

NOTTINGHAM VOICE

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THE BEST CHIP SHOP IN NOTTINGHAM?

PAGE 3



NOTTINGHAM VOICE

**Nottingham's
independent
monthly paper**

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PICKING UP THE PIECES

"CITY PLANNING Department Boot Boys Rule O.K.!" read the most perceptive slogan ever scrawled on the seat of a Corporation bus. That was in the heyday of Ted Evans, Nottingham's most catastrophic Planning Officer, the friend of Tory Council leader and property owner Bill Derbyshire (now in partial retirement at Skegness) and of Mr Big in the local gambling world, bookie, nightclub proprietor and property owner George (call me Geo.) Akins Ltd.

Mr Evans performed his greatest service to the city by leaving for Liverpool last year, but the fruits of his labours are still around us: they have been known to make old people almost weep. His monument was self-selected in a Nottingham Arrow interview shortly before he left: appropriately it was the Broad Marsh mausoleum, that gaping mouth which sucks in pedestrians from Lister Gate and evacuates them through the Collin Street subway. It was Mr Evans who had spotted that the area now occupied by the Centre (which virtually links the Castle to St Mary's) was obviously only one site - in spite of the fact that a main road went straight through the middle of it.

Not all the devastation can be blamed on Mr Evans, however. There were his political masters, like the fatuous Charlie Butler, who said on television that he supported the Broad Marsh scheme because it included a lot of flats, but was still quite happy when the developers suddenly decided not to have any flats after all.

And there were the shifty political manipulators of the fifties, who built Maid Marian Way in spite of its rejection at a local referendum, and knocked down the eighteenth century Collins Almshouses at 4 a.m. on election morning, May 10th, 1956, after assuring everyone that they were not even in danger.

There were also the equally ludicrous traffic experts, who realised that the devastation of the old Norman area round the Castle on the west called for equal devastation of the old Saxon area of the Lace Market on the east. They were intelligent enough to realise also that the answer to the city's traffic problem was to spread it around a bit through as many back streets as possible - like sewing in a few extra yards of gut as a cure for fatness. It was necessary, of course, to widen the roads by ripping down whole street fronts and exposing the ugly backsides of the buildings beyond, but it never seemed to be necessary to repair the damage by providing new frontages. Thus whole areas of the city centre are like wandering past somebody's backyard - Burton Street (splendid rear view of T. Bailey Forman), Fletcher Gate (splendid rear view of A.C. Gill) - while, instead of the fine descent into the city down Derby Road, traffic now scuttles into Nottingham down shabby Wollaton Street - the tradesmen's entrance to Derby Road.

So the present generation of planners is left with the job of picking up the pieces, knowing that many of the best bits have gone forever. They are helped at the moment by the economic recession, which ironically prevents both grandiose schemes like the Festival Hall which originate from the City Council and also grandiose schemes like the Toll House Hill office block which the Council has declared its intention of resisting in the future. It's a temporary respite, at least, but it's to be hoped that the lessons being learned now will be remembered when the economic pressures are resumed.



The City Centre Good Chip Guide

FISH AND CHIPS IS RENOWNED AS A TRADITIONAL BRITISH DISH, BESIDES PROVIDING A GOOD, CHEAP, NUTRITIOUS MEAL WHICH HAS "A NICE BALANCE OF PROTEINS, CARBOHYDRATES, POLYUNSATURATED FATS, FLUORIDE, CALCIUM, IODINE, NICOTINIC ACID AND VITAMINS A, B1, B2, C & D", A FISH AND CHIP SUPPER IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS OF ROUNDING OFF A NIGHT AT THE CINEMA OR PUB.

HOWEVER, OVER THE LAST YEAR (AND PARTICULARLY RECENTLY WITH THE POTATO SHORTAGE) PRICES HAVE ESCALATED. SO WE THOUGHT SOMEONE

ought to have a look at just what sort of value for money fish and chips represent. In order to investigate this in Nottingham we embarked on a survey of fish and chip shops within three-quarters of a mile of the Old Market Square. This is an area from Forest Road in the north to Kirk White Street in the south and from King Edward Park in the east to Harlaxton Drive in the west. At each shop we bought a portion of fish and chips and, after weighing the chips, fish and batter separately, tasted them. Following this we noted down more subjective comments such as soginess, taste and greasiness.

The survey has a number of drawbacks, which must be remembered when looking at the table.

First, we couldn't visit every chip shop in the area. Several were closed because of holidays or alterations (was this more than a coincidence?), and others didn't display their opening times and were closed when we went. Turners, on Wilford Road, for instance, was closed on three nights in the same week.

Second, the survey was very small scale. Only three people, with limited resources of time, money and stomach capacity, were involved, and thus most shops could only be visited once. The helpings could have been affected by such factors as the time of day we called, and the particular assistant serving, so might have been unrepresentative of the usual standard. We did do checks on one or two places, to make sure our measurements weren't wildly wrong. Remember, then, that the survey is simply a record of how we fared on just one occasion, not a controlled, scientific experiment.

Subjective

Third, many of the comments are highly subjective. To reduce this we only noted comments that all testers agreed on, and tried to be specific. But remember, what appealed to us may not appeal to you and vice versa.

The results of our survey are shown in the table, but several points deserve further comment.

Only two shops - the Barbecue Bite and the Knife and Fork Chipperee - charged over 10p for chips, and they didn't give the largest portions. The Knife and Fork Chipperee, in fact, gave one of the smallest portions. So whether you're looking for a big portion, or good value for money, don't be misled by a higher price; there doesn't seem to be any good reason for charging it. Try 46 Wilford Road instead. Many of the chips we tried could be described as limp, soggy, greasy, anaemic, or uninspiring; other places, such as 46 Wilford Road, The Greyfriar and the Kingfisher, produced pleasant chips which were crisp, golden and hot and not dripping with grease. The quality doesn't seem to be related to the type of oil used, as we found good results from both vegetable oil and lard. We found quite a few crinkle cut chips, and these were often unpleasant. The Knife and Fork Chipperee's were powdery and tasteless. The Greyfriar's, however, were very tasty and golden, so you never can tell! One final point about chips - refries. The only place we saw this happening was the Snackery, and to add insult to injury they also gave us the smallest portion of the whole survey. So please, shops, if you must refry, at least give decent portions!

A very interesting trend emerges with regard to fish. Almost without exception, the more you pay for fish, the better value (of fish only per p.) you get. The main exception to this was the Barbecue Bite, which for 22p didn't give an exceptionally large portion. The Kingfisher was very good value, at a reasonable price of 18p. The quality of the fish varied greatly, some tasting too strong for our palates (the Barbecue Bite and Quality Fish and Chips) while others were bland and tasteless (at Canning Circus and Queen's). The Knife and Fork Chipperee's was tough and chewy. The best-tasting fish came from the Kingfisher and the Blue Marlin, 171, Alfreton Road. Undercooking of fish was a problem at the Barbecue Bite and Quality Fish and Chips. Some fish was of the pre-packed, frozen variety (a neat triangular portion devoid of skin and bones), as at the Greyfriar and George's. The Snackery had a choice of portions or normal fillets.

Crisp batter

As far as batter goes, we found some nice crisp batter at 46 Wilford Road, the Kingfisher, the Blue Marlin, Alfreton Road, the Greyfriar, and Canning Circus - oil got through to the fish at Lang Hong's, and the batter was thick and soggy at the Barbecue Bite and the Knife and Fork Chipperee. If you like batter, try 46 Wilford Road, where you get more batter than fish!

All in all, not many shops served a good traditional fish and chips. There is a marked tendency towards the production of a "plastic" fish and chip from convenience foods in a controlled, ultra-hygienic way. The Greyfriar epitomises this tendency. Although not traditional, the food here was well cooked and quite pleasant and its acceptability really depends on your attitude to highly processed foods.

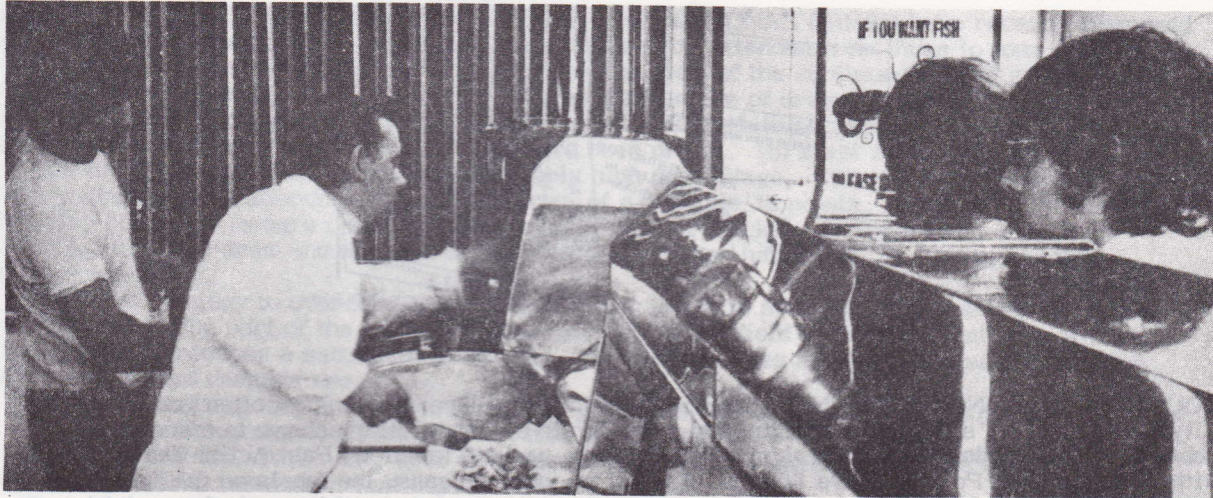
For many people fish and chips isn't complete unless wrapped in newspaper. It is now illegal to wrap directly in newspaper, but some places, like the Blue Marlin, Trinity Square, and the Snackery, do provide newspaper for the outer wrapping.

Fish and chip shops should be a service to the community, and many seemed to operate in that spirit. Friendly assistants were the norm, despite their hot and tiring working conditions. Open-

ing times, however, were a problem. A number of shops didn't display them, and seemed to be shut more often than open, which is not very helpful to the customer. We strongly recommend that opening hours should be prominently displayed. The Barbecue Bite scores here, being open till 1 a.m. some nights of the week. We hope that the staff are well rewarded for their efforts.

To conclude, several shops provided a good fish and chip, but if we had to make a personal choice it would be the Kingfisher, Mansfield Road, for providing a high-quality dish of generous proportions, with friendly service and seven-days-a-week opening. We only wish they did pickled onions too! If you want to read more on fish and chips, try Gerald Priestland's book "Frying Tonight - the Saga of Fish and Chips", published by Gentry Books, 1972.

CJT



Above: the Kingfisher
- our critic's choice.

CHIPS

FISH

	Price	Weight (grams)	Weight per penny	Price	Weight batter (grams)	Weight fish (grams)	Weight fish per p.
Barbecue Bite, 17 Manvers Street.	12	180	15.0	22	97	100	4.5
Blue Marlin,* 171 Alfreton Road.	10	149	14.9	18	68	78	4.3
Blue Marlin,* Forman Street.	10	171	17.1	17	41	80	4.7
George's,* Glasshouse Street.	10	150	15.0	17	56	70	4.1
Greyfriar, Lower Parlt. Street.	10	186	18.6	17	39	56	3.3
Kingfisher,* 127 Mansfield Road.	10	168	16.8	18	45	125	7.0
Knife & Fork Chipperee, Maid Marian Way.	12	143	12.0	20	69	141	7.0
Lang Hong,* 24 Sneinton Road.	10	170	17.0	17	43	61	3.6
Quality Fish & Chips, 109 Sneinton Road.	10	198	19.8	15	34	45	3.0
Queens Fish Bar,* 25 Mansfield Road.	10	168	16.8	18	50	70	3.9
Snackery,* Wollaton Street.	10	128	12.8	16	40	50	3.1
29 Alfreton Road,* Canning Circus.	10	148	14.8	17	54	80	4.7
46 Wilford Road.	10	220	22.0	18	97	68	3.8

*Shops which used vegetable oil at time of survey.
Figures are average of more than one visit in some cases.
There are 28 grams in an ounce.

Zone & Collar

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RECOMMENDED FOR ALL TRAVELLERS IN THE NOTTINGHAM AREA

TRAVEL BRIGHTENER

Concupis plusque in ipsinuria detriment

ZONE & COLLAR	
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YOU MAY OR MAY NOT RECOGNISE THE SLOGAN above, depending on how often you travel by City Transport. It's part of an imaginative campaign to sell the Collar scheme to a sceptical public, and it includes lurid posters of detergent-type packets labelled "Fast Action Daily Bus - with Added Pulling Power. Save £££s!" As well as jazzy slogans, the labels on the "packets" include quite a lot of small print. Passengers wanting to get a grip on this are in for a shock, however: a typical extract (see above) reads, "Concupis plusque in ipsinuria detriment" - which even the County Council's "Mr Collar", Cllr Frank Higgins might be hard pressed to interpret. The worst fears of paranoid motorists are apparently confirmed - the Collar really is pure nonsense! The explanation is a little simpler, though. The lads in the Transport Department's new £30,000 per annum publicity section have obviously taken a short cut and used what is known in the trade as "body type". The sole purpose of this is to give the appearance of columns of type. The words don't matter - and in this case they're Latin!

Meanwhile, the Evening Post gets ever more desperate in its efforts to discredit the Collar. On August 5th, the sad story of Mr William Sansome of Grannis Drive, Aspley was revealed, Schoolteacher Mr Sansome lives "just down the road" from his school, but now has to take his car on a "half-mile detour" because of Collar restrictions. End of story. Apart from the obvious query why Mr Sansome doesn't simply walk "just along the road" in the first place, it is interesting to speculate on how the Post got hold of this searing exposee. The answer, alas, is all too simple: as an ex-teacher on the Voice staff pointed out, Mr Sansome is the father of an Evening Post reporter!

VOICE OF THE FUTURE

THE GAP BETWEEN THIS EDITION of Nottingham Voice and the next will be slightly longer than usual - issue 22 will appear on 4th October. In future, we plan to bring out the Voice on the first Friday/Saturday of the month. The deadline for articles will be the 20th of the preceding month (e.g. 20th September for the next issue). The deadline for information, news, etc. will be the weekend before publication (e.g. 27th - 28th September for the next issue). We can usually be contacted during this weekend at 411676, or copy can be pushed through the door of the People's Centre.

The Voice office at the People's Centre is usually open whenever the Centre is open (i.e. Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. onwards - though not much after 5 p.m.), and readers are always welcome to drop in and see us. We also plan to be available in the Peacock, Mansfield Road during the Tuesday evening following publication from 8.30 onwards, if people want to meet us there - either to talk about ways in which they can get involved, or simply to discuss, comment or make suggestions.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

TAKING A WHIRL WITH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT



LABOUR RELATIONS

COUNCIL ELECTIONS NEXT MAY must be weighing heavily on the mind of City Council leader John Carroll at present. They may well account for his recent interest in the facilities offered by the legal profession.

A preliminary hearing took place on July 29th of a summons issued by Cllr Carroll against Chris Richardson, Co-op employee and Chairman of Lenton Ward Labour Party. The purpose of this hearing was to consider the defence submitted by Chris Richardson to a writ of defamation claiming damage to Cllr Carroll's reputation. This arises from remarks made at a meeting of East Nottingham Labour Party General Management Committee about Cllr Carroll's conduct as election agent for Jack Dunnett MP when Mr Dunnett was re-adopted as Labour candidate for the February General Election last year.

It was interesting at the preliminary hearing to see Cllr Carroll's solicitors (Randall, Rose & Co - formerly Randall, Rose & Dunnett) objecting to references to his financial dependence on Jack Dunnett. For the record, Cllr Carroll was employed as a part-time fund-raiser for Notts County Football Club. Jack Dunnett is Chairman of the Board at County and the major shareholder. Cllr Carroll is also sole director of a firm (Carroll Agencies Ltd) which was originally set up by Jack Dunnett. Cllr Carroll's wife is employed at the Derby Road Labour Party office of Jack Dunnett.

There seems little or no chance of the case being settled out of court - an offer of an apology made by Chris Richardson was so circumscribed with conditions that it became unacceptable to him. The trial will be by jury in Nottingham and promises more interesting revelations of Cllr Carroll's finances.

All good stuff for the May elections!

LAST EXIT?

THE LONG HOT SUMMER HAS SEEN NO LET-UP in the grinding of Jack Dunnett's East Nottingham Labour Party "machine". Slowly but surely the "disruptive elements" are being squeezed out, and everything which might disturb the peace and tranquillity of Brother Jack's patch is being removed.

Latest round was the appeal against expulsion from the party of Market Ward rebel Stephen Evans. The occasion was presided over by two referees drafted in from the Regional Labour Party Council - comrades Adolphe and Booter (sic).

First points were scored by Cllr Evans, who pointed out that even the National Executive whitewash early this year had only recommended he should be reprimanded and "cautioned about his future conduct". Yet three weeks after accepting these findings the East Nottingham Executive Committee had expelled him. Such haste reflects their desperation to be rid of an embarrassment well before next May's Council elections.

But the Dunnett "machine" appears hard-pressed to concoct valid reasons. What could the collective wisdom of the two Higgins, "urban gorilla" Cllr Peter Burgess and humourless, bureaucratic collector of rate arrears Bill Dinwoodie come up with? Precious little it seems.

Four main charges were presented. Stephen Evans had voted against Executive Committee recommendations at the Constituency's General Management Committee (in common with many others not yet expelled). He did not attend three Executive Committee meetings to which he was invited. He publicly supported squatters in Market Ward. (Note: Many Labour Councils have agreements with squatters to use short-life houses. Could this be the signal for a mass purge as the Government drifts rightwards?) Last but not least, the lone rebel had the nerve to attend a tenants association meeting in his Ward and support demands that Council rents should not be increased. Not quite the stuff that rebels are made of.

But the cross-questioning brought out the real issues. Mutterings were made about unsatisfactory behaviour and "embarrassing" questions in Council over the use of "lump" labour on Council building contracts. Frank Higgins referred to the "shady" and "possibly illegal" land deals at Top Valley: Stephen Evans had imputed corruption in his fellow Labour Councillors. When asked which Councillors had been accused, Cllr Higgins was forced to admit none had - adding, "that is just the trouble".

Next move will be a report to the National Executive Organisation Sub-Committee on September 8th. Also appearing on the bill will be Reg Prentice and his local difficulties at Newham North-East. Perhaps a timely reminder to Brother Jack and Co. of their vulnerability.

BARKER

PART OF THE UNION?



1.

(Editors' note. There seems to be some dispute whether a Claimants Union actually exists in Nottingham at the moment. We had always assumed it did, since some of its members were alive and well and running an advisory service at the People's Centre, not a million miles from the Voice office. Along came our correspondent N.L., however, with the first of the two articles printed below, claiming that the C.U. is now dead. Since N.L. was a founder member of the Nottingham C.U., this seemed reasonably plausible. Not so, said People's Centre C.U. man Jack Yates - and handed in our second article: the real work of the C.U. carries on; only the students and political activists have left. So all we could do was publish both articles - plus a statement from a C.U. handbook, defining what C.U.s are all about, which is accepted by both sides. We think the issues raised in these articles are important, and would be glad to have comments on them from other readers.)

SEVEN OF US HAD GONE ALONG TO DAVID LANE Social Security Office to make three claims for clothing and bedding grants. We had waited in the queue and gone to the counter in twos and asked politely.

No! came the reply. We spoke to the supervisor: No chance! The manager would not see us.

This was the moment of decision. Were we going to back down - or stand up against the Social Security system with its intentional confusions and harassment? WE DECIDED TO OCCUPY. The original group soon expanded to include several people who, like us, were pissed off with the treatment they had received.

One part I particularly remember was the first time the police came in. When the Sergeant asked who our spokesman was he got a loud unanimous reply: "There's not one - we have no leader". SS offices are public places until they close so we couldn't be asked to leave. Since they couldn't pin that on us they threatened to do someone for bad language, then left.

Later on, local radio and Midlands TV reported that our occupation had been a success. The manager backed down and giroes amounting to over £117 were sent to the three claimants.

This occupation and others like it were part of the style of action developed through months of struggle and discussion by claimants which led to the Claimants Union becoming an effective local force. Militant collective action, weekly democratic discussion and informative leaflets were fundamental, but more of this next time.

The Claimants Union no longer exists in Nottingham (although there is a social security advice service at the People's Centre). As the crisis deepens, thousands of school leavers find themselves without a job (the Army is frantically trying to recruit them). The factories are "shaking

out" surplus employees: the first to go are often women. Hundreds of thousands of single mothers, pensioners and disabled on "allowances" are finding it difficult to make ends meet with rising prices and rents. In an attempt to rationalise itself capitalism is closing down thousands of work-places and nationalising others while the trade unions co-operate with management in widespread redundancies. In this situation, some sort of organisation of people on social security or unemployment benefit seems necessary.

Apart from proving a determination to fight, that occupation displayed a belief in the RIGHT OF CLAIMANTS TO ORGANISE. Many would say how dare these "dossers", these "workshy", these "women living off the state" demand anything? They should all be at work!

Work is the burden of most people not because we produce valuable and necessary things but because unless we work we don't get paid. A lot of jobs are socially useless (advertising) or harmful (making weapons). On the other hand, caring for the elderly or organising a playgroup rarely counts as work.

With work so meaningless, the struggle against work has become vital. In the factories, schools, hospitals, there is a growing opposition - claimants organising is just one small part of this.

Next issue Women. Strikers. Pensioners. Welfare State. Practical points. What happened to the C.U.?

N.L.

2.

THE CLAIMANTS UNION IN NOTTINGHAM was organised about three years ago by several left-wing students who saw the movement as a vehicle to further their ideologies towards a Socialist Utopia. Weekly meetings were held in all sorts of odd places. Claimants were invited to take part, claims were discussed and claimants were organised to meet at the local Supplementary Benefit Offices and act as pressure groups to pursue their claims. This action was successful in a limited number of individual claims. However, it did not benefit the vast majority of claimants, and only served to antagonise the counter staffs. Any sympathy that the movement could have expected from the local orthodox trade unions was negated.

The Leader - sorry - the most active member, realising that the movement was failing to gain any ground, decided to diversify the action to other fields such as squatting, rent protests, food co-ops, nursery groups, etc. These activities died the death. The Organiser and his fellow travellers, realising that they were not going to overturn the society we live in, decided to cease these activities and conform. This they found very easy, not being genuine claimants, but for the most part highly qualified academically, finding positions in the system which previously they had rejected.

In the meantime, the other active members of the Claimants Union, mostly claimants by necessity, realised the need that existed for help for people such as pensioners, the sick and disabled, unsupported families, etc., in pursuing their claims for Social Security benefits (the benefits by no means being as automatic or as forthcoming as they appear to be). They continued to advise and help claimants in a more responsible and legal manner.

When the umbrella organisation called the People's Centre at 33 Mansfield Road opened its doors to house the various voluntary welfare groups, the Claimants Union became affiliated and holds meetings there every Monday afternoon to which all claimants are welcomed. Active members give advice and practical help where needed. Help with appeals to the Tribunals is given freely. In the last six months over six hundred people have been helped with their supplementary benefit and other welfare benefits problems. Where other problems exist as well, the other voluntary groups which cover that particular field do all they can to help.

So, the Claimants Union is dead, Long Live the Claimants Union!

J. YATES

3.

CLAIMANTS UNIONS ARE GROUPS OF PEOPLE on social security who have got together to help each other and to fight collectively around the four demands known as the Claimants Charter.

THE CLAIMANTS CHARTER

1. The right to an adequate income without means test for all people.
2. A socialist society in which all necessities are provided free and which is managed and controlled directly by the people.
3. No secrets and the right to full information.
4. No distinction between so-called "deserving" and "undeserving".

HOW DO INDIVIDUAL CLAIMANTS UNIONS WORK?

Each Claimants Union is self-governing and cannot be mandated outside the Charter. The essence of Claimants Unions is rank and file control, which means that members make their own decisions at a local level at the weekly meetings of the Union. Consequently, Claimants Unions are not branches of a national organisation and they differ in character and tactics. In doing so they reflect their individual localities, their particular communities, and the personalities of their members. Different emphasis is placed from one Union to another on the political, social, and fighting claims aspects of CU work.

WEEKLY MEETINGS

Here all major decisions are taken collectively by the members present. Together we pool our knowledge, ideas and experience, and decide on future action. New members who join at these

meetings may be shocked at the lack of confidentiality and the friendly informality of the group. They may have come half expecting some sort of emergency social work organisation only interested in sorting their claim out. Instead we expect every member to get involved . . . no indispensable activists, no "casework" by specialists, no permanent experts, etc.

There are three aspects to Claimants Union work:

1. Fighting claims at Labour Exchanges, Social Security offices, Appeal Tribunals and sometimes through the courts.
2. Political - producing literature such as the newspaper and handbooks, also leaflets, etc., organising demonstrations and specialist conferences, schools, etc.
3. Social - most CU members get a lot of support through the organisation of playgroups, food co-ops, squatting, trips and outings, the summer camp, etc.

THE NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CLAIMANTS UNION MOVEMENT

We have no national executive or national headquarters. We are in daily conflict with an enormous, centralised state bureaucracy, *i.e.* the Social Security Section of the Department of Health and Social Security. We want a movement which does not reflect this. A hierarchical structure with a national headquarters would mean discipline and regulation from above with the strong possibility of state co-option or control. Local Unions would soon lose their spontaneity and militancy and power would be removed from the grassroots. "Officials" in secure, well-paid posts would be far removed from the harsh realities of claiming, and would probably fall into the role of arbitrators, conciliators and mediators.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CLAIMANTS UNIONS

is merely a network of all those Claimants Unions which have affiliated together. To affiliate, a Claimants Union must be bona-fide; support the four points of the Charter; and hold weekly meetings which are open to all Claimants. The aim of the NFCU is to communicate and co-ordinate activities between Claimants Unions. To facilitate this there are regional and national co-ordinating meetings, in addition to the Quarterly National Federation Meetings.

Conspiracy unlimited

NOTTINGHAM IS AT LAST SEEING SOME ACTIVITY against the recent revival of the conspiracy laws. Conspiracy charges are being brought more frequently against people who are involved in political activity and demonstrations. On July 23rd there was a meeting, which attracted some 60 people, about the 21 Iranians who have been charged with conspiracy to trespass after a peaceful demonstration at the Iranian Embassy in London. The Iranian régime is not known for its liberal attitude towards opposition. Amnesty International have claimed that a number of people have died from torture at the hands of the current régime. It was against this régime that the demonstration took place. But instead of a simple charge of trespass (which was the law the Iranians had broken) a charge of conspiracy was brought against them.

Similarly a recent meeting at the People's Centre was concerned with the use of the conspiracy laws against people who have given leaflets to soldiers informing them of their rights should they wish to leave the service. A total of 18 people are due to be charged in the coming months with conspiracy to incite disaffection. 14 of these are due to appear at the Old Bailey on September 29th. The Incitement to Disaffection Act doesn't allow people to go around encouraging soldiers to pack it in. However, the charges being brought are not that these people have broken the Incitement to Disaffection Act, but that they have conspired to break it.

So what is the conspiracy law? Normally people are charged with having actually broken a law, with having done something which the law says you shouldn't do. But a conspiracy charge can be brought against someone not because they have broken a law, but because they agreed to break a law with another person. It makes no difference whether they did then break the law or not. However, the usefulness of the conspiracy laws to the State is not only that people can be convicted when they haven't even committed the act, but also that conspiracy is always a criminal charge - for example, if you are accused of conspiracy to trespass you have committed a worse crime than if you were charged with trespass itself! Trespass on private property is a civil offence and conspiracy is criminal. Furthermore, the conspiracy laws allow for unlimited sentences - up to imprisonment for life or an unlimited fine - and this applies however minor the actual offence would have been even if you had committed it.

The law has also been tightened up in another direction recently following a case which involved tenants picketing Prebbles, a London firm of estate agents. The eventual decision was that it is only legal to picket when in an industrial dispute. So no other groups have any legal right to picket at all. This includes tenants' groups, housewives' groups, claimants, or any other pressure groups. Since this is against the law, anyone who pickets, say, the Housing Department in Nottingham is liable to be charged. This is bad enough in itself, but coupled with the conspiracy laws it seems that the police have almost unlimited powers to deal with picketing. Anyone organising or taking part in a non-industrial picket in Nottingham, or even agreeing to it, could be charged with conspiracy to picket. Maximum fine - unlimited. Maximum sentence - life.

Think about it.



MIKE WESTBROOK

Dear Sirs,

I was very pleased to see in your July issue that your jazz reviewer Cliff Lee enjoyed the Mike Westbrook concert at the Albany Hotel as part of the Fringe Festival. However, I feel it is worth pointing out the position of East Midlands Arts sponsoring Mike Westbrook, as he gave the impression that this is something we should do, implying that we have never sponsored a Mike Westbrook concert. In fact, this is so far from the truth that it perhaps reflects badly on our own publicity and PR.

Our music panel financially supported a Mike Westbrook Big Band concert in Leicester, promoted by the Leicester Jazz Society, during the "Citadel/Room 316" tour and the concert at the Albany which Cliff Lee so much enjoyed was promoted by the East Midlands Arts Association as part of our contribution to the Nottingham Festival. Not only did we organise and promote several of the events at the Albany, but we were also responsible for the street theatre and Mike Westbrook Brass Band events in Listergate and other areas of the city during the Festival. I hope you and your readers felt that this was a useful contribution to the involvement of many more people in the Nottingham Festival than merely bought tickets for indoor events.

Yours faithfully, Ian Lancaster.

Drama Officer, East Midlands Arts Association, 1 Frederick Street, Loughborough, Leics.

THE LEFT HAND

Dear Nottingham Voice,

I am writing to tell you that I don't intend entering for the "Stick a Caption on a Copper" competition. The Voice gets more like Private Eye every issue.

As a "radical" magazine the Voice ought to look towards how to change things. How?

One answer may lie with the sort of people who want to read the Voice. Perhaps, by trying to sell the majority of copies door to door, in the launderettes and pubs, on the markets, you may get more in touch with the problems that face most people. And take an active part in solving those problems.

I get the impression that you rely a lot on the "left hand of the Establishment" (community and social workers, People's Centre, Labour Party, tenants' associations) for your news and sales. Is that the case?

Keith Venables. Radford, Nottingham.

Alternative technology

EAST MIDLANDS ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY GROUP

THERE IS NO REASON why science and technology cannot be applied by the community for the good of the community. In order to do this it would be useful to get together all the people in this area who might be interested in starting projects which would be useful to us all and not create a nuisance for anyone. We can all meet at "Down to Earth" in Nottingham, in the evening of August 26th. Obviously it will be necessary for us to brainstorm through ideas and projects, but we would like to be actually working on these as soon as possible.

Down to Earth. 20 Hockley, Nottingham.

Muddled priorities



DENTON GREEN IS A LARGE GRASS CIRCLE which is virtually a traffic island. It is not an ideal place for a community centre, but it is the only one in Broxtowe - the rest is houses. In 1973, with the support of the Social Services Department of the local authority, an Urban Aid application to build a community centre on Denton Green was submitted but rejected by the government. However, it wasn't until 1974 that the various groups which organise activities on the Estate heard about the plans and managed to get a look at them.

In December 1974, the Broxtowe groups met and prepared a report on the facilities at Broxtowe and on the Denton Green project. They were informed that the Social Services Department had approved the Denton Green project and were going to include it in the 1975/6 building programme. A meeting with Mr Caudell and Mr Gibson of the Social Services Department confirmed this. The Chief Planning Officer, Mr S.P. Byrne, also confirmed that the project was to go ahead.

However, nothing happened and the Broxtowe Community Facilities Association (the co-ordinating body for the groups involved) assumed that this was a result of the usual delays. In July an article appeared in the Evening Post saying that a total of ten projects, including Denton Green, had been rejected by the Social Services Committee. No correspondence has yet been received by the Association advising them that the project has been cancelled.

All this leaves the Association asking a lot of questions. Why did the councillors and officers who had said that Broxtowe was a priority area and that Denton Green was essential back down at the Committee meeting? Why are people told that a project is definitely going ahead when there is a strong possibility that it will be axed? Why haven't any of the alternatives put forward by the Broxtowe Association been taken up now Denton Green is out? Why is it that the Council is prepared to pay out a large fee (believed to be at least £10,000) to the architects on a cancelled project? And why is it that Broxtowe is the only community centre to be cancelled?

Perhaps the most important question is: Whatever happened to the much vaunted County Council policy on deprived areas? The County Council's own "Deprived Area Study" classes Broxtowe as a priority area and the County's own policy states that "There shall be positive discrimination in favour of the under-privileged" and that there should be "an irreversible shift of resources" to underprivileged areas. The Broxtowe Community Facilities Association is still waiting for some answers.

Cool under the collar

DISCONTENT HAS BEEN BREWING IN WOLLATON for quite some time over the new collar scheme now in operation. Petitions have been passed from house to house as normally passive housewives and bank clerks jumped onto the community action bandwagon. For once, the sound of birdsong was

drowned by slogans like, "Why should we pay roadtax as well as rates, when the rates are used to stop people using the roads".

The scheme has involved blocking off a few roads, creating a one-way system, building traffic lights which can be controlled by bus drivers, and designating bus lanes along major roads. The aim is to allow buses through quickly and to make life difficult for motorists.

So as I made my way to Wollaton at 8.00 a.m. to observe the new Wollaton rush hour I didn't know what to expect. Would our unaccustomed revolutionaries be building barricades across the bus lanes? or ignoring them altogether? or sabotaging traffic lights? And would Wollatonians once accustomed to such direct action turn their community into a hotbed of radical activity? After all it is a well-known fact that if you lose your belt, your trousers fall down! At the very least I expected to see miles of moaning motorists.

Imagine my disappointment when I arrived to find that there were no queues of angry motorists for me to photograph except the usual traffic jam on Middleton Boulevard. There was actually more traffic heading out of Nottingham than in, even at the height of the rush hour! And the buses? Wollaton can now boast more half-empty buses than pampered poodles. Bus queues are non-existent - I can remember when they seemed eternal, and "I live on Wollaton Road" was always a good excuse for arriving late to work.

I met an old friend who explained the reason: "The kids are off school, that's the only reason they've done it now." She added that the bus company had taken the opportunity to raise fares.

The collar scheme has attracted a lot of publicity. The Evening Post has reported it and commented on it ad nauseam, hundreds of policemen and traffic wardens have turned out to observe half-empty buses and non-existent bus queues, and the little man at the top of Ilkeston Road is excitedly counting the cars. As for the general public, all that can be said at the moment is that it's a bit of an improvement.

JOHN HILEY

Tenants under fire

THE ATTACK ON TENANTS IN NOTTINGHAM, both Council and private, continues unabated and virtually uncontested. It may well be pure coincidence that attacks on both types of tenants are occurring at the same time. The anonymous Private Landlords' Association kicked off the campaign by declaring that they would not let to students, and that the Rent Officers were being unfair to landlords (presumably by not letting them make the vast amounts of money that they had in the past). However, the campaign has been hotting up.

A recent Evening Post article which quoted the Senior Rents Officer of the City Council, Mr Geoffrey Oldfield, under the title "When the Rent Man Calls", laid great emphasis on the rent arrears that were owing from Council tenants and what a catastrophic effect this was having on the finances of the City Council. The article claimed that Council tenants owed a massive total of £220,000 in rent arrears. Unfortunately, the article did not give any of the reasons for these rent arrears nor make any attempt to assess the significance of the outstanding amount.

The article did not mention that many of these debts are notional debts because Council tenants are supposed to pay fortnightly rather than weekly. This means that any tenant who pays in an "off week" would be entered down for rent arrears even though they normally paid regularly and promptly. Mr Oldfield went on to claim that one in six tenants have rent debts. But he didn't say that these debts only amount to 2% of the £10m income on rents. And any private business would consider itself doing well if outstanding debts were only 2% of the annual turnover. But never mind, it makes a good stick to beat the Council tenant with.

Further difficulties appear to be caused by tenants who are on supplementary benefit. But in fact these tenants now do not receive any rent or rate rebates but pay their rents in full. The rebates are paid to the Department of Health and Social Security. And if rent debts do arise because the poor tenants have to spend their little bit on silly things like food and clothing, an order is usually made for the rent to be paid direct from the DHSS to the City Treasury. So comparatively few of the debts can be caused by people on Social Security. However, once the DHSS are paying the rent, they are worse than most tenants because the DHSS only pay quarterly in arrears! In fact, the People's Centre has seen people who are being threatened with eviction by the City Council because they are in arrears with the rent - when in fact it was the DHSS who had caused the arrears!

However, the fearless Post decided that it wouldn't bother to give the right of reply to the Council tenants who had been attacked by the Senior Rents Officer in the City Treasury. And so there was no follow up in the Post at all to the grossly distorted claims of Mr Oldfield.

However, this attack on the Council tenant has now been followed by even more ingenious moves in the private sector. At the Housing Committee on the 7th August, Cllr Bert Littlewood was overheard saying, "Landlords' associations are being asked if they would allocate houses to the Council to find tenants for them". We presume he means the Private Landlords' Association, which has been so worried about the effects of the 1974 Rent Act which brought in security of tenure for a whole range of furnished tenants who had had no real security before. In fact, it is precisely this security of tenure (which means that landlords cannot evict tenants without a good reason) which has made it possible for many tenants to register for a "fair rent" and get the rent put down. The landlords are particularly peeved about this because the present shortage of

(continued at the bottom of page 16)

IS YOUR DOCTOR REALLY NECESSARY?



(THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY A GENERAL PRACTITIONER WHO, FOR REASONS WHICH WILL BE APPARENT FROM THE ARTICLE, FEELS COMPELLED TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.)

DOCTORS, ALONG WITH OTHER PROFESSIONAL GROUPS, have had it their way for a little too long and people are at last becoming aware that their domination has a political nature.

The reasons for the present power of the medical profession are basically historical. Moral leadership of the community rested with the Church until fairly recently, but, as the power of the

Church declined after the Age of Enlightenment and the development of the Protestant Ethic, life and death were seen in increasingly secular terms. During the nineteenth century, doctoring became a useful and legitimate trade with some sort of rational scientific basis and some reasonable results. However, John Powles and McKeown and Lowe have shown that, in retrospect, the good results were more probably due to sanitary reforms than the direct intervention of doctors as a profession. I feel also that the rising bourgeois consciousness of dirt as sinful, helped by the soap manufacturers (e.g. the Pears adverts), played some part in reducing the problems of communicable diseases.

Whether or not doctors' value to the community was correctly perceived in the mid-nineteenth century, it is probable that their domination was seeded here. They became more respectable, forming professional associations (e.g. the British Medical Association in 1858), and becoming associated with "good works". By the turn of the century, medical men were respected both as men of science and as a liberal professional group running voluntary hospitals for the poor with some of the profits they made from their trade. They were thus well placed for the most insidious type of political domination, i.e. they were good because they "helped" the poor and because some of their treatments worked - but this gave them prestige and legitimised some of their more dubious practices.

CONSUMPTION

These factors have been amplified during the present century as society has become less diseased and more orientated towards consumption of technology - both these developments being consistent with what the doctor has to offer. Moreover, this has happened in the same half century that has seen some attempts at socialisation in health, e.g. the Lloyd George Panel System of 1909 and the Bevan National Health Service of 1948.

As a "liberal" democracy we have also used medicine to soften our laws. Instead of locking up or killing our deviants, e.g. murderers, thieves, lunatics, homosexuals, drug abusers, etc., we have come to see them as sick and in need of medical treatment - although as anyone who has visited a Special Hospital like Rampton will know, the effect on the deviant is hardly more constructive. Society, then, has colluded with the doctor to expand his power by papering over its "problems".

The British political system abounds with paradoxes, but what better than that of a socialist-inspired free health service run mainly by private entrepreneurs recruited from the middle class and protected from the people by an impregnable bureaucracy? Perhaps things will change, but how quickly and how much? Ivan Illich demonstrates how complete and dangerous is the professional and government stranglehold on ordinary people, yet everywhere lower status groups are screaming for professionalisation.

Doctors as a professional group are now being threatened, with varying degrees of political significance, on a number of fronts. Probably the most important confrontation was between the women's movement in California and the American Medical Association, which went to the courts and resulted in a rejection of the doctors' claim that they had the sole right to treat a particular woman. The women's movement has been able to show that early abortions are roughly equivalent to having a tooth removed, and women no longer need be alienated from their own bodies.

The consumer movement has also had a go. Spurred on by the middle class media, parents are becoming more suspicious both of new drugs (particularly since thalidomide) and of established treatments like hospital confinements. The consumer movement's lack of political direction can lead to the wrong answers. For example, Nader's efforts have led the US to produce bigger, "safer" cars rather than to make transport subservient to the needs of all the people: the middle classes can survive road accidents, but the working class is still isolated in ghettos with inadequate communication (such as our own Balloon Wood estate).

BUREAUCRACY

Increasing bureaucracy is also threatening doctors. Doctors fill in forms to get paid, to let people off work and to give drugs, and moan for clinical freedom as other entrepreneurs moan for independence from taxation. Meanwhile, the law frightens them into unnecessary overtreatment. For example, it is not safe for a doctor to leave a normal uterus in an American woman past child-bearing age because the few who get diseased will get such high damages from the doctor. So the many go without their wombs.

When other systems, such as bureaucratic government and the law, come into conflict with the medical profession it is difficult to back a winner. Certainly, whatever happens, the people will lose, since it is just a battle to see who has the most controlling strength. This has been seen in the recent conflict between Barbara Castle and the Hospital consultants over private beds. It is surely unhealthy for the NHS to run beds for the rich, but do the people benefit if the government stops this with yet more bureaucracy? The initiative for change should come from the people themselves so that they can tackle bureaucracies and professional élites together. I doubt whether the

Community Health Councils, which each Health District now has, could work anything sufficiently radical.

The few politically and socially aware doctors in Britain are widely scattered. They are suspicious of their professional bodies and the bureaucracy. They are concerned that after twenty-eight years of the NHS the poorly served areas, usually working class districts in the North and West of Britain, are just as poorly served in terms of money spent and per capita doctoring. They feel overworked and sometimes overpaid. They are not scientific miracle workers or paragons of virtue, but are labelled this way in the course of a political game where only the bosses, the government and the professionals can make the rules. That should ring a few bells in your head, dear reader!

Prescription

Like all power games, the best way out is a more appropriate ideology. In medicine few people can even spell ideology because of our overspecialised education system, which aims to stop people thinking. But just occasionally one meets people or reads books with an ideology which might be more in the interests of the people and less in the interests of the Pharmaceutical Industry, the BMA and the Cabinet.

In 1948, the Ministry of Health closed down a community club in Peckham, South-east London. The club had been set up by a group of doctors in the twenties to cater for all the people living nearby. A small subscription from each family entitled the members to use the swimming pool, gymnasium, creche, cafeteria, holiday farmhouse and home-grown food when they wanted to. It also entitled them to a total health check-up annually and a full explanation of the results. The members were not told to do anything in particular about their complaints but the various courses of action and treatments that were possible were discussed and the members could then decide what to do, if anything, and where to do it. The Peckham Health Centre changed people's lives through their own initiative. Pregnant women became healthy with iron tablets and exercise, children learned to play without supervision, questions were asked about why food quality was poor and family planning was openly discussed. Remember, this was in the 1930s. Today, the government is pushing more and more doctors into health centres, but nowadays health centre means disease palace.

The People's Republic of China has also been a healthier place since the revolution, and particularly since 1967. They appear to have eradicated bilharzia, VD and drug addiction, and to have reduced their infant death rate whilst limiting the size of families - and all in thirty years without spending vast sums of money, just because the people wanted it that way. Health is provided at the commune level without any necessity for medical experts. The barefoot doctors and even specialised hospital doctors have to spend some time working in the fields producing food. Can you see your friendly neighbourhood heart transplant surgeon doing one day a week on the shop floor at Raleigh? And if not, why not?

Not everyone can wait for a revolution before demystifying medical care. Britain already has a number of self-help medical groups, mainly in London working in such areas as psychiatry, drug abuse, women's health and Eastern medicine. There is no reason why the people of Nottingham could not generate their own self-help group to keep people out of psychiatric hospitals, to study Eastern and traditional medicine, to reduce drug misuse with information, to learn do-it-yourself abortion, or just to exchange knowledge of doctors and hospitals and the health bureaucracy

But we must not lose sight of the fact that the crisis in health is political, not technological.

(TENANTS UNDER FIRE continued)

accommodation would normally have meant that they would have made lots and lots of money instead of the reasonable return allowed to them with a fair rent. So landlords are taking property off the rented market and in many cases letting it stand empty. This adds to the shortage of housing and brings more pressure to bear in the campaign for the repeal of the Rent Act. This is despicable enough in itself - that individuals in our society should be able to make people homeless just because they have been stopped from grossly exploiting people - but when a senior officer in the Council, Mr John Sharpe (Manager of the Council's Housing Advice Centre), comes down on the side of the landlords rather than the tenants then we can really see where everyone is standing. "Mr Sharpe thought that some of the landlords' difficulties might be eased if they could apply for a possession order to the Magistrates' Court rather than the County Court" (Evening Post, August 7th). Really Mr Sharpe, some people thought you were supposed to be running an advice centre rather than a front for the Private Landlords' Association. And what about coming out with some comment on the number of homeless people in Nottingham in your annual report, Mr Sharpe, rather than hitting the headlines with backing for the landlords?

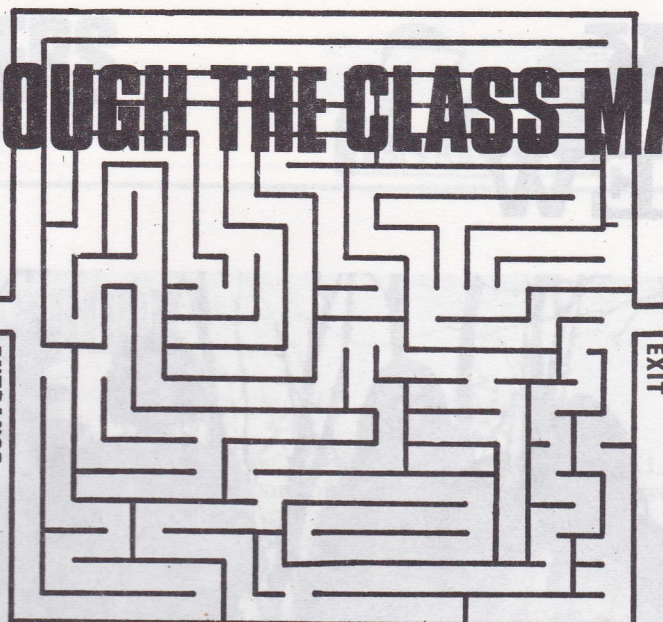
It certainly seems as if the private landlords do not have to undertake much publicity themselves because our present Council employees seem quite capable of putting the case for them. What price a Labour council?

But no one is suggesting that if the Council are able to lease private housing and then relet it to Council tenants they are doing so in order to conveniently let private landlords off the Rent Act hook. It must be coincidence that if the Council do go ahead with this plan such private property will lose all the protection provided by the 1974 Rent Act because council properties are excluded from the Act. Pure coincidence. So far the private landlords have been waging a winning battle because no one, but no one, has been prepared to attack them. Let's hope that the rash of squatting that is likely to occur when more and more properties are left empty and when the students return may have some impact. But perhaps the biggest question unanswered at the moment is - Where are the tenants associations?

THROUGH THE CLASS MAZE



ENTRANCE



EXIT



WHEN I WALKED OUT OF THE RALEIGH YARD FOR THE LAST TIME with my cards in my pocket, and my dirty overalls tucked under my arm, I felt the first serious pangs of apprehension. What the hell was I doing walking out of a job with a wife and two children to support and only a student grant to do it on?

I was forty years old, had no money to speak of, and had just given up a nice, safe factory job for the uncertainties of a full-time course at a college for mature students in Birmingham. It wasn't as though I was going to study something "useful" like business efficiency or ladies' hair-dressing: I was going to study "literature", and any semi-skilled capstan operator can tell you how economically and socially useless that is.

But I'd cut the umbilical cord that had sustained me for twenty years. I was on my own and at that moment my workmates, who long ago had accepted a life sentence at the Raleigh as inevitable, seemed the most sensible men in the world. When I had been asked in the factory why I was leaving I couldn't bring myself to utter the words . . . college . . . student . . . literature. To become involved in such things, especially when I was all too patently "working class", was to become "different", almost alienated. Education, after all, was what you did when you were a kid at school, valuable only when it taught you how to count your wages or to write a letter for a job better than the one you had been landed with.

But awkward explanations were over. The embarrassment of hiding the fact that I tried to write poetry was a relief, at least for a time, and there was nothing to do but sit out the days until I boarded the train to Birmingham. It is not possible to stop being, suddenly, the person that the factory had made you. What I took to college was not only a meagre knowledge of literature, but all that I knew of frustration and boredom after years of time serving. If I enjoyed the discipline of study at the college it was tempered by a deep-rooted anger at a factory system that takes lives by the million and ruins them by devouring the time, the energy, and the feeling of those millions.

Lives wasted

As long as there are assembly lines there will be lives wasted in manning them: as long as there is a fragmented society there will be loneliness, boredom, and alienation. Machine minders and assembly-line workers do their jobs because they have no choice. They are the educational failures, the non-starters, and the penalty they have to pay for this apparent lack of talent is a life of well-paid but mindless drudgery. Through a very minor talent which enabled me to learn the language of a "different" culture I was allowed to slip through the class net into the sea where the big fish swim. Now I am known to my superiors by name rather than by clock number, but in return I have to accept the mores of those who teach me. My tutors never let me forget that I am now on the doorstep of the privileged - in fact the education I received was as much concerned with the proper social attitudes as it was with the academic work. The important thing, I soon learned, was to make as much intellectual protest as possible against the iniquitous "system" without actually rocking the boat to such an extent that we all fell into the mire.

At that point I had to make my choice. I was offered three University places: accepting one of them meant accepting the whole system of values - the middle class culture - that went with the offer. I had come too far, however, for turning back. The thought of the Raleigh corridors, all leading to the limbo known as working class culture, made me dash for the nearest copy of Chaucer.

The fact that I looked on my leaving the Raleigh as an escape defined my new values. My squealing was now done in the comfort of a well-stocked library, and if my voice was lost among the rest of the academic sopranos then it is a measure of how successful our middle class is in absorbing working class misfits into its own tough system.

DERRICK BUTTRESS

ROCK REVIEW



AS I REPORTED LAST MONTH, NOTTINGHAM BAND WHEELS are appearing at the Boat Club once a month. I watched their performance at the venue at the beginning of August. The band comprises: Mart Skinner (organ, synthesizer and harmony vocals), Barry Foster (guitars and lead vocals), Graham Evans (bass guitar), and Paul Richards (drums and percussion).

The band opened their set with a new number which quickly developed from a gentle, melodic sound into a gutsy rock number with some interesting use of synthesizer. The vocals seemed to be a little on the weak side, and after reaching a climax with a good lead break from Barry, the number just diminished into a mélange of sound with no one seeming quite sure what they should be playing. All was made clear at the end of the number, however, when Mart informed the audience that it was the first time they'd played the number. For a first attempt it certainly wasn't bad. The second number "An Age" was infinitely better. Opening with a riff on synthesizer and quickly copied on lead, the number developed into a tight yet fluid piece with excellent vocals from Barry, whose voice has a tonal quality which can only be described as unique: he seems to bend his voice and then abruptly stop, which makes very interesting listening. As the evening progressed, however, the vocals became more strained and Mart's harmony vocals were simply not harmonic. I found it hard to decide whether Barry was off-key or Mart or both, but where the vocals let the band down the music made up for it tenfold.

Almost every Wheels number has a basic very catchy riff which is explored and developed to the full by each musician. A classic example of this was their final number, which is without a doubt the band's pièce de résistance but which I'm afraid I don't know the title of. A theme is developed on synthesizer and gradually each musician adds to the theme and then works away from it and then back to it through a series of very subtle changes. Working the numbers in this way gives not only lead and keyboards a chance to show their proficiency but also bass and drums, since each instrument tends to dominate a section of each number. One problem which the band do seem to encounter is in linking sections of each number, especially when there is a dramatic change in tempo. There are several changes in timing in each number, and whereas each individual section is tight and precise, timing changes tend to be a bit sloppy.

The encore began as a version of the music to "Exodus" and developed into one of the band's own numbers which quite honestly would be worthy of Yes or Man or Camel - which is my way of saying that this band is brilliant. You can see them perform for barely the price of a pint of lager. See them now and you'll want to see them again.

By the way, the band are looking for a lead vocalist, so if there's anyone out there who fancies him/herself as vocalist with a band which is going places, then here's your chance.

DAVE BRETT

ROCK PREVIEW

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KURSAAL FLYERS ARE A BAND about whom you probably know very little. The Flyers have been around for just over a year now and are rapidly gaining recognition for their music, which is basically a unique blend of country and rock 'n' roll. They're not into the esoteric world of dry ice, pre-recorded tapes or back-projection effects: as Paul Shuttleworth (vocals) comments, "We're into playing good songs, entertaining people and getting them dancing". Their new album "Chocs Away" has received favourable reviews and the band look like establishing themselves on a nationwide scale. The Flyers open a tour shortly at the Regency Rooms, Ilkeston on September 5th.

As autumn approaches, tours by the "big bands" start again and there are several good concerts coming up in the Nottingham area. Sparks will be promoting a newly released album when they tour in October. They visit Leicester, De Montfort Hall on 29th and Sheffield, City Hall on the 30th. Closer to home Focus will be visiting the University on 16th October as part of an extensive British tour. Fairport Convention also tour Britain in October to promote their current album "Rising For The Moon", and they appear at Nottingham University on 25th October. Barclay James Harvest have a new album released mid-September titled "Time Honoured Ghosts", and tour in October and November to promote it. They appear at the University on 4th November.

Wigwam, who come from Scandinavia, had an album released by Virgin last month. If you get chance drop into Selectadisc and get them to play "Bless Your Lucky Stars" and "Freddie Are You Ready": they're both knockouts.

DAVE BRETT

COMPETITION

THIS MONTH WE ARE GIVING AWAY two copies of the new Procol Harum album "Procol's Ninth". Just answer the following questions and send your answers with your name and address to Nottingham Voice Competition, 33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, to arrive no later than September 26th.

1. What label do Procol record on?
2. Who is their vocalist?
3. Name any two other Procol albums.

Last month's winners of the Snow Goose album were: C. Storrs, Elm Avenue, and P. Walsh, Musters Road.

CHRIS HOLMES ON MANSFIELD ROAD



Last night's winners of the Snow Goose album were: C. Stone, Elm Avenue, and R. Walford.

AFTER RECOVERING FROM LAST MONTH'S PUB CRAWL of Parliament Street, my companion and I decided we would drink again - purely in the interests of objective journalism of course. We picked Milton Street and Mansfield Road for our second pub crawl.

The first "pub" was the New Welbeck on Milton Street - part of the Vic. Centre. It appears to be run by a Home Brewery/Berni Inns consortium. There are two bars and three restaurants. We only tried one bar - the Western Bar. We pushed through the saloon-type doors to be bombarded by a very loud juke-box. The record playing was S.O.S. (flip side - "More S.O.S.", which was what I felt like sending out at the time). The beer is Home Brewery tank bitter and keg lager. There is no mild or (surprisingly) keg. Considering the amount spent on the place it was not very busy. The whole place is a non-event for me although they have tried different themes. As well as the Western Bar there is the Tudor Bar, Caesar's Bar, the Steak and Chicken Bar and La Trattoria (see if you can find three bars and two restaurants!). Not recommended.

Narrow

We went on to the Regent (next to the Clock Tower entrance to the Vic. Centre). Once again this is another pub that is notable for what it has not got. There is no public bar, no mild and no atmosphere. There is air-conditioning, piped music and one large fitted-carpeted lounge. The toilets were excellent and, as most people probably know, they won't serve pints to women. They obviously do not encourage pint drinking women or anyone who drinks mild. The Shipstone's bitter was excellent and I think it a shame that the Regent is so narrow in its outlook.

Crossing over the road to the Peacock you will find an excellent example of what a city centre pub can be. There is a lounge and a public bar (darts and dominoes available). It also was the first pub where we could get mild beer. The lounge must be one of the best in Nottingham - old railway carriage seats, very cosy, and service is via a bell-push on the wall. Clientele is very predictable - Polytechnic staff and students, People's Centre workers and reporters. It has been rumoured that half of the lounge at the Peacock is to be converted into a news-room since this would be easier than getting a licensed bar in Radio Nottingham. Don't get put off by landlord Maurice Oldham's rather brusque style, but do watch out for his habit of spilling pints over people and then blaming some innocent customer for it! One other point - I cannot guarantee the quality of the Home Brewery bitter and mild in the Peacock. I don't know the reason (small cellar or cellar temperature) but you can always drink bottled Guinness if the ale is not on top form (we did).

Next pub was the Yorker, which is just over the road from the Peacock. It used to be called the Rose of England, a name that Ansells for some reason decided was not good enough. Perhaps the pub was not good enough for a name like the Rose of England? There are two rooms and it is difficult to tell the difference between the lounge and public - the dartboard is apparently the only clue. As with other Ansells pubs in town I found the beer too cold, too gassy, tasteless and expensive for what you get.

Pleasant

The Roebuck, further up Mansfield Road from the Yorker defies description. It really is awful and we got out as quickly as possible. We might have picked the wrong room - the "lounge" on the left as you go in - but a quick look at the other room and out at the back confirmed my prejudices.

We had a welcome breath of fresh air with a three minute walk to the Golden Fleece, on the left hand side of Mansfield Road going up the hill. What a pleasant change. The Golden Fleece is a small, local pub that serves excellent Shippo's in two rooms. The landlord was friendly. Recommended.

The Nags Head is a Bass-Worthington pub on the other side of the road. I was pleasantly surprised to find Draught Bass on sale through an electric pump. The landlord assured me that it was real ale. There is a large lounge with a TV that tends to dominate the room. The room is a shade overdone, with pine panelling and pictures, but the pub was not bad on the whole.

For the fifth time that night we crossed Mansfield Road, this time to the Old Grey Nag's Head. The beer was absolutely superb and the pub was bright and clean and friendly. I thought it the best pub of the crawl and it is highly recommended.

The pace was starting to tell by now but we managed to visit the Criterion and the Forest Tavern. The Criterion is a Shippo's pub (fortunately on the same side of Mansfield Road as the Old Grey Nag's Head) and the Forest Tavern is a very busy Bass-Worthington pub just before the traffic lights at Forest Road. Both pubs were very busy but we did not stay long enough to really comment. Perhaps more about these two next time.

One final comment. It was once again clear that the best pubs were those run by local breweries - Shipstone's and Home (except for the New Welbeck). Perhaps they and their tenants have a better understanding of what people really want in pubs.

NOTTINGHAM VOICE SICK CAPTION COMPETITION

LAST MONTH'S COVER competition was very popular, though not all of the suggestions actually got written down. Special thanks, therefore, to the gent who sent his entries on beer mats - the captions were quite good and the beer mats came in very handy. We narrowed the entries down to two which we thought couldn't be separated - so we're declaring two winners, each to receive the splendid prize of six months' subscription to the Voice. From Mairi M. Yuill came: "If there's two of you in there, it'll be a conspiracy charge!" and from Bob Pierce: "Never mind sonny, by the time you come out it'll fit you."



1. Gong for a song

THE SUMMER '75 ISSUE OF NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY'S arts magazine "Gong" is a post-Clive James mixture of artistic activity. There is more than the usual amount of space given to poetry, probably to counteract the length of the James interview last time.

The current issue is the third of the past academic year, a commendable, if not brave, achievement. That "Gong" is ambitious, with a surprisingly wide choice of contributors, is its chief asset. This new high rate of production makes the placing of better-known writers beside students and newcomers a more established approach.

A balanced production, "Gong" seems to break down barriers within "Art": poetry, photography, opinion, whatever - each is allowed to be equally valid, even to move in the other's territory. An important, a surprising element in this way, is Stephen Barnard's feature on Luton. Although it was in places uncomfortably like a "Student Community Action" article, it turned out to be "The New Journalism" after all, with an accurate dig into Britain's mostly unattractive and anonymous urban heritage. Perhaps he should have written about an urban heritage closer to the magazine's source.

In contrast, social realism is delightfully absent from the lyric poetry. Some strong and assured writing from John Martin and David Cooke remains clearest in the imagination, together with the poetic qualities of the photograph on page 2 taken by Roger Armitage. The experimental element in "Gong" is shown in poems such as "John" by El Gilbert, and in Sam Brown's unusually titled piece. Also worth close attention is the feature on Kurt Vonnegut.

The danger facing a wide-ranging arts production is that any cracks are more easily noticeable. But without risks, nothing can grow. The archetypal mould of a university magazine has been avoided, and the production team should be proud of that. Apart from a curiously naive cover, there are few mistakes, and "Gong" is well worth its 20p price. Let's hope that the promised guide to the arts in Nottingham will be compiled for issues in the 1975/6 session.

(Copies available from: "GONG", Students' Union, Portland Building, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD. Cheques or POs for 27p, to cover postal charges, should be made out to: "Nottingham University Students' Union". The magazine may also be in some Nottingham bookshops. Contributions of all kinds are welcome at the same address.)

CRICKET

23

TIME FOR THE FOUR-DAY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH?



A NUMBER OF CRICKET CORRESPONDENTS IN THE NATIONAL PRESS have recently proposed that the time allocation for county championship fixtures be extended from three to four days. This is an interesting idea and worth further examination in view of the continued lack of spectator appeal of three day matches. Undoubtedly the high percentage of drawn games is a major factor. Despite a recent extension in the playing hours per day and relatively dry weather, over 33 per cent of the championship results this season have been draws. (In a wet season the figure usually exceeds 40 per cent.) This is still an intolerably high percentage. The maximum number of bonus points a drawn result affords a team is only 8 out of a possible 18 points, and is usually much less than this. This is a meagre reward for three solid days of cricket. Neither side, then, can benefit much from a draw and the lack of tangible rewards can hardly fail to discourage the potential spectator.

The usual strategy to overcome this problem is for teams to attempt a contrived result through a declaration on the part of the captain of the side which must field in the final innings. Although this sometimes produces a satisfactory outcome, the consequences are usually disastrous. The three most evident dangers are:

- 1) The side batting fourth may lose a few early wickets and then simply play out time for a draw.
- 2) The declaration may leave insufficient time for a result.
- 3) A generous declaration may give an undeserved victory to a team which has been outplayed during the previous two-and-a-half days.

Each of these occurs with monotonous regularity during any season. The most ludicrous outcomes, however, fall into category (3). Warwickshire (at Edgbaston) and Kent (at Dover) were outplayed by Notts during the first two-and-a-half days, yet, thanks to declarations by Mike Smedley on the third day, all of this good work was nullified. In effect, the first two-and-a-half days' play of these matches were reduced to an irrelevancy. Against Kent, Notts scored over 500 runs for the loss of only 10 wickets, failed by only 3 runs to force Kent to follow on, and yet lost!!

If the four day fixture is adopted and the 100 over limit maintained for a team's first innings, then the problems will be almost completely eliminated. The match will run its natural course unless seriously affected by the weather. The number of drawn games and contrived results will thereby be reduced to an insignificant fraction. If the continued public apathy to the championship programme is to be arrested, therefore, it is to be hoped that four day county fixtures will be introduced as quickly as possible.

GEOFF SMITH

RACING

WILL GRUNDY EVER BE SEEN AT HIS BEST?



GRUNDY HAS PROVED HIMSELF TO BE A TRULY GREAT RACEHORSE. His victory in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes was superb. In a race tactically dominated by Bustino who brought two pacemakers with him, Grundy cut the course record by almost two and a half seconds.

Grundy is still improving with every race, and the tragedy - tragedy, that is, for everyone except the vendor and purchaser - is that the colt's next two appearances on a racetrack are to be his last. For after his victory in the Epsom Derby, Grundy was sold to the Levy board for £1 million (his price as a yearling was 11,000 guineas). The terms of the sale allowed Grundy only two more races, both in England, after the King George - the choice being made from the Champion Stakes, the Benson and Hedges Gold Cup and the St Leger.

So Grundy may never be seen at his best on a racecourse - but that is the price that has to be paid when the lives of great racehorses are governed by the profit motive.

UNSPORTING OWNERS ON THE FLAT ARE BAD ENOUGH, but there is surely no excuse over the sticks, where an extremely cautious career has been laid out for Pendil. In his preparations for the two big level weight chases (the Gold Cup and the King George VI Chase), Pendil has been running in pattern races and small (in both prize money and size of fields) handicaps. He has avoided the big handicaps like the plague! Yet surely there is no disgrace in Pendil being beaten by a horse carrying a lot less weight. So let's hope that we see Pendil in the coming jumping

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Coming Events

The local classic, the St Leger, the climax of four days of racing, is being run on 13th September at Doncaster.

Closer to home, there is flat racing at Nottingham on 6th and 8th September (including some good races). There will also be flat racing at Leicester on 22nd and 23rd.

National Hunt followers will know that the new season is under way again after its brief break. And (weather permitting), you can be steeplechasing in shirtsleeves at Southwell on August 25th and September 1st, and at Market Rasen on August 16th and 25th and September 26th and 27th. Here's hoping you don't fall off.

JOHN HILEY

CINEMA

FILM AND THE

MINORITY VIEWPOINT



THE USE OF FILM AS A POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL WEAPON presents a major problem for politically orientated minority groups within this society. In general terms the visual media - television and the cinema - are controlled by the dominant ideology; indeed one can argue that the control of the media, by one means or another, is essential to the maintenance of society in its present form. This being so it is hardly surprising that any group whose interests and ideas oppose that ideology should receive short shrift from the media. Witness, for example, the distorted picture of the conflict in Northern Ireland seen on British television, or the ludicrous experience of Jean Luc Godard who, asked to make a film for London Weekend Television, promptly made the politically left One Plus One/Sympathy for the Devil only to be told that much as LWT liked the film they felt it was "unfinished". Short of gaining control of the media, which is likely to occur only in a post-revolutionary society, the voice of "extremist"(!) opposition is effectively silenced.

The development of independent film groups (and street theatre) is in no small way a reaction to this situation. The problems here are, of course, money and the difficulty of reaching an audience of appreciable size, though the latter is not necessarily a major stumbling block since many independent films are made for a specific, limited audience. Here perhaps is the key to the issue - the function the makers wish their film to perform.

Increasing use is being made of film within groups and communities. With themselves or other similar groups as the prospective audience the whole problem of media time can be bypassed. Recently in Nottingham, the Meadows Association of Tenants and Residents shot a video-film dealing with the problems of the break-up of the old Meadows and the experiences of residents in moving to new homes. It is hoped that such film will eventually be available for viewing by other similar groups who could benefit from seeing the way MATAR along with Meadows residents have tackled their problems. Some women's groups, too, have found film useful as a way of communicating their ideas - films made by women to be shown at meetings and conferences of women, once again avoiding the need to fight for the use of established media.

The benefit of such enterprise is not only the obvious one of being able to freely communicate the information you want rather than making "good television" or film material (in the eyes of perhaps unsympathetic professionals); the act of making a film, particularly if as many people as possible can be drawn into it, can also be of value to the participants. In striving to communicate to others, a new consciousness of one's own work or the activity of one's particular group, can result, as well as a greater and perhaps more critical awareness of the established media.

There seems to be a good deal of confusion, both in the minds of critics and the general viewing public, about the nature of political film, which invariably seems to surface in an apparent opposition between minority "difficult" films (i.e. Godard) and those which are more conventional in form and content but have the apparent virtue of appealing to a wide audience. However, the problem as posed need not be one of either/or. Again the issue is one of function.

Peter Wollen, co-script writer on Antonioni's recent film The Passenger, has suggested that political film can be broken into three distinct functions: agitation, propaganda and theory. The distinction is relevant both to the style and content as well as to the prospective audience. The agitational film would be restricted to a specific audience and concern itself with particular events and action. The propaganda film would aim towards a large audience and deal with general political lines and broad ideas. Finally, the theoretical work would be the most intellectually advanced and cater for the smallest audience - for the revolutionary vanguard.

This distinction is a useful one, once again pointing to areas where film can be of inestimable value to those whose ideas would not be welcomed by the media in their present form.

In a sense, though, the category of propaganda presents us with the old familiar problem - that of finding the means to reach a mass audience. One might also criticise Wollen for imagining that

the majority of people, including the advanced revolutionary, are at present prepared to really work at understanding film in the way that he would like. However, in a revolutionary and post-revolutionary society one can see that these distinctions would be of immediate practical value.

Perhaps another flaw in such a classification is that it appears to cede control of all three types to a group of vanguard filmmakers, a distinctly elitist and apparently undemocratic procedure.

One can envisage, then, money permitting, that in the future we might witness the growth of a genuine alternative means of visual communication in which activists can reach interested audiences and other activists without having to worry about the limitations and restrictions of the established media. *Behind the Wire*, an independent film recently shown in Nottingham which dealt with the day-to-day life of Catholics in Northern Ireland, offered us a glimpse of the definite potential and value of an "alternative" voice (and eye).

JLG

THEATRE

"HAPPY DAYS" AND "PILGRIM"

AT THE PLAYHOUSE



AMONG THE COMPANIES THAT VISITED THE PLAYHOUSE during the summer period, two stood out as being likely to offer markedly contrasting theatrical experiences. On the one hand, the National Theatre's much-praised "Happy Days" - visiting Nottingham during a successful West End run - provided local audiences with the opportunity of seeing one of the classics of post-war drama, while the Prospect Theatre's "Pilgrim" - starting off in Nottingham before making its way to the Edinburgh Festival - presented another instalment in the sequence of in vogue God-rock musicals.

Beckett's "Happy Days" centres upon the character of Winnie - a middle-aged woman who is slowly sinking into a mound of earth. In the face of an unsympathetic universe, an arid lunar environment whose sterile atmosphere is only punctuated by the daily clangour of an electric bell, a world in which intercourse with others (the taciturn Willie) amounts only to muttered "titbits from Reynold's News", Winnie has chosen to seek affirmation in a life of habit. Winnie's "day" (between bells) follows a regular and unerring routine (pray - clean teeth - examine handbag - instruct Willie - tell story - pray - sing - sleep) - a truly happy day. Winnie's self-hypnosis through her daily monologue serves to remove her from the reality of her position (the steady drift into earth, devoid of all feelings save those of formication). In this way Beckett presents us with a stark vision of our absurd endeavours to seek a degree of worth in human life. The supreme goal is to achieve "a dull inviolability" in a life of habit. Yet, despite this apparently meaningless routine, Beckett does not present us with a totally negative picture. Winnie does have a degree of dignity, an unwillingness to be dismayed in the face of annihilation. She has the strength to be absurdly convinced of the happy day as she lies up to the neck in earth. In "Happy Days", the irony of human life becomes a source of value, as evidenced in the dignity that enables Willie to be "dressed to kill" as he struggles to his feet in the moments before death. Peggy Ashcroft's dignified performance as Winnie was transfixing - most noticeably in Act Two when her body was submerged leaving her face as the sole focus for the audience's attention.

"Pilgrim" is loosely based upon Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" and traces the journey of Christian through the world of vice to the land of salvation. The programme carries Bunyan's dedication from the prophet Hosea, "I have used similitudes" - more appropriately after the profit, "I have used platitudes". The "drama" was without any degree of progression or development (other than that offered by Bunyan's narrative line). The circular stage (richly symbolic) provided a springboard for Paul Jones's quasi-sexual motions as he sought to present the horrors of spiritual torment and self-doubt. The songs were the familiar rousing vacuums of previous God-rock spectacles; notably the cloying "Follow the River", which had the audience in a state of orgasmic glee during the gratuitous encore. The production aroused my venom for two reasons. Firstly, I find the exploitation of spiritual vessels for commercial purposes both shallow and hypocritical. The machinery involved with the setting of this play - lapel badges, sumptuous programmes, smoke flares, screeching electronics and costumes that seemed to stress sexuality whilst apparently trying to deny it - amounted to little more than cheap gimmickry. Secondly, that a company of such talent and quality as the Prospect should find it necessary to commission a work of such mammoth bandwagon proportions seems to be extremely unfortunate, ill-advised and undignified. Finally, the encore that sought to milk the audience of all the hysterical faith that had been generated was, in the light of "Happy Days", an act of severe theatrical indignity underlining a fundamental lack of respect for the audience.

Within the next few months, the National Theatre on the south bank should be operational. Already, the Playhouse production of Trevor Griffiths' "Comedians" is booked for an autumn run at the Old Vic. It will be interesting to see what the policy of the Playhouse will be when presented with the opportunity to use the South Bank Theatre as a visiting company. One would hope that a more experimental approach could be adopted next season, in response to this impetus.

GP

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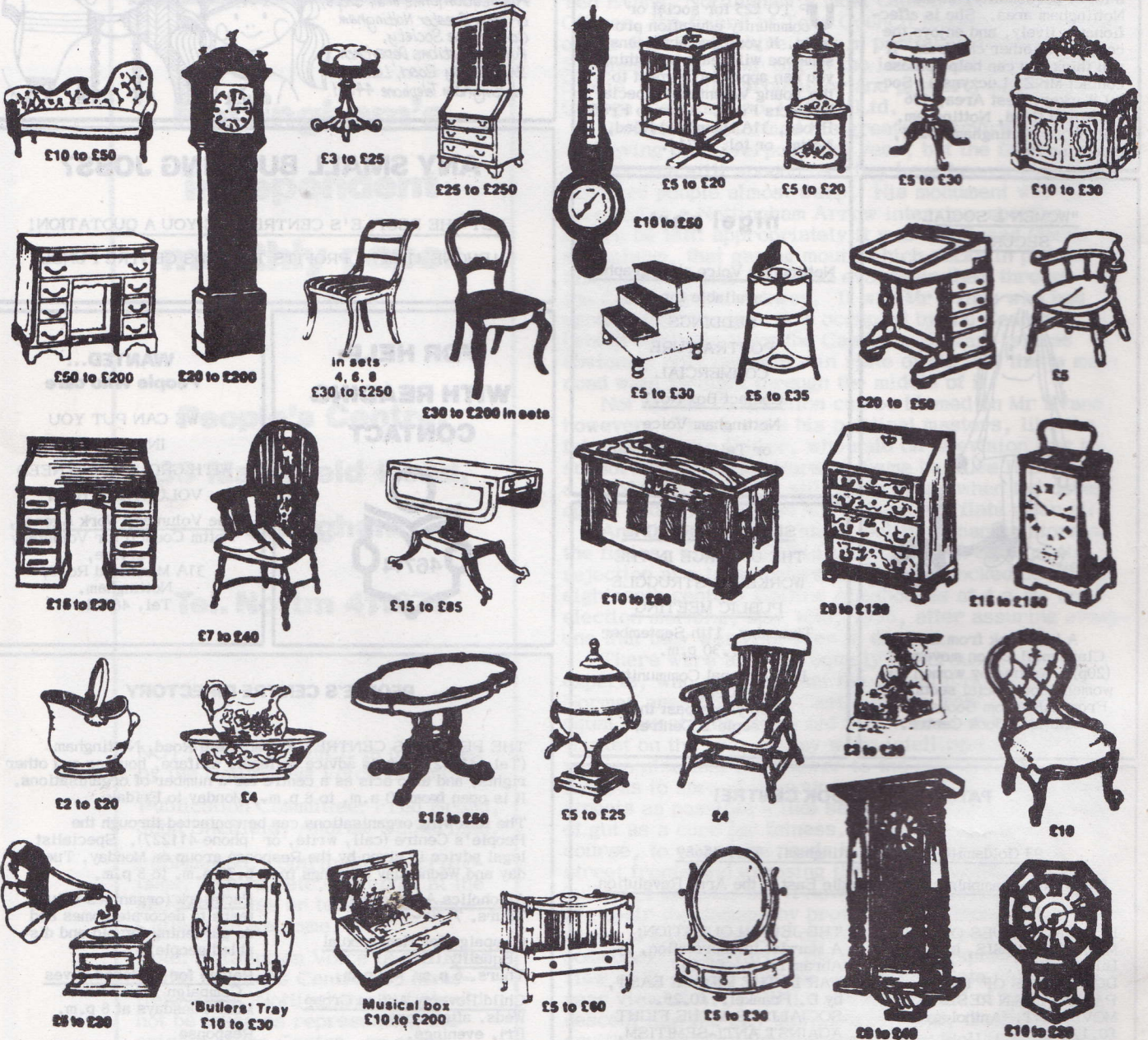
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