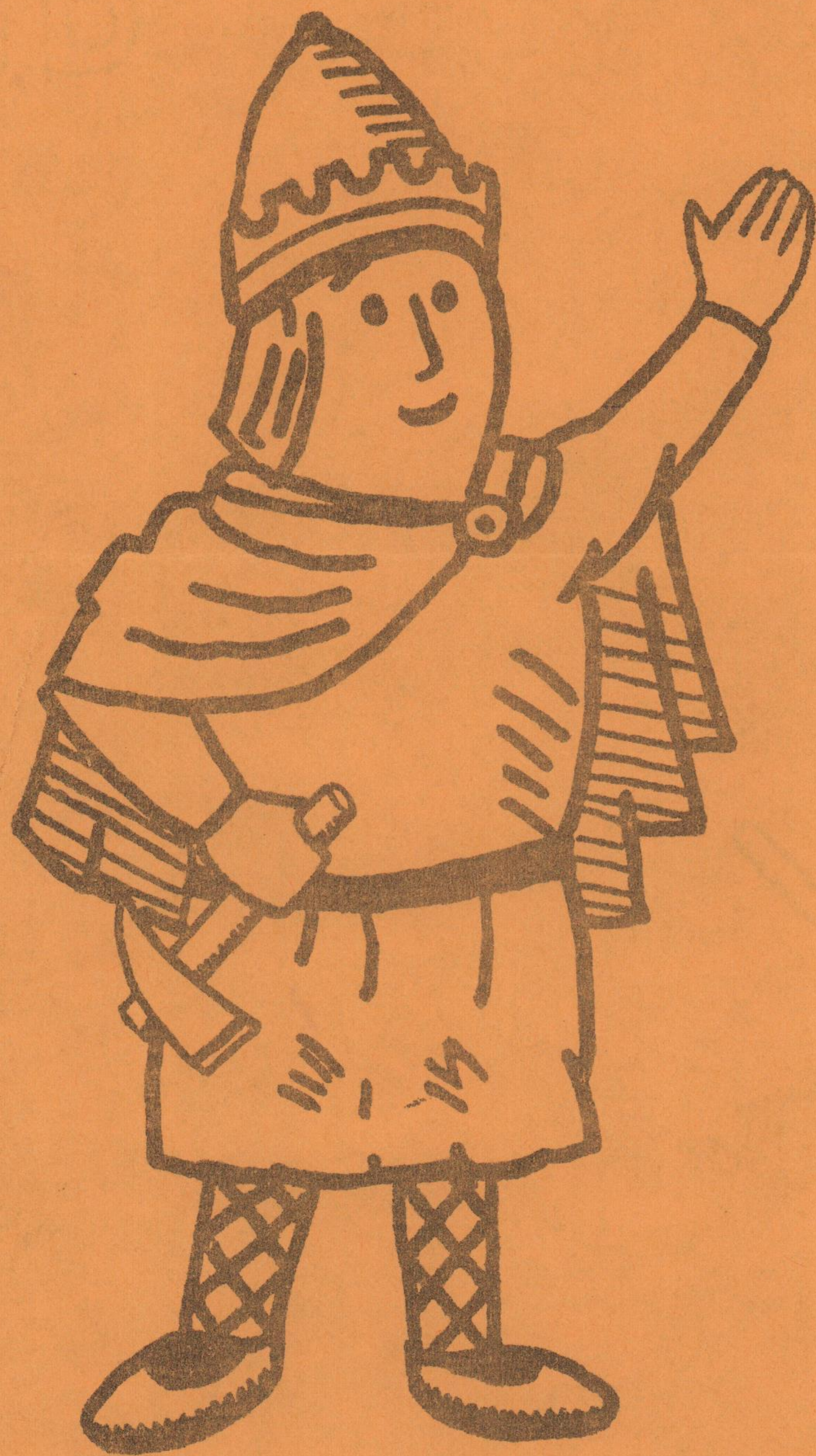


April '83

NOGSOG



NOTTINGHAM

GAY SOCIAL

GROUP

NOGSOG NEWS

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

APRIL

THUR. 14TH A Darts evening at CVS at 8.15.

THUR. 21ST Programme meeting at 8 pm PROMPT. At CVS.

FRI. 22ND Swimming at Carlton Forum. Those going should meet at the entrance of Carlton Forum at ~~7pm~~ 6.30pm.

MON. 25TH A general Games evening at 8.15pm at CVS.

Future Events

Lincoln/Derby/Leicester/Boston and Newark Gay Groups are going to Belvoir Castle on 15th May and some of us are going too. People should meet up at the car park in Grantham station at 12 noon.

There will be a pub crawl in May, at the moment it is provisionally arranged for the first Friday. Details to follow.

For those people who are new to the group or new to Nottingham the CVS stands for the Council for Voluntary Service and its premises are at 31a, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. They are open every Monday and Thursday (except Bank Holidays) from 7 to 10pm. Nottingham Gay Switchboard also uses the same premises and can be contacted by phoning 46714 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 7-10pm.

Nottingham Gay Switchboard's Annual General Meeting will be held on April 19th at 7.30 pm in the Salutation Inn (left-hand bar coming in from the back). If you are interested in the work of the Switchboard, you are welcome to come along even though you don't help with the operation of the Switchboard.

Those of you who know me will know that I work for British Telecom. I have recently returned from a training course at the British Telecom Technical College at Stone, Stafford.

This is a Technical College with on-site accommodation and all facilities provided. Each student has his own single room. One of the college rules is that students must not entertain women in their rooms - if caught doing so, the student will be sent home immediately and possibly banned from the college for a period of time. However, recently two men were discovered 'enjoying' one another's company in one of the bedrooms by a cleaner. The matter was reported, but no disciplinary action was taken as there is no rule saying that men cannot have men friends in their rooms (and both men were college students and over 21).

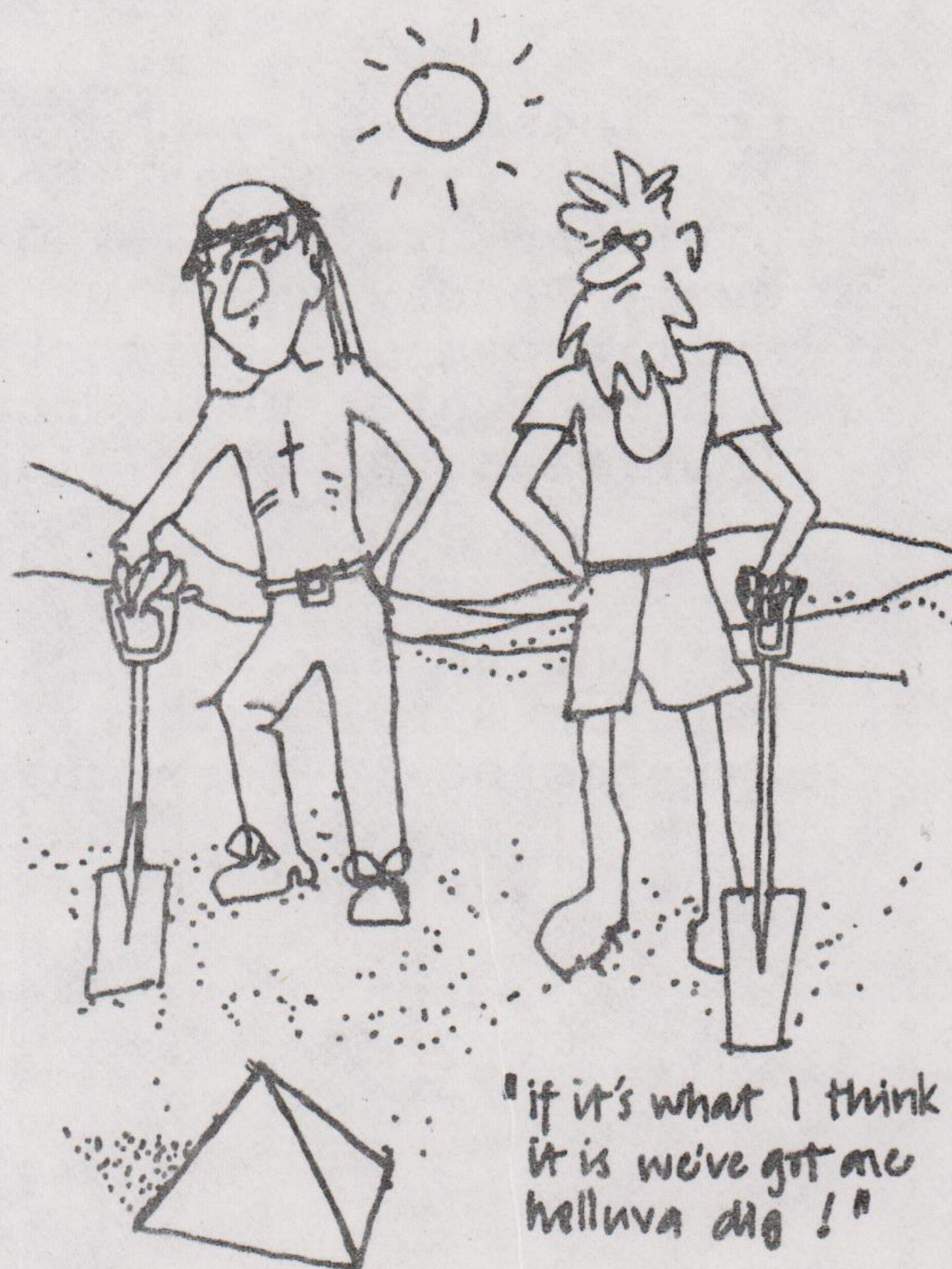
It seems that British Telecom Technical College is a heterosexual establishment which discriminates in favour of gays.

Perry

The special meeting to discuss NOGSOG's progress was well attended and people recognised that the group served a useful function, both in its own right and in conjunction with Nottingham Gay Switchboard. Reasons for the poor attendance at events earlier on in the year were explored and the main conclusion was that there had been simply too many meetings. In a group of limited size, people only have so much time and inevitably the numbers going along to a large number of separate meetings have declined as the number of meetings has increased. Another factor (speaking from 10 years experience with CHE) is that things have always become quiet in the Winter months and picked up again in the Spring. At the moment, Mondays and Thursdays at CVS are becoming more popular and we are including fewer events outside CVS for a while in order to give ourselves a bit of breathing space.

There has been a bit of disappointing news for Gay Switchboard and Friend recently. Neither has obtained a grant from Karnival this year, nor has Gay Switchboard's application for £400 from the Labour County Council's Community Resources group been successful. Let us hope that the work being done towards extracting a grant for a Gay Centre meets with better fortune.

Things look rather more promising for the proposed gay newspaper for Nottingham. Quite a few people have become involved and we may be seeing it in production soon.



THE POLICE BILL

It looks as though the section in the Police Bill dealing with access to confidential files may be dropped or modified after pressure from the BMA et al. but what remains is still confused and thoroughly nasty.

The death of habeas corpus

Habeas corpus remains the most celebrated safeguard of our personal liberty. Founded upon Magna Carta, it was strengthened and consolidated in the seventeenth century to become the great remedy for wrongful imprisonment. It gave practical expression to the principle that has existed since the records of English law began: that no free person could be detained in custody except on a criminal charge or conviction for a civil debt. In any legal manual or textbook it is referred to with reverence and awe. Pained and troubled references are made to the exceptional circumstances in English history when habeas corpus was suspended—in 1794 and 1817, for example,

to deal with conspiracies against the king, or in Ireland to deal with the Fenians, or in England during the Second World War. The remedy was quickly restored, the legal writers hasten to reassure us, as soon as these particular emergencies were over. Presumably they would class the Prevention of Terrorism Act, under which suspects can be detained for up to seven days on the authority of the police and Secretary of State, as just another such emergency.

But how will they refer to the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, which effectively abolishes the principle of habeas corpus, not to deal with any perceived "emergency" but ostensibly to codify and tidy up the existing law? How will they square the fact that an innocent person can be held for 96 hours in a police station without charge with the principle that no one should be held in custody unless charged with an offence? For under the provisions of this Bill, someone suspected of a "non-serious" offence can be held for 24 hours without charge; someone suspected of a serious offence can be held for 36 hours on the authority of the police and 96 hours on a warrant of further detention granted by a magistrates' court. During these periods of lawful detention, the ancient principle of liberty for the innocent will no longer apply.

The standing committee considering this Bill starts looking at those clauses dealing with detention today. The Government has already been forced to scatter in some disarray before the combined criticisms of the Law Society, the Magistrates' Association and the Justices' Clerks Society, which thought the original clauses needed further safeguards. But the Government's amendments have worsened the situation. True, the full magistrates' hearing will now be convened earlier in the 96 hours than was originally proposed; but the police will be able to detain someone on their own authority not for 24 hours but for 36. Nor is this the only controversial section of the Bill. The committee has already discussed new powers for the police to carry out intimate body searches against a suspect's will. Doctors are bound by their ethical code not to do anything to patients without their informed consent; but as the heads of the British Medical Association and the Law Society pointed out recently, since a suspect won't be allowed to see a lawyer for up to two days in custody, it's difficult to see how any such consent could be informed. As they wrote: "The scope for abuse is self-evident, and it will be inevitable that police officers will be laid open to accusations of the use of excessive force."

This decriminalising of possible assaults upon the public is one particular example of the alarming character of this Bill. The Government is bending its best endeavours to persuade the police along the path of consensus, not confrontation. But the Bill will, by further alienating the public, make such consensus an ever more unattainable goal. It makes legal and respectable those elements of aggressive policing which are most likely to threaten public tranquillity. Yet it is going through Parliament with scarcely a ripple on the waters of government. The PTA was considered draconian but temporary. This Bill is no less draconian, but permanent; but despite the broadsides from those battleships of the establishment, the doctors and lawyers, not to mention a flotilla of other critics, the missile is being trundled into place to blow a jagged hole through our most cherished freedoms.

THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER

In teaching one has to be careful to phrase what one says with care in order to avoid any double entendre that can reduce the adolescent audience to a fit of giggles. On one occasion I destroyed a colleagues lesson by rushing through her class and emerging from the prep. room with an armful of molecular models while excusing myself with the comment "Sorry, I've had to come back for my balls". I have a tendency to abbreviate words on the blackboard and substitute a letter instead. I only did this once with "test tube holder", because the chortles from the class soon told me something was amiss - "test" had become "t" and "tube" had become "t", but the rather elongated full stop between them had turned it into "tit holder". Fortunately, the connection between molecular weight and vapour density has been dropped from our syllabus along with the equation $MW = 2 VD$. (But Gay Lussac's Law still remains). I remember quite clearly the tortured pronunciation affected by my old Physics teacher in a forlorn effort to apply phonetic disinfectant to the experiment based on Kundt's tube. Last week I was caught out by a "Wordsearch" puzzle that I had constructed on the subject of Air. I wrote this by putting words such as Xenon and Combustion over the grid and then filled in the remaining spaces with letters at random. After working at this for a few minutes, a voice from the middle of the class said "'Ere, Tracy, I've found arse!"

A few days ago I came across a test paper on VD filled in by a 4th former. One of the questions was "Name two venereal diseases and state what happens if they are not treated". The answer was "Herps and Scrabies" and "Death". Does anyone else think it fitting to hear herpes described as the 'Norman Tebbit' of venereal diseases (perhaps you can catch it from bike seats).



One member of NOGSOG has been described to me as being like a young Margaret Rutherford, but for the life of me I cannot remember who it was. There was, however, no doubt about who appeared out of a trap door at the Birmingham Hippodrome in the part of Klingsor in Wagner's Parsifal - it was Mike Raymond, regardless of what may have been printed in the programme.

As there is a little space to fill at the bottom of this page, I'm sure Dr. Tim won't mind me quoting these two extracts from the letter he received from a Mr. Paddy Rafferty, who was undergoing certain problems with contraceptives.

"The wife was supplied with the coil, but after several unsuccessful attempts to fit it, we realised that we had got a left hand thread and my wife is definitely a right hand screw."

"Then we tried the Dutch Cap, but alas, it did give my wife a severe headache. We were given the largest size, but it was still too tight across her forehead."

Guernsey legalises homosexuality

GUERNSEY MPs yesterday agreed to amend the island's law on homosexuality to conform with a 1981 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights.

For a trial three years, homosexual acts in private between consenting adults will now not be criminal offences.

Setback to gay rights in church

By Martin Halsall,
Churches Correspondent

Prayers for practising homosexuals, including services of blessing on homosexual partnerships, should be referred to area bishops before being performed in churches, the Bishop of Manchester, the Right Reverend Stanley Booth-Clibborn is to tell his diocesan clergy.

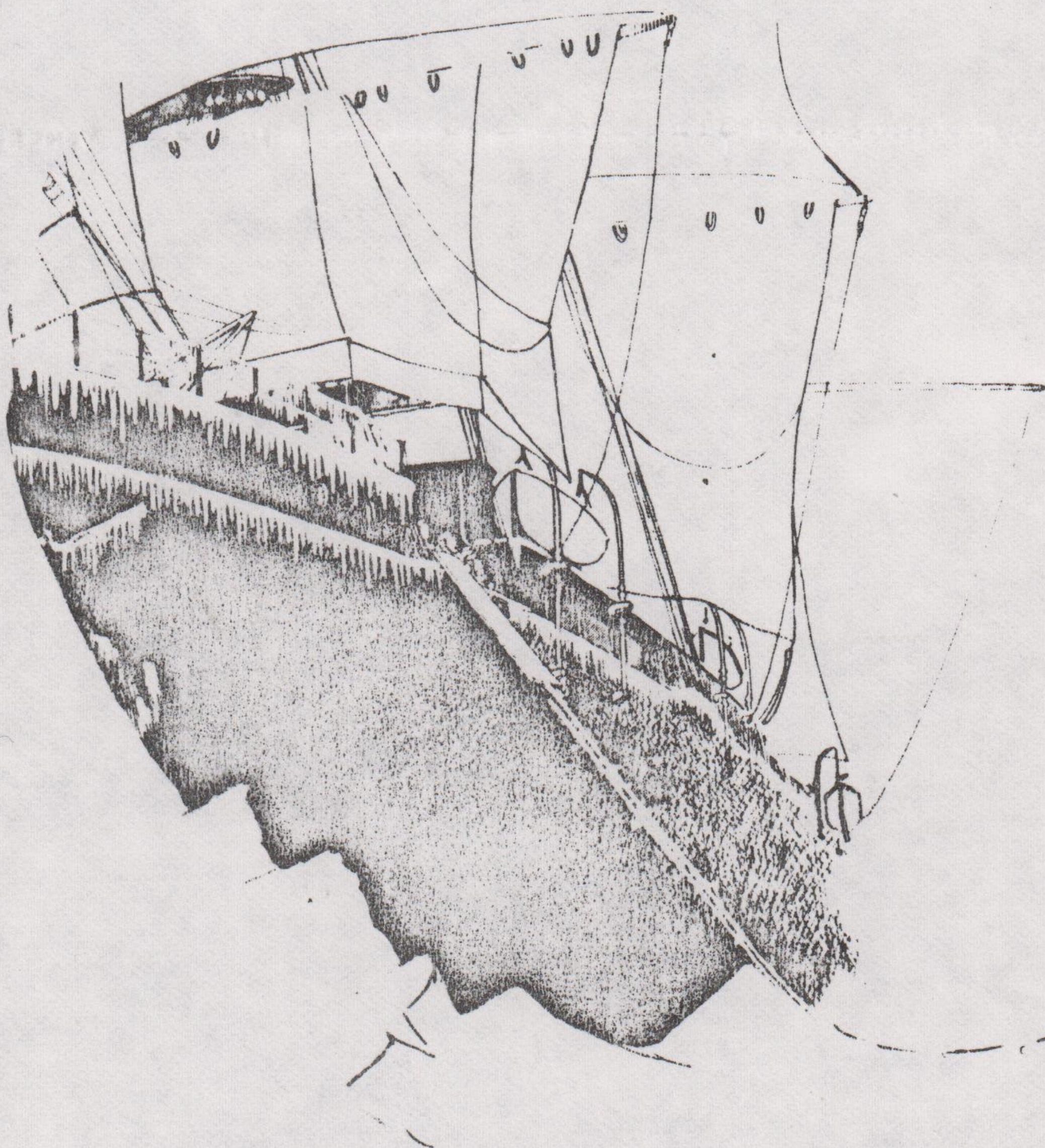
A forthcoming pastoral letter "will make it clear that there is no official encouragement whatever for such services, especially . . . within the context of eucharistic liturgy and attended by a congregation."

The bishop's letter follows controversy over a private service of blessing for two homosexual men at a church near Oldham. The service included Holy Communion.

The bishop said yesterday there was the need for compassionate understanding for the needs of practising homosexuals. His statement said a recent service did not infringe any church legislation and was in no sense a homosexual marriage. But he said it was liable to cause misunderstanding and offence.

The Gay Christian Movement yesterday estimated services of blessing were held at least once a week and increasingly in church rather than at home.

The Reverend Richard Kirker, secretary of GCM said: "The amount of distress caused by the Church refusing to bless same sex couples is in stark contrast to its willingness on many occasions to bless battleships or budgerigars."



"Ernest, I've said it before and I'll say it again—the Antarctic is no place for a burial at sea."