

# TENANTS FORCE CITY TO RE-HOUSE THEM!

A group of tenants of Birmingham City Council have just succeeded in making the Council re-house them in decent accommodation. The tenants lived in various old houses belonging to the City in George Street and Homer Street. Their houses were in an appalling condition.

## CAUSING A 'NUISANCE'.

The tenants tried complaining to the Housing Dept. about the state of their houses. Nothing happened. Then they appealed for the support of the Balsall Heath Association, whose community worker, Jenny Rossiter, went to look at the houses. Jenny is a Public Health Inspector, and after looking carefully at the houses she came to the conclusion that the Council was BREAKING THE LAW. Any buildings which endanger health or are likely to cause injury, or are in such poor condition generally that they interfere with the comfort of the occupier severely, may be offending against the Public Health Act, 1936. These houses were in such bad condition that in Jenny Rossiter's professional opinion they were 'unfit for human habitation'. In other words, no repairs or 'patching-up' were likely to make these houses suitable for people to live in. They were past it.

## DANGEROUS, INSANITARY, ROTTEN.

A list of the defects of the six houses would be long indeed. The conditions included holes in walls and ceilings; rotten woodwork and plaster; dangerous stairs, roofs and chimneys; faulty and dangerous electrical wiring; missing doors and windows. The tenants complained again to the Housing Dept. No answer again. The tenants were by now very angry and sick of their miserable living conditions. They held a

meeting in August, and decided to write and tell the Housing Dept. that unless some steps were taken at once to improve their position they would apply to the Magistrates Court for a summons against the Council. There were no steps taken.

## SUMMONS ISSUED.

So the tenants decided they had had enough. They went to the Magistrates Court and got a summons issued against the Council. The case was due to have been heard on October 20th. But the summons DID produce results. Suddenly the Housing Dept. recognised that the tenants had a point. One by one the tenants were offered other houses, mostly in Balsall Heath, which were fit places to live. As we go to press on October 21st, only one of the tenants concerned is still waiting for action from the Housing Dept. and it looks as though they, too, will soon be re-housed.

## OTHER TENANTS CAN TAKE ACTION.

The message is clear. There are not the only tenants in the area with intolerable living conditions - there are others, both with private landlords, and in Council-owned houses. The case of the tenants in George Street and Homer Street shows that something CAN be done, when normal methods fail. If other groups of tenants have similar problems, the Balsall Heath Association will be glad to advise them. You don't need expensive legal advice - if you have a genuine case, get together with your neighbours, and with a bit of determination you can get the problem solved. B.H.A. address is 91, Court Road. Telephone: 440-1310.

PHOTOGRAPHS, RIGHT, SHOW THE DISGUSTING CONDITION OF SOME OF THE HOUSES TENANTS WERE LIVING IN.



# HOUSING: WHO IS TO BLAME?

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS PARIS.

## Still A Problem.

Those of us who live in areas like Balsall Heath are only too aware that there's still a housing problem in Birmingham. Why should this be the case, when the City Council can boast a record of over 130,000 municipal homes built since 1920, about 50,000 slum properties cleared, and thousands of families re-housed?

## Disappointment

By 1970, in fact, it was beginning to look as if things were under control. The 'waiting list' had fallen dramatically, the clearance programme was under way, and there was every prospect of many new council houses being built. The problem wasn't solved then, and some areas had to be last (one of which, as usual, was Balsall Heath) but an outsider could have been excused for thinking that by about 1975 there would be few problems left. Of course 1975 has now come, and anyone who takes a walk from Calthorpe Park, down Clevedon Rd., up Balsall Heath Rd., Mary St., and Edward Rd., can see that something went wrong! Plans produced years ago led people to believe that the area, known as Calthorpe Park Comprehensive Re-development Area (Phase 2), would by now be fully redeveloped. But there are still people waiting to be re-housed, still derelict empty houses, and only just a significant start on new building.



NEW COUNCIL HOUSES IN KINNER CROFT. THESE ARE A BIG IMPROVEMENT. BUT THOUSANDS MORE ARE NEEDED.

## Miserly Governments

Many people blame the Council - they say the Council doesn't care, that the officers are inefficient, and that our area has been forgotten. I don't think that is true. The real reasons are less obvious, and the Council should perhaps have let local people know more about the problems they've had to face, which were mainly due to 'Building Cost Yardsicks'. Put simply, the 1964-70 Labour Government introduced a policy that required local councils to keep the cost of new buildings at a reasonable level. All schemes had to be submitted for government approval, to ensure that the costs were not too high. Fair enough, but the original idea was that as prices rose generally, the 'yardstick' would be revised. (Yes, our inflation is in the act again.) When the Conservatives won the 1970 General Election, they saw the building cost yardstick as a means of keeping the cost of council housing down. So, instead of revising the yardsticks at a sensible rate, they kept them low. Birmingham City Council simply couldn't get any builders to undertake the work within the price limits the Conservative Government laid down.

## Mean County Councils

Another problem is the one of getting land. The Council built a fantastic number of houses in the 1960's, mainly due to the rapid development of Chalmers Wood. And though there is now land available in the cleared sites, Birmingham has still needed land outside the City boundaries for new homes. Worcestershire, and the other counties, don't like Brummies moving into their sacred Green Belt, so they always fight against the City getting any land. So not only was the Council restricted by what the government would let it spend on housing, it was also almost impossible to get any land to put new houses on! So much for the failure to build new houses. What about the new Urban Renewal Policy for older houses?

## New Houses For Old?

What about Urban Renewal and General Improvement schemes? What effect have these had?



UPS AND DOWNS. UNFORTUNATELY THE OLD HOUSES ARE OFTEN LEFT IN DANGEROUS STATES & SPOIL THE NEW.

Most people in Balsall Heath were glad to hear that lots of the older houses would be saved and that owners could get grants towards improvements. This Policy is nearly three years old now, but not much has happened in our area. This is partly because it has taken the Council a long time to decide in detail which houses can be improved and which must come down. This was unavoidable, if people were to be given a say in whether they wanted their houses improved or not. But what we need now is ACTION. Hopefully, this will come soon with the Area Team of Urban Renewal now working in the Balsall Heath area.

## After You

The area MIGHT be declared a 'Housing Action Area' which would mean higher grants. But by then inflation would mean that higher grants might not be enough to make up for increases in prices. If you're going to improve, do so - the sooner, the better! A lot of people, of course, don't believe really that the Council's urban renewal plans will come to much. This reminds me of the story on the front page of this paper. If only the Council could improve more of its OWN houses more confidence would be inspired. Owner-occupiers, in particular, would be more inclined to do up their houses, if they saw the Council giving a lead. No-one is making it easy for those who try - many have tried to get work done and have had trouble getting builders who are ready to do it, and there are often delays in payments of the grants and loans from the Council.





A FEW OLD HOUSES ARE OFTEN LEFT ISOLATED

## More Government Cuts

Recently the Urban Renewal Policy has been hit by the government cuts in spending. The worst of these is the decision that houses with a rateable value of over £175 are no longer eligible for grants. The government has also cut Council mortgages, so people will have great difficulty buying or selling older houses (unless they've got the cash!) Both of these cuts will make people reluctant to spend a lot of money on their own homes if they have not got confidence that their neighbours can do it too. So once again central government policies are having a bad effect on Birmingham's attempts to solve its own housing problem. The Conservatives made house-building more difficult, and now a Labour Government is threatening house improvements (for the time being, at any rate.)

## Both Sides Against Us?

I'm certainly not saying that the Council is entirely faultless. That would be stupid. But it does seem at times, that the central government, despite what it claims (on both sides of the House) isn't helping Balsall Heath to get better housing conditions. Urban Renewal and improvement policies seem our best bet in the short term. It's absurd that lots of building workers are unemployed, while old houses are crying out to be improved. The local Labour Party is pledged to concentrate resources on older areas, and its up to local residents to get together with the local Urban Renewal Area Teams to work out proposals for our area.

## More Cash Please

The Council has also introduced a scheme to help young couples by providing mortgages and improvement grants for houses built before 1919. The Council will organise both the money side and the building work on the houses. It's a good scheme but it's not going to solve the housing problem. That problem will only be overcome when enough resources are made available by the government both for new building and improvement work. The government's Land Bill should help Birmingham to get more building land outside the present City boundaries, but unless more money is made available, and soon, there's going to be a housing problem in Brum (and of course in Balsall Heath) for a long time to come.

(Chris Paris, who wrote the article above, lives in Court Road, and is a member of the Balsall Heath Association Committee.)

# CLIFTON SCHOOL.

Nearly all parents will know of the new classroom in the infants' playground. Unfortunately, solving a problem of work space has created a problem of play space, but we hope that the neighbouring grassy area beyond the playground will soon be available for play and dinner times and for organised games. We are always pleased to see parents in school. There have been two occasions before half-term when parents were formally invited to come: October 14th, for the election of a nominee for Parent Governor, and October 23rd, for a Parents' Evening (Juniors). These formal occasions are always useful for the teachers, and we are glad of the first-class support we get during the evenings.

## staff

Mrs. Stella Blackmore left in July to take up a Deputy Headship in Lancaster, and Mrs. Thomas has moved to Sutton. We welcome Mrs. Brookes and Mrs. Miller in the lower junior school, and many local people have already met Mr. and Mrs. Banks, our new caretaker and his wife - and Blackie, their Staffordshire bull terrier! From the Infant school, Mrs. Lloyd-Roberts left in July, and expects a baby at any time now. Miss Fennell was married on July 26th, and is now Mrs. Morgan.

## winners

The usual range of activities in the junior school are now well under way. Three chess teams are being entered in the Junior League, and Mr. Tatton has high hopes of several players being selected to represent Birmingham. Games include wins over King Edward VI, Camp Hill, and Golden Hillock, Secondary Schools. (Editor's note: the emphasis is mine, not Don Abbey's. He was too modest for his chess players! No wonder the Community School's chess players are still practising, and not yet taking up Clifton's challenge.) Junior and Infant children have their own swimming clubs on Mondays after school run by Miss Cocksey and Miss Parkes, the aim being to encourage the younger children to enjoy the water. (The Infant swimming club is run by Mrs. Morgan, Miss Davis and Mrs. Roberts.)

## in brief

A full programme of plays, parties and films is planned for Christmas. (A brochure advertising this programme will be available later in the term.) The infant school had an expedition to Manor Park, Northfield, on October 15th. The netball team, small in size but tenacious and very well-drilled, have started their season with some well-deserved successes, while the football team have also been playing well, though not always winning. New strip-lighting and electrical points are being fitted in all the infant classrooms.

## aid

The Clifton Advice Bureau is very popular. Many parents come to seek advice on educational and social matters, which include such things as problems with official forms that have to be filled in, translation of various documents, the writing of letters to different organisations. The Advice Bureau is open as follows: Mondays, 9 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.; Tuesdays 9-10 and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesdays 9-10. We are also running a very successful English language class for Asian ladies on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Miss Eden and Mrs. Wood take these classes.

Contributed by Don Abbey, M. Dard and other Clifton Rd. staff.



from  
the

# COMMUNITY SCHOOL

## Report

### ABOUT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE AND SCHOOL.

We're now into our third year, and everything is going better than ever. This time, I'd like to report on all our community activities, not just the school.

### THIS NEWSPAPER

Sales now top 1,500. Even so, we only just break even, and it's always a hell of a job to get articles in on time, and above all to sell it. We need help because we want to get it out once a month. To do that we've got to raise a wage so that one person can edit it full time. We also need help with the sales. Would anyone like to take on a part of their road, for example?

### BINGO

The Bingo is going very well now. Over 60 people go to the old church hall, St. Paul's Road, every Tuesday. (Eyes down 7.30p.m.) The prizes are good household articles, presents for kids, and the refreshments are cooked by the Community School kids. Above all, it's a nice friendly atmosphere. So, come along - it's a good night out!

### WEDNESDAY - NIGHT OUT!

Another good night out is on Wednesday evenings. Every week Paul (the Art/Craft/Woodwork teacher) and Val (the Sewing/Cookery/English teacher) are to be found in 112, St. Paul's Road. They welcome any adult who wants to use the project's facilities. It can make an interesting night away from the kids - or, if you prefer, bring the kids along too.

### HOLIDAYS AWAY FROM HOME

Again we went to Norfolk. We took 65 kids and eight parents and had a terrific time in the sun. We're going again next year. There is only one problem - we haven't the cash or time to take more people. So, lots of families will always be disappointed. It's a case of first come, first served.

### THE SCHOOL

Now to the School. It's still the most time-consuming side of our activities. We've grown over Summer: one new teacher, and five new pupils. We've also got our first exam results: two pupils entered and got Grade 1 in Maths., 2 and 3 in History and 4 in English. This year we expect that there will be even better results. But exams are not the be all and end all of education. If a pupil doesn't feel up to taking exams he need not. We are as keen to develop the children's own skills and ability to get on in life as to get them through exams. No one is a success or a failure at our school. Every child is expected to do as much, and as well, as he or she can. The children are judged by their own individual work and not by comparing them. A little competition can be healthy, but only as an incentive to get better, not if it means that someone has to lose. The feeling of failure can lead to an unwillingness to try again. It can make the job of teaching impossible; a miserable depressed child can't learn anything.

### HOW IT WORKS

The interest of parents is vitally important. Our mums' a dads' meetings take place every month. Parents visit the school, look at and check all the work done over the previous month and talk to the teachers about it. Then we all meet and discuss the School's progress. This is the meeting of the Management Committee of the whole project not just the School. Though the School figures highly in our discussion, we also talk about this newspaper, holidays, Bingo, Wednesday evenings and other activities. Because the children know that their parents take such a keen interest in their education they work hard and try to do well. Wouldn't you, if your work came under such close scrutiny? Parent visit at other times too - and friends, neighbours, and anyone just interested to have a look, are also welcome. It can help you pass an otherwise empty half-hour - especially if you're in time to sample the products of the cooking class! Your visit will help the children, too. It shows that you are interested in them and their work. It's sad that big schools can't welcome people in, make them feel at home, and show them the children's work. It's the whole point of our school. It's got to be, for the school belongs to the parents and their community.

Dick Atkinson.







HOLIDAYS IN NORFOLK. ABOVE: MERMAIDS? BELOW, LEFT: MAN BURIED ALIVE! BELOW, RIGHT: BRAVING THE WAVES.



## First

by MARK GOSSAGE.

The old man sat in his wheelchair watching the television set. There were two nurses, one on each side of him. He was in the television room of the mental hospital. He was there because he had come out with a story that would have shocked the world if it had been believed. His story was that he landed on the moon in 1947. When people asked how, he said that he travelled in a metal cube. When people heard this they would say, "Show us your spaceship, then!" Downheartedly he would say that it sunk in the ocean and that he was lucky to escape. On the television set the two Astronauts were bouncing around. Then they got down to some serious work, like taking samples of soil. One of the Astronauts noticed that there was a British flag sticking out of a rock. There were also papers in a plastic envelope. The Astronaut picked it up. The old man sitting in the chair jumped up in excitement. "They've found it, they've found it!" he shouted. "Found what?" asked a nurse. "The papers I left when I went there," he said. Six months later he was let out of the home, because his story was proven by the piece of paper found on the moon.

## Somewhere

by VINCENT DOYLE.

One night when John was walking home from his girl's house he heard someone crying. It seemed to come from an entry just in front of him. He walked towards it, and the crying became louder and louder. His curiosity got the better of him and he walked up the entry, to find a young man on his hands and knees. When John asked if he was alright he replied, "What place is this?" "Birmingham", said John. "I mean, what place is this?" the man said. "Oh - a lane", said John. "I mean, what place is this", said the man, again. John got a little flustered. "Is that all you can say?" he asked. "What place is this?" the man repeated. "Forget it", said John. Just as he turned to leave, the entry disappeared. He turned back, to see the young man still sitting there, saying, "What place is this?" "What place IS this?" asked John. "What place is this", was the man's only reply. After about two hours of this from the young man John thought to himself, "Well, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em." So John sat down beside the young man and joined in. Now John and the young man are waiting for someone else to join them. So if you are walking late at night, and you hear the sound of crying coming from an entry - don't go up. It could be John and his friend waiting for you. "What place is this?" "What place IS this?"



**POTTERY**

More etchings by Community School pupils. LEFT, by Ada Iwenofu. RIGHT, by Des Gray.

## CLEARING BANK

by JOHN STONE.

One Saturday afternoon I went into the village to do some shopping for my mom as she wasn't feeling very well. I had to go to the bank to get some money. I walked in and went to the counter, when in ran two men with shopping bags over their heads with holes for their eyes and in their hands they had brief cases and guns. They pushed one of the cases on the counter and said, "Fill this and nobody move, or else". The man behind the counter was puzzled. "Move", the robber shouted. There was one man standing by the door and the other was with the Manager in the vault. There was a shot and the one in the vault ran out. "Grab a couple", he shouted. The man by the door grabbed an old woman and then came to me. "Come on, sonny, let's get going". He grabbed me by the arm and pulled me while the other one had all the other people lying face down on the floor. He gave a few shots and ran out the back way with me and the old woman in between them. The back door led to the car park, but as the first man pushed the doors, about five men grabbed him. The other man turned round and was about to run when another man grabbed him. They were Scotland Yard. We had been saved. What the raiders didn't know was that there were television cameras inside the bank linked up to the police station.

## LAUNCH

by RENA JAN.

When I first went skating it was on a hot day; I was sweating to death and when I got in to the rink it was cold. When I got on to the ice I just skated around and my friend said, "I thought that this was your first time here". "It is," I said. When I got home I asked my mom if I could have some ice skating boots and she said, "You can have them for Christmas". So when Christmas came I got up very early and I saw my ice skating boots on the bottom of my bed, and the next week I went to the rink with them and I liked it very much.

## Happiness

by KAREN BYRON.

In August 1975 we went out for the day with my mom and dad, sister and friend Susan. We went to Weston-Super-Mare for the day, by car. My sister Mandy, Susan and I watched the cows and as we went along we saw sheep as well. When we got there my dad parked the car and we all went on the beach and had our dinner. Then we went down to the sea. It was not in yet. It comes in at four o'clock. So we went down to the mud and it was really fun jumping and splashing in the puddles and we were all passing the time away until it was four o'clock. We all saw the sea coming in and we all ran down to it. It was fun. We were swimming and chasing the sea up to the wall, and then it was time to go. On the way back a big black cloud came over the sky, and hailstones came over the car. My dad couldn't see in the car window where he was going. But we got home safely.

## HAZARDS

by SUSON MORBEY.

There was a piercing sound of brakes, A look of horror on people's faces, As the two cars went smack into each other. People ran around shouting and screaming, Everyone went hysterical, People were panicky and frightened. Then everyone rushed to the car. They pulled out people one by one, Others gave drinks and comforted. Then the ambulance came, Police moved the cars, Everything was normal again.

## INTO COMPUTERS

by FENTON THORPE.

If I had to make a list of the things we need, and the money, my pocket money would fly right up in the air.

## IN A NEW JOB

Ian Shemilt is a Neighbourhood Building Adviser, who has recently taken up this job in our area. He will be working with the Lane Neighbourhood Centre, the Balsall Heath Association and the Sparkbrook Association. What, people may ask, is a Neighbourhood Building Adviser? Well, as Chris Paris points out in his article, a lot of our readers now find themselves living in Urban Renewal and Improvement Areas. Many people are being offered the opportunity to improve their houses with Council grants to help towards the cost. Local advice centres have already found that many people are having various kinds of difficulties with grants, loans, builders, etc. So Ian's job will be to try to help those who are experiencing problems. He hopes that he may be able to help, for example, those members of the Asian communities who may face difficulties - perhaps because their English is not yet very good, or because they have less knowledge of local building firms, and so on.



## THE COMMUNITY HOUSE AND SCHOOL

Need

A NEW STAFF MEMBER. EXPERIENCED TEACHERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS, YOUTH & COMMUNITY WORKERS ARE INVITED TO APPLY FOR A HARD, REWARDING JOB. SALARY DEPENDENT ON EXPERIENCE.

120, St. Paul's Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, 12.

Tel: 021-440-4376.



# up your street

Few people know that once upon a time Mary Street was called Cadbury Street. Its name was changed to Mary Street after George Cadbury had been involved in some unpopular piece of City politics. So unpopular did he become that the residents got up a petition to change the name of their street, but it was Mr. Cadbury who got the last laugh. The street was renamed after his wife, 'Mary'. The street was built on the site of what was once Eastwood House. 261A Mary Street is still known locally as 'the coach house' and other signs of the old house are still to be seen. What were once stables, for instance, now accommodate a woodyard. Like a lot of Balsall Heath - it was clearly once a very well-to-do street. When it was made part of Birmingham towards the end of the last century there were indignant protests about the 'poor law' rates the residents would have to pay. Protests about rates are nothing new!

## miss the trams?

Many older people will still remember how Mary Street looked from the windows of the trams that used to rattle up the street to the terminus where the Trafalgar Road bus park now is. Nowadays the trams are gone, though some of the original cobblestones still remain. But the street is still a bit special. It houses the Bible Tract Society as well as a Sikh Temple, and a Child Welfare Clinic as well as Mrs. Jones' excellent senior citizens' organisation. There are some fine houses, too, including the ones with the wrought iron verandahs at the top of the hill.

## to turn them out?

The issue that at present most concerns Mary Street residents is whether Dr. Deiry should be allowed to knock down the Avenue to the left of his surgery at the top of Mary St., together with several surrounding houses, which he owns. He wants to build fifteen one-bedroom flats and ten garages there instead. Dr. Deiry runs a highly lucrative practice from 262 Mary St. He took the practice over from his father. He owns the Avenue behind his house, the flats on either side, and, of course, the house from which he conducts his medical practice. He has recently extended his property by buying the two cottages in front of the Avenue. Now Mr. Law, and his wife, who have lived in one of these cottages for the past 38 years are in danger of losing their home. As if this were not bad enough, Mr. Law will also lose his garden, which has been the labour of half a lifetime, and must be one of the best and most beautiful in Balsall Heath, if Dr. Deiry's scheme goes through. Mr. Law contemplates the prospect with the calm of a man who has survived tough knocks before. (That's another story, and maybe one day he'll let me print it!) But of course, neither the Laws nor tenants of the other houses affected can be expected to be happy about the scheme.

## not if they can help

Dr. Deiry has applied for planning permission to carry out his scheme. The Balsall Heath Association, and the residents of Mary St., have separately entered objections to it, on several grounds. The most obvious of these objections is that what the City, and especially Balsall Heath, most urgently needs, is NOT more one-bedroom flats, and garages, but houses for the tens of thousands of families who need them.

## a tribute

The heroine of my piece this time (and I never like to stop before I've mentioned some of the nice things that happen and nice people!) is Mrs. Chandler of 3, Beaconsfield Terrace. Although Mrs. Chandler is in her 80's herself, she goes round to 261 Mary St. - sometimes as often as three times a day - to help Miss Readings, who is 95, and nearly blind. Residents I spoke to said, "If anyone should get the M.B.E., it's not people like the Beatles, it's Mrs. Chandler. She just quietly gets on with the job."

By Mike Dunkley.

## MEET

Introducing another man with a new job in the area - Leslie Roberts, recently appointed by the Social Services Department as Senior Community Worker at St. Paul's Hall. Leslie has joined Nick Turner, the community worker who has been around for quite a time already and whom many local people already know well. Both men have the job of helping to build the hall into a real community centre. As the Heath has argued more than once in the past, the hall is a valuable asset to local residents. Quite apart from its indispensable function as the home of St. Paul's Day Care Centre, it can also provide a meeting place for other local groups whose activities do not interfere with the running of the nursery, a place for entertainments for local residents, for informal educational activities, for family and other celebrations, and all sorts of other things. In the evenings and at weekends, especially when the facilities are not in use by the nursery, the hall can be used by other local people. Leslie and Nick sit on the hall's new Management Committee, which includes some representatives of various local voluntary organisations, and which will plan the use of the hall and the development of its facilities. A good start has been made already on the hall as a centre, and Nick, as many people know, is already helping different local groups with their projects in the area - the playground, nursery and so on. It is good to know that Social Services see the bright future of the centre, and that local people and organisations will have the extra help of Leslie as well as Nick. (Incidentally, Leslie's a big football fan - coming from Liverpool originally, he's got to be - and is also keen on all sorts of music. So maybe we can hope for a lot more concerts like the successful one already held in the hall, and perhaps some soccer competitions for the kids. No, not IN the hall folks!)



Leslie Roberts, in the office in St. Paul's Hall.



## Notes & News

Since the Heathen was last published our Mother & Baby Club has gone from strength to strength, and the playgroup too is well-supported by a number of most helpful mothers. It opens every school morning and at certain times during the holidays. We should be most happy to welcome more mothers and babies who would enjoy playing and meeting other parents. The Nursery is at last finished, and we have welcomed the first children in. We are all most grateful to the Education Committee's officers and workmen who have so ably provided the children with an imaginative and attractive place in which to play and learn. We have our own Cook, Mrs. O'Hara, and I am told that the meals are fabulous. I am looking forward to joining them occasionally when the children are well settled-in.

### NEW IDEA

A new idea that we are putting into practice this term is our Pupil/Tutor and Parent/Tutor scheme. Because, as they say, 'If you want to learn a subject, then teach it' can be so very true, we are trying it. We have linked older children who may be having reading problems with younger children who need the extra practice. The older child spends a few minutes several times a week with the young child listening to them read. Both benefit from this, the younger child gets more practice, in addition to practice the older child gains in self esteem and consequently being more confident improves. We think it will foster the proper caring attitude with our older children too. Parents are being invited to become Parent/Tutors and give a few minutes regularly to particular children who are experiencing the normal difficulties in learning how to read competently. Reading is the major skill that we have to teach our children. It can be difficult and yet, is most necessary for their future happiness and progress.

by Alex Hughes.

### CAMPING

During the first week of the school holiday a party of 13 children and 6 teachers camped at Penrhyneddraeth near Portmadoc, North Wales. The camping equipment was provided by the Committee and the transport by Social Services and one of the teachers. The advance party left school at mid-day to set up the tents and build the fire. The cooking was all done over an open fire, which was the focus of the campsite during the evenings. The children were free to explore the campsite and collect wood for the campfire. The weather was not particularly favourable, so we only went to the beach occasionally. One highlight was the tractor inner-tube which we used in the rock pool. One day was spent visiting a slate quarry, and seeing the slate mined and processed. Another day was spent at Butlins Pwllheli Camp, where the children took full advantage of the free rides. In the evenings we tried a late night walk, a sausage sandwich barbeque on the beach, and toasting marshmallows by the campfire. Unfortunately, by the time the children had settled into the routine of the campsite it was time to leave. A longer stay would have been popular, but the costs would have been too high.

by Nigel Baynes.

## PLAY PROJECT POPULAR

During the weeks 4th - 8th August and 11th - 15th August we ran a holiday playscheme. Three mornings of each week were spent on the school premises where children too part in rounders, football, and hockey matches; the French game of Boule was introduced and proved very popular, and bats and balls were also popular amongst the younger members who came along. The Community Rooms were used for quiet games; cards, solitaire, billiards, scrabble, chess, etc. Two full days of each week we took children and parents on trips. The first week we went on the Severn Valley Railway and to the Lickey Hills; and during the second week we went to Twycross Zoo, Wyndley Leisure Centre and Sutton Park. The numbers who came along for the day trips showed how popular these outings were - 88 children and adults went to Twycross Zoo. The outings to the more local areas were also very well attended. The club days saw up to 60 children coming along. We were very grateful to sixth-formers from Golden Hillock Comprehensive School who gave of their time and energy to help our activities. Our Playgroup Leader, Miss Wendy Braund, ran her own playscheme for four weeks during the Summer break and took youngsters and their mums, and also several old folk, along to St. Nicholas Park at Warwick and for a barge trip. She and her playgroup also joined up with the school during their holiday scheme. Wendy had the help of two girls from Mount Pleasant School (Highgate) to whom we offer our warm appreciation. This holiday scheme appeared to us to meet a great need and mothers were very appreciative and said they had never known a Summer holiday go so quickly, and that it had meant a great deal to them being able to go out and about with their children.

by Laura Mead and Rod Parry  
Home/School Liaison Teachers.

### OPENING UP!

Friday 3rd October was a highly successful milestone for Tindal School and the Birmingham Schools Community Experiment. It was the official opening of the recently completed community rooms at Tindal School, and the occasion was marked by a party in the new rooms for all those involved with the school and the project. We were delighted to entertain, amongst others, the Chief Education Officer, Mr. E. Brookesbank and his wife, who both expressed their appreciation of what has already been accomplished. There was good support from both staff and parents of the school, and many local organisations and other schools were represented. The evening went splendidly. Let us hope for more like it.



Our photograph shows some of those who attended the opening of the community rooms - we're sorry we didn't have more space for further photos to show how pleasant the new rooms are.



# SHOPPING AROUND!

Two years ago we did a shopping survey on various shops in the area and found some shops were cheaper than others and as promised we have done another one this year. We all know that people who go to work or have young children find it difficult to shop around and find the cheapest and most convenient shops in the area so once again we have done it for you.

## WHERE WE WENT.

We went to five local supermarkets on Ladypool Road, and in each one we checked the price of the 26 items on our shopping list. These comparative prices are set out for you in the chart. The cheapest biscuits, which we included in the list last time, have been left off, because the sizes of the packets vary so much.

## CHEAPEST STORE.

Price differences between the stores, overall, were much smaller than two years ago, but the cheapest shop on the whole was Maini's, which was also cheapest then. Their prices, except for a few items such as Anchor butter, cheese and Nescafe, were generally just slightly cheaper than elsewhere. Avery's, which is the new shop by the traffic lights, on the corner of Taunton Road, was also on the cheap side, but doesn't have a wide range of stock. The Co-op has improved on two years ago, and is now one of the cheaper stores. They also have one or two items which are bargains - much cheaper than elsewhere.

## BARGAINS.

Most of the shops had special offers, and these were good value. Maini's, Avery's, and the Co-op all mark up the prices of their special offers on their display windows, and it's definitely worth keeping an eye on these. Particularly good bargains were 15oz baked beans for 10p at the Co-op, 3lb of 'Snowflake' flour for 15p at the Co-op, cheap toilet rolls and Nescafe at Avery's, and Fairy Liquid for 26p at Maini's.

## BUT....

Some of the items on the list are available cheaper at other places; such as eggs for 37p a dozen from Ladypool Stores, sausages for 30p a lb at Kalyal Co., although, of course, the quality of the sausages varies a great deal. A new shop has opened on the corner of Oldfield Road, which sells a small selection of goods very cheaply, e.g. Swiss roll for 9p, ginger cake for 14p and Cadbury's gateau cake at 20p, and the best bargain of all, a large block of ice cream for 12p. However, all of these best buys are in shops where you couldn't buy all the rest of your weekly groceries at the same time, which could be inconvenient.

## CONVENIENT?

Shopping is not an easy business at any time, especially when rising prices mean that you have to watch the labels carefully for both quantity and price. Some of the shops we visited were also a lot easier to shop in than others. Maini's, although it is cheaper, and although it has a good range of stock, is also difficult to walk round because of narrow gangways, and piles of things on the floor. It also looks as though it could be arranged more attractively. Ali's is also very cramped for space, and in both of these shops it is quite a struggle to get what you want, if you also have small children with you. Easiest to shop in were the Co-op, Riteways and Avery's, and of these the Co-op is the largest and also has the widest range of goods.

## TERRIBLE!

Obviously prices have gone up a lot in the past two years, as we all know, but comparing the prices with those we noted two years ago, is nevertheless quite shocking. Some items have actually doubled in price; for example, Surf, sugar, jam, cornflakes, Fairy Liquid,

and the cheapest margarine. Other items have also got a lot more expensive; for example, Nescafe has risen from 54p to 70p, taking the cheapest prices in each case, and cheese has risen from 30p to 42p. Eggs are at the moment more or less the same price, although there are warnings that they are going to go up soon, aren't there? How many people's wages have gone up the equivalent amount, and what about Social Security?

## WE'LL BE WATCHING.

We will keep an eye on rising prices and repeat this survey of local shops again. Meanwhile, if anyone comes across any specially good bargains, please let us know, because we're sure other Heathen readers would like to know too.

SURVEY BY: Val Hart, Karen Byron, Mandy Byron and Susan Morbey.

SHOPPING LIST	ALI'S	MAINI'S	Co-op Ladypool Road	AVERY'S	RITWAYS
19oz Fairy Liquid	29	26	33	NA	28
1lb P.G.Tips	9	8½	10½	8½	10
1lb cheapest tea	8½	8½	9	8½	9
1lb Stork margarine	10	10½	13	NA	11
1lb cheapest margarine	10	9½	9	10	10½
1lb Anchor butter	13½	14½	NA	NA	14
1lb cheapest butter	13½	14½	17	15½	14
1lb Cheddar - cheapest	43	46	44	42	NA
16oz Kellogg's cornflakes	24	24	23½	24	22
15oz Heinz baked beans	13½	13	13	NA	12
15oz cheapest baked beans	12	10½	10	12	12
17oz Surf	NA	23	24	22½	NA
1lb McVitie's plain chocolate digestive	21	20	22	22	22
8oz Nescafe	74	73	74	70	72
Medium sliced loaf	14	13	14½	12½	14
2lb sugar	22	20½	21½	21	23
15oz tin peaches	20½	19½	18½	20½	18
15oz tin peas	14½	13	13	NA	9
1lb pork sausages	39	35½	42	38	39
1lb Robertson's jam	25½	23½	23½	24½	25
1lb cheapest jam	21½	19½	18½	22	22
3lb McDougall's Flour	21	18½	19½	24½	20
3lb cheapest flour	18	18½	15	18	18
2 Toilet rolls-cheapest	19	20	15½	14	19
1 dozen standart eggs	39½	38	39	38	39
1lb long grain rice	16½	13	26	NA	16
N.A. - Not Available when we visited the shop.					





# CURB THE KERB CRAWLERS!

Ever since the Heathan first came out, people have been complaining to us about the problem of prostitution in this area. Some people have expressed great anger to us, others have been upset and fed-up. People have talked of petitions to the Council demanding action, others have said that they experience so much annoyance that they are trying to move away. Although it is a difficult subject to write about (one of those a lot of us would rather not even think about!) we have talked to a number of people in the area about it, asking for information and views on the matter. We discussed it with the local community workers, as well as with ordinary residents, and got a good many different and often conflicting views.

## DISTURBING OUR PEACE.

One thing everyone is agreed upon: some parts of Balsall Heath have once again become the regular haunts of prostitutes. One such place is Court Road, but there are, unfortunately, many others. Most of us never see, or never notice, a prostitute - and never spare a thought for those who happen to live in the wrong street. But there is one way in which nearly everyone who lives in the area is affected: that is, by the kerb-crawlers. Any woman, and most men with wives, sisters or daughters, will know what we mean. Over and over again people tell us about the menace of the men who solicit from crawling cars; any woman walking on her own after dark is likely to be accosted - either 'for kicks' or for real. There are very many women in Balsall Heath who do feel genuinely afraid to walk in the streets alone at night. Even the would-be client who just murmurs an unwanted invitation and then goes on his way leaves a nasty taste in the mouth which lingers on. This doesn't do a lot for the good name of the area, of course. Apart from this problem, which is quite bad enough in itself, there are, as well the problems of those who ARE in the 'wrong' road or the 'wrong' house. It's not so much that they have to put up with the prostitutes themselves, as that clients, or would-be clients can be a frightening and infuriating source of harassment. Noise, drunkenness, brawls, mistaken addresses, are only some of the problems those who are in the 'wrong' place experience. Some who dare to complain have found that this brought worse troubles in its wake.

## IT WON'T JUST GO AWAY.

It is tempting, but probably unfair to saddle the police with all the blame for these problems. Soliciting on the street is against the law, it's true, and the law says that after three warnings a girl seen soliciting is registered as a prostitute, and can be fined or even imprisoned. On the other hand, a prostitute can operate quite legally from a private house. The law is clearly designed to drive prostitutes off the streets, so a lot of people simply conclude that the police aren't doing their job when they see street-walkers. But it is asking a lot of the police to demand that they make the present law work. The police could claim, with some justice, that the sentences imposed on those they take to court are not stiff enough to deter women from soliciting in the streets. (And few people think that

long prison sentences would be a solution.) The police also have the problem that they are dealing with a constantly shifting population of prostitutes, who simply move on elsewhere if one area becomes too hot for them. Anyway, the police have a duty to keep an eye on the criminal element among prostitutes, to prevent the build-up of organised vice-rings, the exploitation of young people and so on. This is most easily done when you know where to look. Lastly, of course, prostitution has earned its name as the oldest profession and it would be quite unfair to expect the police to abolish it, whatever they did. It would be just as difficult as trying to abolish road accidents. Some people would even argue - as some said to us - that prostitution provides a useful outlet for the needs of a small minority, and so may prevent more serious offences. Those who think that the clients are actually or potentially a greater cause of annoyance than the prostitutes themselves also point out that the women, or girls, also have their problems - including the problem of being exploited by landlords. A good many prostitutes travel to work, taking care not to offend their friends and neighbours who are quite unaware of their activities. And a good many are women who would be hard-pressed to support themselves without their 'work'.

## WHY HERE?

We can ask this question, even if, realistically, we must admit there are always likely to be prostitutes somewhere. And indeed, plenty of local residents DO want to know why they have to put up with disturbances, unpleasantness and often harassment in their road and even next door. The reason that prostitutes work in places like Edward Road, and not in Solihull, is not that all their clients come from areas like this. Some of the cars that visit the area are quite posh - including, reportedly, a Rolls Royce. Nor has it got anything in particular to do with our coloured neighbours - in fact it was largely pressure from immigrants that led to the closing down of Varna Road as a red-light district. We suspect it has got a lot to do with the fact that none of us plays golf with the Chief Constable, so we can't urge him politely to get people moved on. "I mean, the prostitutes are not going to go away, so leave them where they will cause the least fuss", may be the argument for not taking any particular action. Some people pointed out to us that a bolder and more constructive approach than leaving them to it or moving them on - already operated on the continent (but unlikely to be adopted here for the next fifty years) is the establishment of official Council brothels together with much stiffer penalties for street soliciting. This would mean that prostitutes could be medically supervised, protected by the police and could even be offered help with the personal and drug abuse problems that many of them have. Shocking perhaps - but it might be better than the present hypocrisy - It would do away with those kerb-crawlers anyway. Well yes - this is one point of view. But, of course, not everyone would agree with this solution. And even those who agreed with it in principle might well find themselves perplexed when it came to deciding where to put the 'official' brothels. It's one of those things that none of us want to live next door to, isn't it? Funny if in 50 years time they turn out to be sited in poor old Balsall Heath, with the clients all having to make the long journey from Solihull or Sutton. Anyway, any views from readers on this? There aren't any easy answers, we know that much.

By Mike Dunkley and Anita Halliday.



NEW  
CALTHORPE NOW

Lots of people know Calthorpe School by its old building - which looked like something out of a horror film. It must have been difficult to teach and learn in. Especially with that label 'Special school' to add to the bleak Victorian building. This term the school has moved into a new building, further down the Moseley Road - the low, flat new buildings on the left as you go towards town. The contrast between the old and the new is dramatic.

## MARVELLOUS

The new building is magnificent. It's spacious, well-equipped, has lots of playing space and class, craft and woodwork rooms which are specially designed for the needs of the physically and mentally handicapped. A lot of thought, care and imagination has gone into the planning and a lot of money - half a million pounds - into the construction.

## SPECIAL IN A NEW WAY!

It must now be one of the best special schools in the whole Midlands area. But it is now 'special' in a new way. The school's headmaster, Peter Wildblood, and his staff, want to get the surrounding community to use the school's marvellous facilities. The school is surrounded by tall new flats. There must be lots of events and activities which the local teenagers and adults would like to use these buildings for. Perhaps pensioners would like to, as well. The monthly meetings which community workers in the Highgate area hold are expected to lead to further ideas for the use of the buildings.

## BARRIERS COMING DOWN

It is hoped that the school's facilities will quickly become fully used all day and all year long. As the buildings fill up in this way, the number of children at the school will be slowly reduced from 300 to 150. Children in need of special attention because of physical, speech and hearing problems would then be drawn from ordinary schools for periods of intensive care and teaching and then returned to the ordinary schools quickly. They would not be separated from other girls and boys for long periods. Local people would be using the school buildings - perhaps staying to help look after the children. The barriers between 'normal' and 'handicapped' would be lowered, and the children's lives made easier.

## WHY DELAY?

These aims are good and bold. It's much to be hoped that Peter Wildblood, his staff, parents and local community workers can make the aims a reality. It is a great shame that, with so much that is necessary, important and exciting, to accomplish there should be any delay. However, through no fault of those working for the school, there is at present a delay in its development. Instead of getting off to a flying start in the new building, the school is having to wait for adequate staff to cater to the needs of the children. Calthorpe is short of both cleaning and welfare staff. Peter Wildblood and his teachers are having to cope with these jobs as well as their ordinary work which is strenuous in itself. No wonder that Mr. Wildblood is concerned in case he may lose some of his existing staff, who are be-

coming tired and frustrated. The only way in which they can manage at present is by sending some of the children home early each day, so that the other jobs can be done. Of course, no-one likes this solution, which deprives the children of the attention they need so much, but until the City Council takes the decision to appoint more staff the development of the school is bound to be held up. It is obviously no good spending half a million on a new building and then trying to skimp on the staff who are going to make things work. The Education Department of the City seems to recognise this very well - let us hope that the political leaders on the Council also recognise it too, and don't try to make false economies which would waste the school's potential. The facilities are there - let's hope there will be no further delay in putting them to the imaginative use that is intended.



Photographs, above, show parts of the outside and inside of Calthorpe's new buildings with children and staff at work.





## Adult help vital

We're sure everyone already knows what a smashing summer holiday we had. But people could easily miss the reasons why it went off so well. First, the re-arrangement of the playground over Easter, with the generous amount of help given by parents and committee members. Second, this help continued throughout the holiday period, making it one of the best ever. The sheer numbers of children taking part in activities - ranging from painting, candle-making, den-building, to various playground competitions, such as football, 'It's a Knockout', and a very successful Bar-B-Q evening - go to prove this. We have also had a large number of outings. Too many to mention them all. But two were particularly outstanding. At Coombe Abbey, in front of 130 of us, Shelagh, our new play-leader was 'christened' in the paddling pool, and Ron Ford won the British Bulldog competition. The other was a terrific day out at Abergswyth, when everyone was in real holiday mood, collecting periwinkles, crabs, swimming in the sea, and going on boat trips. One crab found its way back to Birmingham in someone's coat-pocket. The behaviour on the majority of these summer trips was so good that there were times when the children really didn't need supervising.

## THE BEST

Our holiday away this year was to a Welsh cottage, loaned to us by a school in Abingdon. The cottage was situated in a remote corner of Wales - so remote, in fact, that the water had to be brought in from a stream! Brummies, unaccustomed to farm animals were often chased home from long walks by enraged bulls - except that on closer inspection these often turned out to be cows! On one visit to the sea-side, one imaginative young person swore that he had just escaped being eaten by a 12-foot shark. The week was so good that 30 children and six parents had to be dragged home at the end. We're delighted to tell you that we may be allowed to use the cottage again next year.

## Best Wishes to Good Friends

We can never thank everyone enough for all their help, but we should like to mention several people who have left the area. Margaret Selby has left the playground committee, having been on it virtually since its conception. She has left to go to her new job. During all her time on the Committee she has been of enormous help, and her advice always of great benefit. She will be missed by us all. We want to thank Angela, too, for her help during the summer, and wish we could find more volunteers of her calibre. The same goes for Rob (the other one), who was employed as a playleader throughout the summer holiday period. We're very sorry that we've also had to say goodbye to Anne Stafford, who has been with us for more than a year. In that time she managed to win the affection of everyone. So to you, Anne, Margaret, Angela and Rob - wishing you all every success in your new careers, THANK YOU.

## Important Dates

This year Farm Park have invited us to celebrate Halloween with them. We shall organise transport from Malvern St. on Friday 31st October at 6 p.m.

# BONFIRE NIGHT

REMEMBER, REMEMBER, THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER: This year we light up the street at 7 p.m., with a gigantic bonfire, followed at 7.30 by a spectacular fireworks display under the direction of our PYROTECHNIC EXPERT, 'Sparklerfingers' Mr. Bernardo Ingles. Music will trumpet across from the playground while you tuck into baked potatoes, hot dogs and hot soup. At about 8.30 we shall be having a sing-song around the fire. If you want to bring your own fireworks we would urge you to USE THE SPECIAL AREA which we will set aside for this purpose. We hope that this will help us to keep this the accident-free event it has always been. See you there! (Be THERE or be SQUARE!)

By the Playleaders: Rob, Shelagh and Chris. (P.S. for those who haven't met him yet, Chris is the new leader who came in September - come and meet him at the Playground!)

## Letters

### Playground Holiday

Dear Editor,  
We went to a cottage in Wales with the Adventure playground, and all my friends came. There were 28 children and 6 adults. We enjoyed ourselves very much.  
We went to the beach on Monday and Thursday, and on Monday we also had a tea-party for Tracey Deardo. She was nine. On Sunday we went for a ten-mile walk round the Welsh mountains. Tuesday we took a visit down the gold mines. It was very exciting and interesting. We also visited the new dam, where most of the water we use comes from.  
There was a stream about half a mile away where we had to go every day for a wash! There were two big dormitories - for the girls and ladies in one, and the boys in the other.  
It was great, and I hope we can go again next year.  
Yours sincerely,  
Jane Ford. (Aged 10.)

## Tinkers

Dear Editor,  
There has been a lot of controversy in this area about the people they call gypsies and tinkers, and some people have complained about what the adults have been getting up to. But since I have been helping out at the Adventure playground I have found that the children have been well-mannered and well-behaved, ready to receive any help offered to them, and ready to give help when asked. They do this even though the other children at the playground tease them and call them names. People are shouting all the time about the mess the 'tinkers' make, but they never do anything to help them. I wonder how they would feel if they were moved about all the time and given tatty old houses, and had to take all the stick these people do.

Yours,  
Rob Hill.



## Note From Exile

Dear Sir or Madam,  
Among some books I received from a friend in Birmingham, was a copy of the *Heathan* (August). I had never heard of it before then, and really enjoyed reading it.  
My three brothers and I went to Tindal St. School - my youngest brother was the only one who had to move at eleven, and he went on to Clifton Rd. or Dennis Rd., I'm not quite sure which, but I think it was the former. I am sixty-nine, so that you can see its quite a long time ago. We lived in Balsall Heath, but I believe that where we lived is pulled down now (Hampden St.) I'm the only one in Yorkshire. I only have two brothers now. One is living in Shirley, and the other (the youngest) in Cannock. I have not lived in Birmingham for 34 years now.  
I was wondering if you would let me have a copy of the *Heathan* each month, and if you will let me know the price, and postage, I will be glad to send it right away and will look forward to reading it.

Yours sincerely,  
(Mrs.) Dorothy Spetch, Ripon, Yorks.

(We were really delighted to get Mrs. Spetch's letter, which is our very first from an exiled *Heathan*. Of course we will be sending the paper to her - and the first one will be free, in thanks for her kind letter. We would love to hear from other far-flung *Heathans*, and promise them the same reward! Do we have any readers in REALLY foreign parts yet? If we do, we send you our greetings and ask you please to write to us with recollections and news of your adventures! Ed.)

## It Was Lovely

Dear Editor,  
Its exactly eight years ago that we came to live in Sunny Avenue, being the first family to move into these new houses. We did think at the time how lovely everything was, but instead of improving, the district has very much deteriorated. Whatever is happening? We have now come to the stage where we are afraid of either being robbed or 'mugged'. I am sure the time has come for something to be done to make one proud to say we live in Sparkbrook, not ashamed.

Yours sincerely,  
Phyllis Morbey.

## Enjoyable Time

Dear Editor,  
I would like to thank all concerned for making our Wednesday evenings at the Community School such an enjoyable time. If there is anyone who doesn't know about our 'evening classes' and would like to learn or join in with anything from sewing, cooking, knitting, to art and woodwork, then there is always someone to help you. Please call at 112, St. Paul's Rd., Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

Yours,  
June Stone. (Mrs.)

## No Angel

Dear Editor,  
I read the article 'Young Thieves' in your last issue with great interest. Everyone seems to agree that this problem, like so many others, is on the increase in our affluent society. On the other hand, I can remember that as a lad I was far from being an angel and not above the odd 'crime'. What seems to be different about the kids today is that they have no idea where to draw the line, and while, like me, they may see the light when they get a bit older - it may be too late by then, and they may have done a lot of hurt to people on the way.

Yours,  
Fred Morris.

# Margaret Moves.

Margaret Selby left the Lane Neighbourhood Centre in September. She has gone to live and work in Aston. The news was hard to believe at first for she has been so permanent and reliable a presence for so long that perhaps we had come to take her work for granted.

However, no-one need fear that the work of the Centre will be badly affected by Margaret's leaving. Already her place has been filled and work goes on as normal.

Margaret started the Lane Neighbourhood Centre herself, seven years ago, and the present scope of its work is largely due to her efforts. There are now few people in Balsall Heath who have not used the help and support of the Centre over the years. Anyone in need of advice about housing, legal, family or other matters has always found skilled and sympathetic help there.

The informal and friendly atmosphere of the Lane Neighbourhood Centre continues to fill an otherwise gaping hole in the provision of skilled services in Balsall Heath. The City could not fill the gap; indeed, it was left to Margaret and her supporters in the Church to see the need in the first place. Few could have answered the need in such a reliable, hard-working and considerate way as Margaret. It is perhaps a final tribute to herself and her fellow-workers that she can leave without adversely affecting the Centre's work.

The celebrations to mark Margaret's leaving were held at St. Barnabas Church in September, and were led by the Reverend Bill Lowndes. A packed church service was followed by a huge leaving party, and both showed what a valued friend Margaret had been to many people. Her warm and cheerful presence will be sorely missed. But the Lane Neighbourhood Centre's continued work will remind us of all her efforts and work here.



## Pleasant Prospect



If you have noticed mysterious activity on the railway embankment at the top of St. Paul's Rd. lately - don't worry, and on the other hand don't rush to join the quest for gold. The only gold that will be coming out of the ground is hosts (one hopes) of daffodils in the spring. The Community School have been busily planting at a regulation 8" deep, and hereby warn that anyone rash enough to PICK any when they bloom will be tied to the sleepers in time to catch the 6.15.



EVERY TUESDAY

St PAULS HALL

COMMUNITY

BINGO

DOORS OPEN 7 p.m. EYES DOWN 7.30

GREAT PRIZES!

REFRESHMENTS!

PENSIONERS FREE!

FLYER, SNOWBALL, RAFFLE, ETC. 5p IN, 2p GAME.

IN AID OF THE HAPPY HOUSE & LOCAL KIDS.



St.

Paul's

Did you know that the experts say that from the moment a child is born until he's about 5, he learns more than he will ever learn again in a single five year period? An interesting fact, considering that most of us tend to believe that learning doesn't really begin until a child goes to school. It's worth stopping to think about what children do learn before they're 5. They learn to speak - no one really knows how. A lot of children round here can speak in two languages by the time they're five - a pretty remarkable achievement. They learn all sorts of physical things, too. Physical development is not just a matter of learning to walk and using muscles. By running and jumping around, children are learning confidence, balance and co-ordination. They're learning what is dangerous and safe and all the different things you can do with your body. That's important because of all the more complicated things they're going to have to do later on. Then there are relationships. Whether you're young or old, relationships with other people are the most important things in life. Children need to know and learn from other children and adults. Imagine what it must be like to be 3 or 4, doing so many exciting things for the first time. Riding in cars and trains, going to the park, seeing new things on T.V., watching grown-ups, having your first playmate, etc. It must be exhausting.

## PRE-SCHOOL PLAY

The experts say that the more experience children have in these things before they go to school, the better. That's the way to help their personalities develop, and they will probably do better when they get to school and later, when they go to work and raise their own family. That's what we're doing at St. Paul's Day Care Centre. It's not just a place where 2-4 year olds are 'looked after' while mum and dad are at work. It's a place where we put all that boundless energy that young children have, to good use for the future. We organise a time and place for all the things that youngsters like doing every day. They have the chance to listen to stories and music, sing and dance and let off steam, dress up, make things, do things, talk about things, be by themselves, or with other children and adults. They think they're playing, but really they're working. A lot of grown-ups don't understand this and think that playing is not important and doesn't teach anything useful. For example - if children have a lot of interesting things to do, they will obviously have a lot to talk about. As their talking improves with practice, so does their ability to think and understand, and the more they learn. While they're sitting at a table doing jigsaws, or painting, or cutting they're having a good time, but they're also training their fingers to do as they're told. It all helps when they go to school and learn to write. There are thousands of things that mothers and fathers can be teaching their children before they go to school. It helps them when they get to school and later, when they go out to work. You've got to admit, it all makes sense. Many mums and dads have known it all for a long time, and the experts are only just catching on. Learning can and should be fun, and it's only when things start to go wrong that it becomes a chore.

## LANGUAGE by Phyl.

We all have the desire to communicate or share experiences with one another. Communication happens very easily between young children and does not entirely depend on our understanding of what is said. Here in the Nursery I see children of different nationalities playing together even though they can't understand each other's language.

This is not always the case. An immigrant toddler can and does get very annoyed and frustrated when, because he can't speak English, his little English friend doesn't understand what he's trying to say. In an effort to help these immigrant children to speak English

here at St. Paul's we have started a "Language Group". For a certain period every day I take those children who can't speak English and chat with them. For children as young as those here in the Nursery, a new language must be "Caught not Taught". So we sit on the floor together and play with dolls, bricks, houses or cars. As we play with - say cars - I introduce the English word "CAR". The children are at that moment playing with a car, they can see it and touch it, they hear me calling it a car and gradually they associate the word with the little thing on the floor. So they are then on their way to speaking English.

it's free

# CONTRACEPTION AT BROOK

Pregnancy testing,  
help with problems

CITY CENTRE:-  
TEL: 021-643 5341  
EDGBASTON:-  
TEL: 021-455 0491  
HANDSWORTH:-  
TEL: 021-554 7553

BIRMINGHAM  
BROOK  
ADVISORY  
CENTRE



# CAN WE HELP?

In our last issue, we said that "can we help" would have a page answering questions about shopping problems. But as with every issue, we find ourselves with a "quart" of Heathen news, views and information, and only a "pint" size magazine to put it in. Sorry our advice on shopping has had to be held back for a latter date, but we do print a few "Golden Rules" to help you get the best deal out of the most expensive time of the year - xmas shopping.

Do you know what happens when you buy something from a shop? Hopefully you get a bargain. Legally you enter into a binding contract with the shop. This means that after you have parted with your money, the shopkeeper has certain obligations, namely, that (A) the goods he sells must be of "merchantable quality" - ie, it is not damaged and/or it works. (B) the goods must be fit for the purpose for which they are sold - ie, they do the job, and (C) the goods must meet the description applied to them - ie, what it says on the package must describe the contents.

If any of these conditions are not met then the shopkeeper has broken the contract and you are entitled to return the goods and ask for your money back. You may prefer to accept a replacement, it's up to you. You do not have to accept a credit note.

These are shoppers rights, and cannot be taken away from you. They do not depend on any guarantee which may be given with the goods.

Don't be put off by a shopkeeper telling you that faulty goods are the makers responsibility and must be returned to him. This isn't true, it's the seller that must put things right with you.

Most of us don't find it very easy making a complaint. But remember, it's your money that's being wasted if you do nothing and anyway, the shopkeeper isn't doing you a favour, he is only being asked to carry out his legal duty.

If you don't get much satisfaction from the shopkeeper, the best thing to do is to get some expert help and advice. The Citizens Advice Bureau in Colmore Circus (Tel.No.236-0864) or the Consumer Protection Dept. (Tel.No.300-5151) are perhaps the best people to contact.

If you still cannot get satisfaction it is possible to take the shopkeeper to court. This you can do yourself at very little cost in the "Small Claims Court". But you should never have to go that far, particularly if you follow the "golden rules" of good shopping:-

- 1) KNOW YOUR SHOPPERS RIGHTS, and don't be talked into giving them up.
- 2) DON'T BE MISLED BY DECEPTIVE PACKAGING its not always as big as it looks outside. Check the weight/number of contents carefully.
- 3) EXAMINE THE GOODS YOU BUY AT ONCE, if they are faulty tell the shopkeeper quickly.
- 4) KEEP YOUR RECEIPT, its proof you brought the article at the shop, and that a legal contract was entered into.

## New Benefit Rates

From the 17th November "Supplementary Benefit Rates" will be increased. This means that claimants will only be a long way behind most other peoples standards of living, (instead of a VERY long way behind). If you are a claimant, check how much you are getting from the Social Security. The HEATHAN has produced a special cut out and keep table to help you do this. Are you getting legally enough? If you are in doubt, contact one of your local Advice Centres. Some claimants were being paid less than S.B. rates because of the "WAGE STOP". Are you affected by this?, well you should'nt be, as the wage stop WAS ABOLISHED ON THE 22nd JULY THIS YEAR.

## St Paul's Day Care Centre

VACANCIES FOR 2½ - 5 YEAR OLDS



AT ST. PAUL'S HALL

TOP OF ST. PAUL'S RD.

Nursery hours 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

# HEATHAN CROSSWORD

A prize of £1 for the first correct entry opened November 30th

## Clues Across,

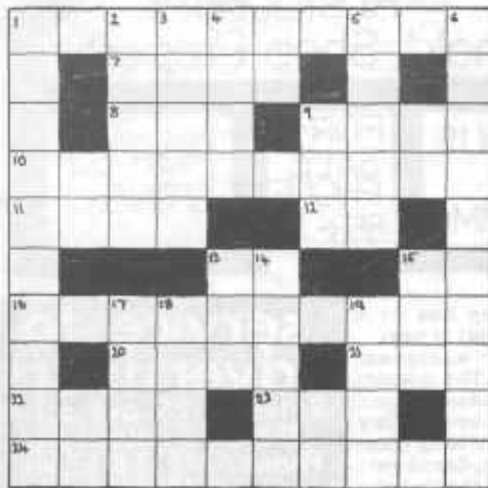
1. Whose new school? (10)
7. Emerald isle (4)
8. Dictionary isle (3)
9. Prickly lady (4)
10. Province of Canada (10)
11. Jewel of a car (4)
12. Not us (2)
13. Alright? (2)
16. Treasure Island (10)
20. Clever child (4)
21. Untrue (3)
22. Musically, as in 21 (4)
23. Fairy Fellow (3)
24. Juggernauts (5,5)

## Clues Down,

1. Military Mountain (6,4)
2. Army Holiday (5)
3. Before "the beak" (5)
4. American Robbery (3)
5. Aid to dinner (5)
6. Church Playgroup (2,8)
9. Arrowless (3)
13. Grain (3)
14. Submission (5)
15. World Champ (3)
17. Healed cut (4)
18. Happy cat (4)
19. Away (3)

## Number 8

## Solution No 7





# NEW SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT RATES

From, 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1975.

Ordinary Scale	Ordinary Weekly Rate	Long-Term Weekly Rate.
Husband and Wife	£17.75	£21.55.
Person living alone	£10.90	£13.70.
<u>Any other person aged:-</u>		
Not less than 18	£8.70	£11.00
Less than 18 but not less than 16	£6.70	£6.70.
Less than 16 but not less than 13	£5.60	£5.60.
Less than 13 but not less than 11	£4.60	£4.60
Less than 11 but not less than 5	£3.75	£3.75.
Less than 5	£3.10	£3.10.



## PUBLIC MEETING

For Residents of Balsall Heath  
(south of moseley rd.)

Come and hear what is happening  
TO YOUR HOUSE & STREET.

This will be a good time to set up a  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION to fight  
on your behalf

Time, 8.00pm - Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Nov  
At, St. John's School, Mary St.



MEET ALL YOUR FRIENDS  
At

**THE CROWN**

St Pauls Road

YOUR HOSTS

**Brian & Maureen McSkane**

AN **M & B** HOUSE

## BARNWELL STORES

144 EDWARD ROAD BALSALL HEATH. Tel-440 3622

Domestic Hardware & General Ironmongery.

BUCKETS BOWLS BROOMS  
CROCKERY CUPS SAUCERS PLATES  
DUSTPANS DISHES DISHCLOTHS  
DOOR LOCKS YALE LOCKS PADLOCKS  
NAILS SCREWS ALL SIZES

ALL YOUR HOUSEHOLD REQUIREMENTS:-  
AT THE RIGHT PRICE

DOMESTIC HARDWARE GENERAL IRONMONGERY BUCKETS BOWLS  
BROOMS ALL TYPES - CROCKERY - CUPS - SAUCERS - PLATES  
DUSTPANS - DISHES - DISHCLOTHS - DOOR LOCKS - YALE LOCKS  
PADLOCKS - NAILS - SCREWS - ALL SIZES. ALL YOUR HOUSEHOLD  
REQUIREMENTS AT THE RIGHT PRICE. HARDWARE, IRONMONGERY

Spend Your Bonfire Night at:-  
Malvern St. Adventure Playgd.

FIREWORK DISPLAY  
CHAMPAGNE RAFFLE+\*\*\*DISCO MUSIC  
FOLK SINGING+\*\*\*PLENTY OF FOOD  
FIRST AID ATTENDANTS  
Bring your own Fireworks  
and let them off in SAFETY

## west bromwich

Commercial-  
Residential  
Freehold Shop Property

SPACIOUS  
LIVING  
ACCOMM:

FOR  
SALE  
PHONE  
553-  
2231.

HIGH ST.  
SITING.

## help the heathan

With; information, news,  
drawings, letters, photos  
Write or Call in to :-  
120 St Paul's Rd, B'ham B12

The Heathan is published and printed by the  
Community School, and edited by Anita Halliday.  
Photos by Mike Dunkley and Mick Turner - copies  
can be bought cheaply from the School. The paper  
is financed solely by sales and adverts, and  
does not make a profit. The Editor thanks Saltley  
Action Centre for the use of their printing fac-  
ilities; and Jenny Rosziter, Dick Empson, Carolyn  
Parish and all named contributors for their help.

## service to advertisers

Rates: £1.25 per col in  
(20% off 3 issues.)  
Phone: 440 4376 or  
440 4603