by presenting something on their own doorstep - but they do at least have them.

The strangest, or the most unusual of these services, is the art gallery, which is tucked away at one end of the Portland Building, the rest of which houses most other student activities. The gallery is not, however, organised or run by students, but by the Department of Fine Art, which is a part of the academic establishment. One could criticise the University for originally establishing the Department in 1956, at a time when the city had a thriving School of Art, but over the years it has appeared to have justified its existence. For example, it was the Department of Fine Art that created the excellent Van Gogh exhibition recently, which received international acclaim and made its mark in London and Amsterdam. (The illustration below is a lithograph from this exhibition.)

The gallery is run directly for the benefit of the students, although it is open to the rest of the University and indeed to the citizens of Nottingham, although local publicity doesn't seem to be a very strong point in the Department's activities. Ten to twelve exhibitions, ranging from the old masters to the avant-garde, are held each year, and this surpasses anything that any other University in the country offers. It is a fact, however, that to maintain this kind of presentation the gallery relies heavily on Arts Council and Victoria and Albert Museum travelling

exhibitions - but the advantage of this is the extremely wide range that is offered each year.

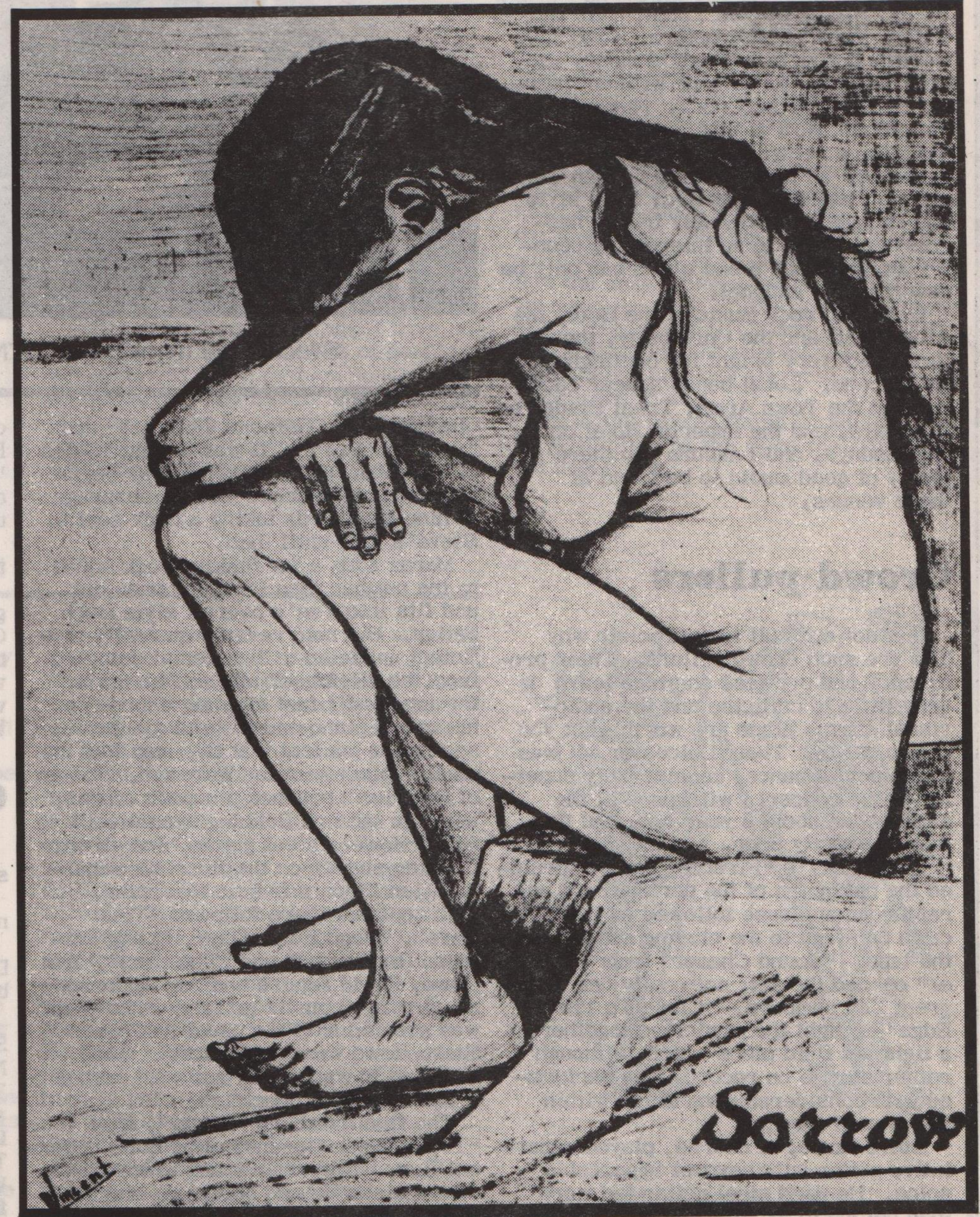
The Arts Council exhibitions are of course subsidised, and in addition to this the gallery has a grant of £5,000 a year from the University. Overall, the money fed into the gallery is excessive, but it does enable it to present exhibitions that would not normally be seen outside of London. The programme has always been ambitious and has in the past included exhibitions by Whistler, Lowry, Sisley, Degas, Piper and Gainsborough. To go with many of these exhibitions the gallery has also produced some incredibly professional and informative catalogues, which are of such a high standard that even the Tate Gallery would find it hard to match them. They are, in fact, an enviable luxury.

### Unusual

The Department of Fine Art has other functions and duties as well as running the gallery, the most important of which is to provide the Art History half of joint honours courses, and there are six members of staff to service this. In addition to this function there is attached to the Department the unusual post of Fellow of Fine Art, an appointment that is made every two years to a practising painter. When the position is advertised, it attracts well over one hundred applications - which illustrates the fact that other universities could promote a similar position. As the lamentable fact is, Nottingham is, though not unique, at least unusual in having such a position. This apparent Valhalla for the artist appointed not only gives him a certain amount of status and time, but also a university lecturer's pay for two years.

Generally, one could say that the gallery and the Department is an asset, if not entirely to the city, to the university at least, and it is one of the few pleasing features in the swamp of academia, the land that is almost situated in our midst. It does try to bridge the town-and-gown gap, if unsuccessfully, and it is there to be taken advantage of both for its exhibitions and the series of public lectures it offers.

STEPHEN MORRIS





## ROCK Brighter future

TRENT POLYTECHNIC are promoting several concerts at the Albert Hall. Greenslade appeared at the venue recently and the Poly have booked Stackridge on the 22nd May. I am assured that there's a possibility of several big name bands being booked by the Poly for the Albert Hall during June; so it seems that concerts at the Hall will become a regular occurrence.

Stackridge are an extremely interesting band and have one of the most popular live shows in Britain. They have gone through many changes of style, presentation and personnel since they started in 1969, but in spite of this their popularity expands steadily. Their music is original, highly inventive and extremely varied. Originating in Bristol, much of Stackridge's music has a distinct West Country air to it, but this in no way becomes tedious; their broad accents are often used with hilarious effect. Keith Gemmell joined the group last year on saxophone, having previously played with Audience, a group whose style had several parallels with Stackridge's. Seeing Stackridge live, you're guaranteed to have a really enjoyable soiree.

### Ability

Steve Hillage, guitarist with Gong, has a solo album out this month titled "Fish Rising". Personally, I find it far easier to listen to than any of Gong's material, which seems to have no real substance to it; strangely enough, most of the musicians on the album are also members of Gong. The best track on the album is "Solar Musick Suite", and certainly demonstrates Steve's ability to "twang his wires" accompanied by a melodic synthesized backing and interesting keyboard work from Dave Stewart. Steve's lyrics on the album are also excellent; if you get chance to grab a copy in your local shop get them to play "Solar Musick Suite" and digest the lyrics (mentally of course).

The Boat Club have some good bands booked for the summer, including Strife, Stray, String Driven Thing, Nutz and Wally. As I've said before, Stray are worth a dollar of anybody's money and vital listening for anyone with an interest in heavy or soft rock. Nutz are going places, so I'm told, and as this is their third return visit to the Boat, it could well be true. String Driven Thing are well worth seeing live; their style has changed considerably from a neo-classical sound to an interesting country/reggae/rock blend which can only be described as unusual.

With good rock music at the Boat, the Albert Hall and the University, the future looks very bright for Nottingham's rock scene. Local bands appear each week at the Town Arms, Trent Bridge on Tuesdays, and the Imperial Hotel on Wednesdays, and I assure you there's plenty of good music to be found at these venues.

### Crowd-pullers

It's not difficult to appreciate why Yes are such crowd pullers. Their proficiency and prowess on stage leave very little to criticise and the audiovisual effects alone are worth what you pay to get in. Their Leicester set was a fine performance, considerably superior to the concert I witnessed at the same venue about a year ago, and that wasn't exactly poor.

Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite" heralded the beginning of the performance and rapturous applause followed as the band came on stage to the closing strains of the tape. "Sound Chaser" from "Relayer" opened the set; not really one of the great Yes numbers. "Close To The Edge" brought the musicians together in a tight yet fluid piece which, although rather sterile on record, was performed with considerable variation within the overall form.

Steve Howe, of course, played superlative guitar with several impeccable solos. He used steel guitar far more than before to excellent effect, partic-



Stackridge (top) & the NTMC (see opposite page)

ularly during "Gates of Delirium" and "And You And I". It was during "Gates of Delirium" that Patrick Moraz began to make his presence felt, his barrage of nine keyboards taking a back seat to Steve's lead until then.

Moraz adds a far funkier rock sound to the number than Rick Wakeman did and fits into Yes's overall style much better. His solo revealed a really proficient musician with material selected from the "Refugee" album (Patrick's former band); fast rippling chords on his grand piano and tasteful synthesiser soon made me feel that this man was the ideal replacement for Wakeman. "Gates of Delirium" reached a superb climax, with six strobes flashing hypnotically to Steve Howe's steel guitar, and strange flashing shapes on the floor accompanied Alan White's frantic drumming.

In contrast there followed "Your Move", "Mood For a Day", "Long Distance Runaround" and "The Clap", with Howe, Chris Squire and Jon Anderson all playing acoustic guitar. "The Clap" was greeted with the usual furore - Steve Howe was on fine form. "And You And I" was performed with normal competence and precision.

The final number, "Ritual", from "Topographic Oceans", was quite different live, however; a track which seemed quite sterile and boring on vinyl came to life and gave Chris Squire a

chance to develop some fine bass lines. Encores were "Roundabout" and "Sweet Dreams", the latter being from one of the early Yes albums and quite unrecognised by many fans.

Yes are a phenomenal band and they're still on the way up.

In this month's competition we're giving away two copies of the new Greenslade album, "Time and Tide" and next month I hope to publish an interview with the band, who I'm confident will shortly be as widely acclaimed as Yes and ELP.

### Competition

To win a copy of "Time and Tide" simply answer the following questions.

1. What is the name of Greenslade's new bassist?
2. For which famous rock band did Dave Greenslade formerly play keyboards?
3. Who is the band's main vocalist?

Send your answers on a postcard to: Nottingham Voice Competition, 33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, to arrive no later than 6th June. Last month's winners of Rubycon by Tangerine Dream were Pete Maginnis, Wollaton and Dave Gadsby, Old Basford.

DAVE BRETT

## JAZZ Merging sounds

HERE WE ARE, three-quarters way through the twentieth century, evidently none the wiser after two world wars, several revolutions, economic recessions and miracles and the advent of the sparkling age of technological advancement. In those dark, poverty-filled days of the beginning of the century the word jazz didn't exist. According to one theory it was invented by some drunk who started shouting "Jass it up, boys, jass it up" when some musicians were playing the music of the New Orleans coloured quarter in a Chicago joint. He didn't know what he was starting.

### Blurred

Nowadays it's difficult to tell where jazz ends and one or other of the popular music forms begins. The margins between rock, blues and jazz are blurred to insignificance, and musicians are drawing from all kinds of contemporary music sources, merging them together, and putting the result under the name of jazz. All except for the remaining purists, that is! Fortunately we have plenty of examples of both schools in and around Nottingham, even though there's a distinct preference from the paying audience for old-time styles. Even George Melly's parody of blues singing packs them in when he pays an occasional visit to the Dancing Slipper at West Bridgford.

New groups recently to appear on the local scene reflect the sharp division between those who adhere rigidly to trad jazz forms, and the more wide-ranging and exploratory groups borrowing extensively from popular music sources. It's a poor do if a jazz writer can't publicise his own effort through his column, so I won't hesitate to put my own new venture first!

Glorifying under the name of Herbs, the quartet has played only one gig to date - at the Federation Club - and that served to expose its weaknesses rather than its strengths. Clarinet, which I play, is currently an unfashionable instrument, probably because it's the most difficult of the reed instruments to play, and the kind of material Herbs features tends not to suit the clarinet. So I'm the weak link in my own group, and until I can find a cheap enough soprano sax to switch to we'll continue to rehearse numbers drawn from such diverse sources as Stevie Wonder, Carol King and Thelonious Monk. Look out for us!

### New venue

The Savoy Syncopators was formed to move into a new jazz venue at the Grand Hotel, Alfreton Road. Basically it comprises several faces familiar on the jazz scene, including Bill Cole, Pete McDonald, Terry Shaw and Paul Stirk. Obviously the repertoire draws extensively from blues, stomps and rags, and it seems from the early popularity of the sessions that this is what the public wants. While wishing that some of the trad-style bands would extend the range of their material by rehearsing more often, I also wish the lads luck in the new venture.

PW's Kind of Music is a bizarre name for a band, but ex-Dave Brennan clarinetist Paul Winfield, now resident in Nottingham, deliberately chose the name because he doesn't want to classify the type of music he wants to play. While retaining a basically trad-jazz format, Paul hopes to explore some of the material available from the wider sphere of music, and may even change the band's lineup to suit the occasion. The group is currently resident at the Warren Arms, Stapleford, occupying the Monday spot formerly filled by Chris Burke during the latter's absence in New Orleans for the Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Can a biography reveal more about a person than an autobiography? A comparison between John Chilton's "Billie's Blues" and Billie Holiday's own story of her life told in "Lady Sings the Blues" seems to indicate that it can. In



attempting to recapture the colourful and tragic life of the greatest of all jazz singers, John Chilton has used the historian's techniques of painstaking research to produce a balanced portrait of the controversial figure whose career was ended prematurely because of her inability to cope with the problems of being a gifted black singer in a country not yet ready to explore her talents, or for that matter of a whole generation of jazz musicians.

"Billie's Blues" is the latest in a

series of publications of major interest to jazz fans from Quartet Books, and follows their memorable biography of Charlie Parker, "Bird Lives", which I still regard as essential reading for anyone interested in the problems faced by minorities in a society which hardly hides its covert hostility. But for those who just want to know about the great contributors to jazz, "Billie's Blues" and "Bird Lives" make interesting reading.

CLIFF LEE

## FOLK MUSIC

# Traditionalists

NOTTINGHAM TRADITIONAL MUSIC CLUB, News House, St. James's St., Fridays, 7.45 p.m. prompt.

I'D BEEN TOLD about the NTMC by literally dozens of people before I finally managed to go on April 25th, and all their virtually unanimous reports went roughly as follows - the standard of the resident singers and of the audience participation in the choruses was very high, there was a definite clannishness fostered by the organisers and by the long-established regulars of the club, there were usually some interesting guest artists, and the word "traditional" in the club's title meant what it said, i.e. the club aims strictly to preserve Great Britain's folk heritage. It turned out that my past, purely second-hand ideas about the club were, in fact, pretty accurate.

## Involved

The session began promptly, as always with the NTMC, and from the very first song the audience were actively involved. I thought it was rather a pity that the proceedings were centred so much round the four resident singers, who spent almost the whole evening at the front - they are all sensitive and skilled performers, but I felt that the usual relaxed and informal folk club atmosphere was not quite there. This doesn't prevent the NTMC from being a most successful club in terms of prestige and regular support - the long, narrow and rather tatty upstairs room of the News House was packed by 8.15. Most of the audience were themselves able

and knowledgeable folk singers, and their chorus participation proved that they were familiar with even some of the most obscure songs.

The performances of Ian Stewart, the chairman, were particularly fine, especially on the Scottish chorus songs, where he showed a marvellously sure grasp of rhythm and movement, and lost nothing through the lack of instrumental support. The highlight of the evening, though, came with the sets of the guest artist, Stan Hugill. He's one of the very few remaining shantymen, and superb performances of ballads and whaling, hauling and capstan songs were matched by his completely relaxed manner in talking to the audience during his stories of the old days at sea. His chat and background explanations provided a truly appropriate introduction to the songs themselves. Stan Hugill is not only a master sea-shanty singer but a formidable scholar of folk music and a born entertainer as well, and every side of the man was shown in this memorable performance.

There's no doubt of either the high standard or the sincerity and integrity of the NTMC, but although everyone was perfectly friendly I couldn't escape the feeling that the club basically caters for and perpetuates a clique, a folk elite which implicitly considers all non-ethnic music unworthy. Still, the club is undeniably amongst the best in the country, and Nottingham is fortunate to have it; if you like purely traditional folk music and you still haven't been to the NTMC, I guarantee that just one visit will make you a committed supporter.

CS

## CINEMA

# Flick knives

THE NOTTINGHAM FILM THEATRE and Peachey Street Flick continue to provide the only alternatives in Nottingham to the major distribution chains. Even more regrettable than that the Film Theatre shows something less than friendship towards the Flick - even the presence of a broadsheet advertising the Flick's programme is unwelcome at the Film Theatre. Between them they might have managed a somewhat more exciting Festival than the "Book into Film" programme that the Film Theatre will be showing as part of the Nottingham Festival (June 13th - 29th).

Well, alright, beggars can't be choosers - we should be grateful for any festival of films. But the logic behind the selection of the ten films chosen, of which the best might be *To Have and Have Not* and *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, appears to be nothing more unifying than that each of the films is based on a well-known literary work. It might have been more rewarding, for instance, to choose a programme which explored the varying relationships that a film can have to the book upon which it is "based". Even more interesting to Nottingham viewers, who after all do get plenty of opportunities to see films conventionally based on novels, might have been a festival of those films which have attempted to explore the boundaries of the specifically filmic - the work of the so-called underground film-makers, virtually none of which has yet been seen here.

Fortunately no such qualms trouble me about the selection of *Aguirre, Wrath of God* as part of the Film Theatre's summer programme (June 6th - 8th). Directed by Werner Herzog, who along with Rainer Fassbinder (whose *Fear Eats the Soul* was recently shown in Nottingham) is the best-known representative of the recent

revival of German cinema, this film is one of the most interesting of recent years.

*Aguirre, Wrath of God* concerns the rise to absolute power of the fictional Don Lope de Aguirre, superbly played by Klaus Kinski. His exploits are set in the Peruvian Andes at the time of Pizarro's conquest of the Incas: Aguirre, a member of an advance section of the main group in search of El Dorado, manipulates the situation until he emerges as its "legalized" and "constitutionally elected" leader. From then on, exploiting the opposition between his own relentless sense of purpose and the silent and cowed acquiescence of those around him, he leads the party to a horrifyingly logical conclusion.

## Analysis

The film operates between the poles of detailed analysis and an almost elusive mysticism. This is apparent even in the opening sequence: it begins with an extreme long shot of the rain forests of the mountainous Andes; but very gradually the camera zooms towards the mountain side until we begin to see Pizarro's contingent edging their way forward. Immediately before the figures become distinguishable, visual and sound elements evoke a series of "meanings" impossible to translate into words. Then we see officers, their wives, a priest, slaves, horses, chickens and pigs presented in hierarchical order as a specific political analysis.

Aguirre himself "exists" somewhere between the two paths of logic and mysticism which the film exemplifies - but it is not possible to begin to do justice to the film in this space: I suggest you see it.

JLG



The National Health: Richard Howard, Ralph Nossek & Mary Sheen

## THEATRE

# Sick humour

THE SCENE IS THE Stafford Cripps ward of a London hospital; the paintwork has faded past recognition, the plaster is falling from the walls and the fire is out in the stove. The inmates are bidding farewell to Ken, a motor-bike freak, who has just recovered from his latest bout of multiple fractures. All appears to be well as each patient looks forward to moving one bed nearer to the outside world. So far, so familiar; the carry-on jokes sally forth, aided by comic capers and a liberal dose of wheezes and farts (from patients and audience alike), and everyone is made to feel that hospital isn't such a frightening prospect after all.

However, Peter Nichol's "The National Health" (at the Playhouse until 7th June) mercifully does not reside upon this well-trying framework alone. Gradually, the audience becomes aware of added dimensions in the characters before them. The patients are not merely two-dimensional types, Mr Nichols has invested them with individual traits, which gives a double edge to our appreciation of them. For, while we laugh at their humour, we also have sympathy for them - as in "Comedians", the audience is forced to examine the whole basis for its mirth.

Take Mackie, a miserable old killjoy whose doom-ridden comments put a cloud over our pleasure - the best approach is to laugh, "Not him again". Unfortunately Mackie has terminal stomach cancer, he is in constant pain, but every time he tries to die the doctors pull him back to the circle of pain. Or take Tyler, a constant source of humour with his puritan rhetoric and "good nature", he even laughs at himself as he continues with the "therapeutic" basket weaving; but Tyler is depressed, his life has never quite reached up to expectations, he must seek pleasure in lost illusions. However comic the characters may be at times, by the end of the play they have all revealed how trapped they are - three of them die, one is left without any arms or legs, another is destined to finish his days an alcoholic and Ken, who left hospital in the first minute of the play, returns after his next crash in a state of infancy.

The play's subtitle "Nurse Norton's

Affair" refers to the subplot, a superb piece of romance magazine parody concerning the amorous adventures of Nurse Norton and her surgeon sweetheart. The two plots are held together by the character of Barnet, who acts as hospital orderly and master of ceremonies - mediating between the stage and the audience. Barnet is the play's focal point, coaxing the audience into laughter and then reducing them to shamed silence by his declamatory gibes. Richard Howard, a relative newcomer to the Playhouse company, carries through this role with considerable verve and range. His hushed tone for reading the inter-dialogue comments in "Nurse Norton's Affair" eminently suggests the arid, breathless orgasms of trash literature; while his instructional talk on "How to prepare a corpse" is at the same time comic and chilling.

## Nuances

It is easy to praise actors, like Richard Howard or the lamented Jonathan Pryce, whose personalities can take hold of the more extrovert parts. It is less easy to draw attention to those actors who produce consistently fine performances with more modest roles. Tom Wilkinson is one such actor; his Mick Connor in "Comedians" was one of the most difficult parts in that play, his Loach in "The National Health" proved, yet again, what a fine sense he has of the nuances of character. Particularly memorable was the moment when the outsider Loach tries to become integrated into the "life" of the ward. Tom Wilkinson presented, through ungainly arm gestures, uncertain communication and gauche facial expressions, the delicate balance between pity and distaste which Peter Nichols had so carefully written into the part.

"The National Health" is one of those plays that manipulate their audience through sheer contrast of experience - at once its greatest strength and potential source of weakness, for if I were to find fault with the production it would have to be with the vaudeville ending, which, for me, does not have the assurance which such contrast requires. GP



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## SOCCER

# Red Army

MANCHESTER UNITED may be a world-famous club, but in England their private (red) army of "supporters" has made them a complete liability. At Meadow Lane on April 19th their antics reached a dangerous new level.

Your correspondent was standing at the half-way line on the popular side. The United fans were segregated on the Spion Kop to the right, so I was able to observe them at close quarters. Almost from the start of the match they pelted bricks, rocks and other assorted debris at the police standing at the foot of the Kop. This barrage of missiles reached a crescendo when the police unsuccessfully attempted to arrest a youth who had scaled one of the floodlights to plant a flag. In response, the police made a number of charges into the crowd to restore some semblance of order. They were repelled by what had now become an hysterical, seething, ugly mob.

Frankly, it was a sickening sight watching a handful of police attempting to control hundreds of weapon-wielding, missile-throwing maniacs. At this stage, it seemed that the United fans were smashing and uprooting anything on the Kop which could be physically dislodged. A corrugated fence was torn up and converted into weapons, while one group even managed to completely dislodge an entire iron crush barrier. The police were eventually forced to retreat to the sidelines after sustaining a number of injuries.

The crowd cooled down somewhat after half-time. Some actually appeared to be following events on the pitch (which were totally unrelated to the terrace violence). However, it soon became clear that this was merely an opportunity for the red army to regroup and gain second breath. The final whistle heralded a mass invasion of the field. Within minutes the mob had occupied the main stand and was literally tearing it to pieces. Seats were uprooted, the glass of the press box shattered, and indeed anything breakable was duly smashed. By this time the police were reduced to protecting the goalposts!! With the ground in this state of total anarchy, I decided to leave before I was smashed too!

The Meadow Lane ground sustained an estimated £3,000 worth of damage, forty spectators were arrested and twenty-three fined, while several spectators and police were injured (one spectator suffered two broken legs). Yet the statistics do not fully reveal the level of the violence. I have witnessed a considerable amount of football hooliganism, yet have never encountered anything remotely on this scale.

The Manchester United mob have throughout this season terrorized people up and down the country, caused tens of thousands of pounds worth of damage to private and public property, forced hundreds of businessmen and publicans to board up premises, and undoubtedly have influenced the outcome of Manchester United away fixtures.

## Action

There are, admittedly, no easy solutions to this problem, but it is clear that much tougher action must be taken by the authorities and the governing bodies in football. The following might be worth trying.

1. Continue making United away fixtures all-ticket and only allowing the purchase of ticket by a teenage United supporter if accompanied by an adult. The adult must also purchase a ticket and enter the away ground with the youth.

2. (if the above does not succeed) Again make United away fixtures all-ticket, but ban their supporters as far as possible. This could be achieved by issuing tickets at the away ground only.

If these measures do not succeed, then all Football League clubs should impose a complete boycott on Manchester United fixtures. Although this would be a harsh measure, it would not be entirely inappropriate. United have made few really positive efforts to control their supporters away from home, and show little interest in helping out those clubs who suffer at their hands. This puts the onus even more strongly on other Football League clubs to make the first decisive moves before the beginning of the 1975-6 season. **JOE BOOT**

## RACING

# In the hunt

WITH THE 1974-5 National Hunt season nearing its long drawn-out conclusion it seems an appropriate time to make a few reflections on it. The most enduring memory will be the rain that poured down incessantly culminating in the partial abandonment of the Cheltenham Festival programme.

When the rain stopped we saw the comparative decline of the old regime - Pendil, Bula, Lanzarote, Red Rum and Captain Christy - and what looks like the beginning of a new period of Irish domination in the top chasing events. Although the old stars of Fred Winter's stable had their moments, and Bula might still be a champion chaser at two miles, the season belonged to Brown Lad, Ten Up and Comedy of Errors.

## Cantered

Comedy of Errors, in winning the Sweeps Hurdle for the second year in succession and regaining the Champion Hurdle, never looked like being beaten all season and vindicated trainer Fred Rimell's opinion that the horse was not "right" for the 1974 Champion Hurdle when beaten by Lanzarote. He will probably be nominated as the National Hunt horse of the year, an honour which would have gone to Red Rum had he won the National. In Brown Lad young Jim Dreaper seems to have found the nearest thing to Arkle since that great horse's death; I have never seen an easier victory at Cheltenham than Brown Lad's in the Lloyds Bank Hurdle - he literally cantered in, and is my idea of the 1976 Gold Cup winner. Ten Up from the same Irish stable won the Gold Cup convincingly and might only be prevented from making it a double by his stable companion.

Of the English horses for the future, Border Incident, trained by Richard

Head and ridden in all his races by John Francome (perhaps the champion jump jockey next season), may be the best prospect. Lightly raced last season, he is to be sent chasing next year I understand, and could well be a top novice.

The four-year-old hurdlers turned out to be a fairly undistinguished lot - none of them seems likely to be more than a good handicapper. Much the same can be said of this year's novice chasers - for my money Easy Abbey, Pengraill, Broncho II, Lord Browndodd, and Floating Pound will never be in the top chasing bracket.

What can one say of Red Rum? Not quite the horse he was last year but nevertheless a magnificent effort; he was set a very difficult task to give weight to L'Escargot. It would be surprising if any of the old timers - Spanish Steps, The Dikler or even Red Rum - run as well again.

As I watched the National and saw the desperate cavalry charge and the crashing fatal fall of Beau Bob it was difficult not to question the "sporting" nature of such a spectacle; the fact that only a third of the field completed the course and the terrifying difficulty of Beechers and The Chair for all but the best of jumpers seems to support such doubts. Would it, after all, be as terrible as many would have us believe if the race were lost? At the new exploitative prices the National might in any case price itself out of existence as a race to attend.

Those who wish to watch the race next year will have to go to the cinema to do so, since the fees from international cinema networks far exceed the BBC's offerings. If the National is a "tradition we can't do without" it's going to be a very expensive one for you and me, and a very profitable one for its new owner. **ALAN FOUNTAIN**





## Cinema

Nottingham Film Theatre  
Fri. & Sun. 7.30 p.m., Sat. 5 & 8 p.m. unless otherwise stated. Co-op Arts Centre, Broad Street.  
May 16-18: Slaughterhouse Five (Fri., Sun. 7 p.m.; Sat. 3 & 7 p.m.)  
May 17: Targets (11 p.m.)  
May 23-25: Take the money and run; Sleeper (Fri., Sun. 7.15 p.m., Sat. 3.30 & 7.15 p.m.)  
May 30-Jun. 1: Nada  
Jun. 6-8: Aguirre, Wrath of God

## Classical

May 28: I Musici Chamber Orchestra. Albert Hall. 7.30 p.m.

## Folk

**Mondays**  
Burton Joyce Folk Club. Wheat-sheaf, Burton Joyce.  
**Tuesdays**  
The Scheme. Fox Inn, Parliament Street. 8 p.m.  
Arnold Folk Music Society: folk singing & dancing. Youth Wing, Gedling Road, Arnold. 7.45 p.m.  
**Wednesdays**  
Beeston Folk Club. Three Horseshoes, Middle St. 8 p.m.  
**Thursdays**  
Carlton Folk Club. Windsor Castle, Carlton Hill. 8 p.m.  
**Fridays**  
Nottingham Traditional Music Club. News House, St James's Street. 7.45 p.m.  
**Saturdays**  
Cropwell Bishop Folk Club. Wheat-sheaf. 8 p.m.  
**Sundays**  
Co-op Folk Club. Crown Hotel, Ilkeston Road. 8 p.m. (see opposite page).

## Jazz

**Mondays**  
Chris Burke's New Orleans Band. Warren Arms, Stapleford.  
Johnny Hobbs. Blue Boar, Hucknall.  
**Tuesdays**  
Harry Brown Quintet. Warren Arms, Stapleford.  
Dave Vickers Magnolia Jazz Band alternating with Phil Boyd's Ragtime Band. Bell Inn, Angel Row.  
**Wednesdays**  
Mercia Jazz Band. Tally-Ho, Oakdale Road.  
Swing Quintet. Warren Arms, Stapleford.  
Chris Burke's New Orleans Jazz. City Road, Dunkirk.

At the New Place, Federation Club, Ebury Road, Sherwood:  
May 21: Ken Eatch Jazzmen  
May 28: Marshall-White Quintet  
Jun. 4: Billy Butterfield (direct from the USA).

**Thursdays**  
Chris Burke's New Orleans Band. Cherry Tree, Calverton.  
Jazz session. Town Arms, Plumtree Square.  
**Fridays**  
New Crescent Dixielanders.

Earl of Chesterfield, Carlton Hill.  
Les Devotees. Carlton Liberal Club.  
Various bands. Imperial Hotel, St James's Street.

**Sundays**  
Chris Burke's New Orleans Band. Town Arms, Trent Bridge (lunchtime).  
Tommy Owen & Harry Brown alternately. Warren Arms, Stapleford (lunchtime).  
Jazz Artisans. Bell Inn, Angel Row (lunchtime).  
Cisco. Imperial Hotel, St James's Street (evening).

## Meetings

June 4: Nottingham Writers' Club. Richard Eyre (Director of Nottingham Playhouse). Nottm Society of Artists' Studio, St Luke's House, 71 Friar Lane. 7.00 p.m.

## Rock

**May**  
17: Yes, Alex Harvey Band: Stoke City Football Ground.  
20: Alex Harvey Band: De Montfort Hall, Leicester.  
22: Stackridge: Albert Hall.  
24: Zzebra: Burton-on-Trent 76 Club.  
29: Hatfield & the North: Derby Cleopatra's.  
31: 9.30 Fly, Greenslade: Loughborough University.

**June**  
7: Strife: Boat Club.

**Weekly dates**  
**Sun.** Cisco. Imperial Hotel, St James's Street.  
**Tues.** Various bands. Town Arms, Trent Bridge.  
**Weds.** Glider & Nimbus (alternate weeks). Imperial Hotel, St James's Street.

## Theatre

Nottingham Playhouse  
Wellington Circus. Box Office Tel. 45671  
Mon.-Fri. 7.30 p.m. Sat. 5 or 4.30 & 8 p.m.  
The White Devil  
May 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31. June 2, 3, 4, 5 (last performance).  
The National Health  
May 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30. June 6, 7 (last performance).  
Walking like Geoffrey  
June 11 (preview), 12 until June 28.

Theatre Royal  
Box Office: Tel. 42328/9  
May 19-24: "A bit between the teeth" (Brian Rix farce). Mon.-Fri. 7.30 p.m. Sat. 5 & 8 p.m.  
May 26-31: "The Phantom of the Opera". Mon.-Fri. 7.30 p.m. Sat. 5 & 8 p.m.  
June 2-7: "Silent Witness".

Co-operative Arts Theatre  
George Street. Bookings: Tel. 46096.  
Annie Get Your Gun  
June 2-7.

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The following organisations can be contacted through the People's Centre (call, write, or 'phone 411227). Specialist legal advice is given by the Response group on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Alcoholics Anonymous  
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Campaign for Homosexual Equality  
Thurs. 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Child Poverty Action Group  
Weds. afternoons, Fri. evenings.

Claimants' Union

Fair Housing Group  
Gingerbread (one-parent families)  
Mon. 7.30 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Homelessness Action Committee

National Council for Civil Liberties  
Tues. 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Nottingham Community Planning Group

Pachwork (organises volunteers to decorate homes and do gardening for old and disabled people)

Refuge for Battered Wives Campaign  
Most Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

Response (qualified legal advice)  
Mon., Tues., Weds. 6.30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Shelter  
Weds. afternoons, Fri. evenings.

Student Community Action  
Women's Liberation Group  
Advice on women's rights:  
Fri. 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Group meetings: Thurs. 8 p.m., Newcastle Chambers, near Bell Inn, Market Square.

Rates: 2p per word. Box numbers 10p. Other rates available on request, for column inches or sections of a page. Bargains struck with impecunious good causes. Tel. Nottm 411227.

**G**ROUP for homosexual men and women. Contact Nottingham and Derby: CHE, P.O. Box 87, Derby DE1 1EN.

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# SAVE THE THEATRE ROYAL!

FEW PLACES IN NOTTINGHAM OVER the last hundred years have given so much pleasure to such a wide variety of people as the Theatre Royal. Now, after more than a century of colourful dramatic history, it seems that its managers, Moss Empires, and its owners, Nottingham Corporation, have decided to dump it. Each has its own good reasons, but neither is likely to take much account of the real interests or desires of the people of Nottingham.

Moss Empires has a glorious past - at its height it controlled some thirty theatres and music halls throughout the country, from the Portsmouth Hippodrome to the Edinburgh Empire - but now it is only a small part of the huge Associated Television Corporation. And running theatres is not the most profitable of ATV's activities.

## Cash crisis

As far as Nottingham is concerned, the spokesman and hatchetman is the deputy chairman and manager of Moss Empires, Mr Louis Benjamin. In the Evening Post of April 10th, under the headline "City theatre faces cash crisis", Mr Benjamin was quoted as saying that the Theatre Royal had been losing "a fairly substantial amount of money for a long time," that he was "not in a position to say what is going to happen but the situation is very serious indeed," and that "We have done our level best to keep it going but it is becoming a real worry. Whether we can contribute any more I don't know. It would mean we would be subsidising a loss."

This sudden rash of pessimism followed the revelation by the Arts Council that it was paying £5,000 for temporary dressing rooms at the theatre to guarantee the six-day visit of the English National Opera on April 28th, and that national companies would be unable to visit the theatre in future unless the owners, Nottingham City Council, were prepared to make a substantial contribution towards essential repairs - estimated at £100,000. Of this, the Arts Council was prepared to find £40,000 - provided the sum was matched by Nottingham Corporation and other bodies.

However, this pious plan was knocked firmly on the head by the City's Director of Leisure Service, Mr Hugh Lawson, who said (eyes obviously a little moist): "We want to help, but we just don't have the money or the borrowing power. We know the dressing rooms are inadequate by modern standards and we welcome the Arts Council's help" - a welcome which was obviously heartfelt, since the Corporation proceeded to charge the Arts Council £200 for parking their dressing rooms in the Corporation car park at the back of the theatre.

## Indifference

This handsome gesture is absolutely in line with the City Council's present attitude to the Theatre Royal, best described as pig-headed indifference. The Council leader, Coun. John Carroll, announced on April 17th that the Corporation was in no position to give any further help: "In view of our financial commitments to the Playhouse and other forms of the arts it is unlikely we can find an annual subsidy to the theatre."

Coun. Carroll explained in a letter to the Evening Post on April 21st that the Council already subsidised the Theatre Royal at a rate of over £24,000 a year, since it let the property to Moss Empires for only £3,500 a year (due to increase to £5,000 a year in 1976 at the end of the current seven-year lease), whereas paying off the mortgage on the property cost £28,000 a year.

Coun. Carroll was not being entirely open, however, since as well as the theatre the site includes (according to his own letter) the Corporation car park - and we have seen how profitable that can be: at the Council's own figure of £200 per week for one quarter of the space (the dressing rooms occupied 25 places, leaving another 75), the car park as a whole could be bringing in anything up to £41,600 a year!

Curiouser and curiouser! In fact, everything points to a mutual decision



by Moss Empires and the City Council to ditch the Theatre Royal. If neither undergoes a change of heart, then the theatre will be closed and demolished in the not too distant future.

Why? The Council's pleas of poverty can be dismissed with a fair amount of derision. It is clear that what is lacking is not the means but the will. Contrast the Festival Hall project (baby of Coun. Len Maynard, Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee), which has quite probably had as much spent on it already as the entire sum requested by the Arts Council to save the Theatre Royal - yet the site has still to be purchased and the whole scheme may be rejected at a public inquiry in three months' time. If the project goes ahead, it is likely to cost at least £5 million, which the Corporation is supremely confident it will be able to afford - apparently by flogging off plots of land "surplus to requirement" (including the Theatre Royal site?).

But, as well as these somewhat naive disclaimers, there may well be a few interesting manoeuvres going on behind the scenes.

## First option

When the Council bought the Theatre Royal and the adjoining site, including the old Empire, in 1969, the sellers were none other than Moss Empires themselves (as Coun. Carroll reported in his letter). At the time of the purchase, the Council made an agreement with a property company, Bentrax Investments Ltd, which gave Bentrax first option on the development of the site. This option was duly taken up in March last year when the City Planning Committee gave Bentrax outline planning permission to build a 140,000 sq. ft. office block on the site. The office block was to be leased back to the Council as District Council offices at an estimated £250,000 per annum.

In the row which followed, a number of interesting points emerged - for example:

(1) The Council had ignored the report of its own surveyor that the site

was too small for District Council offices.

(2) Like Moss Empires, Bentrax Investments is a subsidiary of ATV - in fact, Sir Lew Grade is chairman of all three.

The row over the office block has temporarily subsided, largely because the project has been temporarily shelved. It has not been abandoned, however, and it seems likely that, once the Theatre Royal is safely out of the way, the scheme will be revived on a larger site which would meet the surveyor's recommendations. A number of councillors are known to be very keen on getting their new offices - and the appeal to ATV is even more obvious.

## Special comment

ATV's total turnover last year was £54,851,000. Of this, theatre subsidiaries were responsible for £3,119,000 (5.7%) and property subsidiaries for £2,290,000 (4.1%). In other words, in terms of turnover, property was less significant than theatre by nearly £1 million.

But the picture changes sharply when we consider profit. ATV's total pre-tax profit for the year was £7,268,000. Of this, theatre subsidiaries were responsible for £420,000 (5.8%) - but property subsidiaries were responsible for £1,584,000 (21.7%), the progress of Bentrax Investments being singled out for special comment by the chairman in his annual report.

Property subsidiaries, therefore, accounted for 4.1% of ATV's turnover - but for 21.7% of its profit.

The conclusion is obvious: regardless of whether the Theatre Royal is making a profit or a loss, it would be more profitable for ATV to knock it down and replace it with an office block.

But it is a strange irony that a Labour-controlled council should wash its hands of the Theatre Royal. The Royal is a genuine palace of the people, whereas the Playhouse, which receives a handsome council subsidy, is a temple to middle-class intellectualism with audiences to match.

A glance at the Royal's programme

over the last six months shows an amazing variety of popular entertainment which will simply vanish from Nottingham if the Royal is destroyed. And the new Festival Hall will not be a replacement. According to the City Secretary: "It has never been the intention that the proposed Festival Hall should in any way replace the Theatre Royal or cater specifically for any of the functions at present held at the Theatre. It is intended that the Festival Hall should be specifically designed for concerts although, of course, it will no doubt be possible for other types of functions to be carried out there also."

## Savage act

The loss will not only be Nottingham's, but also that of the whole East Midlands area and beyond, for which the Royal is the only surviving theatre regularly visited by touring companies - one protest to the Evening Post came from as far as Sheffield. It will be sad if a Labour council denies ordinary people the chance to see such varied entertainment as John Hanson in "Rose Marie", "Murder in the Vicarage" by Agatha Christie, Morecambe and Wise, "Hair", "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat", and the Christmas pantomime (Harry Worth in "Aladdin" last year), as well as major cultural events like the English National Opera and the Royal Ballet (both guaranteed sell-outs).

Worst of all, though, is the savage act of vandalism the destruction of the Theatre Royal would entail: one more distinctive part of Nottingham rendered anonymous by the erection of yet another office block.

A night out at the Theatre Royal, even in these sad days of its enforced neglect, should convince anyone that it is worth saving. The interior is magnificently ornamented in traditional crimson and gold, and there is the imposing bank of dress circle, upper circle and gallery, giving the Royal a sense of occasion rarely felt at the smoother but more workaday Playhouse. Also unlike the Playhouse (with its unhappy "dead-spots"), the acoustics are excellent: the smallest whisper can be heard even in the gallery.

The Theatre Royal's value is recognised by its inclusion in the statutory list of buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. This gives it some legal protection, though not necessarily enough to defend it from the deadly alliance of councillors and property developers which has seen off so many of Nottingham's finest buildings in the past. Its best defence will be the determination of the people of Nottingham to save it, since they can apparently expect little sympathy from Councillors Carroll and Maynard - foreigners to Nottingham who seem to have more feeling for its politics than its personality.

Happily, there are signs that the Council are not going to have it all their own way this time. A campaign is being organised by Frederick Smith, 163 North Sherwood Street, and Bryan Bargh, who can be contacted at 933 2104. Please get in touch with them if you can help in any way.

## Public inquiry

A petition is already in circulation. If you haven't had a chance to sign it yet, a copy can be found at the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road (opposite York House). Because the Theatre Royal is a listed building the Council will have to give notice of any intention to demolish it, and if there is sufficient opposition the Department of the Environment will refuse consent, or possibly call a public inquiry.

On the opening night of "Party to Murder" on May 5th, Peter Adamson (alias Len Fairclough of "Coronation Street") thanked his audience for their appreciation and said: "Let's see what we can do to save this theatre." The roar of approval which followed should give warning to developers and councillors alike that the people of Nottingham will not give up their theatre without a fight.

JOHN SHEFFIELD