

Gardeners' Quest time

WITH more and more people wanting to grow their own vegetables, allotments have become very difficult to get. At the same time there are many people with gardens they can't look after.

Friends of the Earth have come up with a simple idea that could change all that. The aim is to put would-be gardeners in touch with

owners of unwanted gardens.

What happens after that is up to the people involved. Ann Wigglesworth of FoE said she expected the gardeners would keep most of the vegetables but probably give some to the garden owner as well.

Apart from that the owners would have the satisfaction of seeing

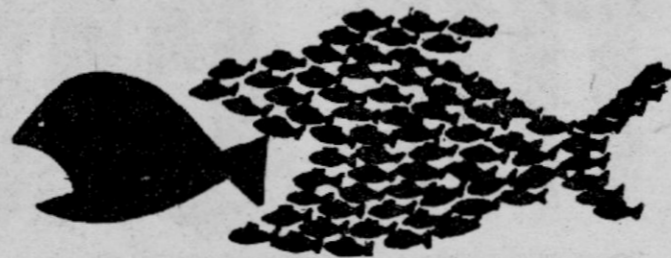
the land put to good use.

A similar scheme in the Camden district of London has been very successful — so successful that it's now run by the council.

Anyone interested, either as a gardener or a garden owner, should contact Ann Wigglesworth at Friends of the Earth, 5 Percy Street, Liverpool 8. Tel: 708 0358.



LOCAL ACTION



No eviction over unpaid heat bill

LIVERPOOL Corporation have dropped their threat to evict a Toxteth mother who refused to pay for electricity she hadn't used.

Wendy Leader was due to appear in court for 'rent arrears' because the corporation consider the £2.15-a-week heating charge is part of the rent.

All the flats in Entwistle Heights have electric under-floor heating in two rooms. The system is automatic and tenants have no control over it.

Wendy's problem is that she lives on Social Security and the SS refuse to include the heating charge when they pay her rent. They allow her 47p a week and say she must find the rest from her living allowance.

She had no alternative but to turn off the heating at the meter.

By stopping their court action the corporation have avoided an embarrassing problem. It's not at all certain they would have won the case, and if they'd lost it would have set a precedent allowing other tenants to refuse to pay without fear of eviction.

Still, this hasn't stopped several others in the block from following Wendy's example and turning the heating off.

Tenants complain that the system heats living rooms and kitchens — but not bedrooms — at night, and makes food go off quickly.

There are also complaints that it doesn't work properly, though the corporation point out that it is only 'background' heating and electric fires are necessary as well.

Wendy and some friends did a survey which showed the tenants in the block wanted to control their own heating. The corporation did a survey which showed the opposite, and suggested the tenants had not worded their questions properly.

So now a third survey is to be done when both sides agree on the wording of the questions.

The corporation also plan to test the heating system with clocks and thermometers, but there have

been long delays. First they said there were no empty flats to put the equipment in.

Then "when a flat became vacant... it was found to be infested and before the test could be started disinfection had to be arranged."

A third attempt proved "inconclusive" because of the hot weather.

Possibly they will eventually come to the same conclusion that was reached six years ago by housing chairman Gordon Pascoe when he said underfloor heating had "failed miserably".

"The system was not necessarily inefficient but the specification was utterly inadequate and the workmanship in many cases was thoroughly bad."

Not surprisingly the most enthusiastic supporters of the system are Manweb. In 1964 they

offered to pay for extra wiring to convert some blocks of flats from tenant-controlled to corporation-controlled heating.

They argued that the corporation would save money because even temperatures throughout blocks of flats meant less maintenance.

It would also shift the work of collecting the money and chasing bad debts from Manweb to the corporation.

Entwistle Heights was designed by the late Dr Donald Bradbury, City Architect. Several of his projects have been struck by misfortune. Oak and Eldon Gardens in Birkenhead are having to be demolished after only 18 years. And his parting gift to Liverpool — a crematorium — was found to be in danger of exploding when used.

Repair sense

COUNCIL workmen are refusing to move a fence in Cantril Farm because they say there is more urgent work to be done.

The fence surrounds a tenant's garden in Barons Hey and officials had planned to enlarge the garden by moving the fence 10ft on one side and 20ft on the other.

They estimated the work would take 183 hours and cost several hundred pounds.

Gerry O'Neill, senior steward at Dovecot Maintenance Depot protested when he heard about it.

"The department is supposed to have no money," he told the Free Press. "All the tenants are going to complain and we're the guys that's going to have to take the brunt."

He said the rule on these repairs at the moment is 'emergencies only' — fences which are dangerous, or which are needed to stop children running into a road.

He knew of fences in the same area which were in a bad state, and one tenant who had been waiting two years for repairs.

Anti-racism conference

THE NORTH-WEST Regional Council of the TUC are holding a delegate conference on Sunday October 24 to set up a North West Committee Against Racism.

They hope it will be attended by representatives of all churches, political parties, the CBI, Jewish and immigrant organisations.

More details from the secretary, Colin Barnett, 222 Stamford St, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs. Tel: 061-330 6652/7073.

Action group for tenants

LIVERPOOL Tenants' Action Group was formed from a group of people who successfully fought the council's plan to alter tenancy agreements. The plan would have made tenants responsible for maintaining communal areas of flats, maisonettes and tenements.

Individuals and representatives of community groups have been meeting regularly, aiming to mobilise on issues needing immediate action such as charges for minor repairs, and rent rises. They also hope to draw up a tenants' charter.

Action on these issues has to be city-wide to be effective. Anyone interested should contact Pat Riley (207 4289) or Tony Dronfield (228 7882).

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER...
95 LARK LANE, L17.
BUY AND SELL
COLLECTABLE CURIOUS ANTIQUES
SECONDHAND & ANTIQUARIAN BOOKS
HANDMADE LEATHER GOODS



VOICES of Scotland Road and nearby



THE SECOND edition of 'Voices of Scotland Road and Nearby', a publication with lots of hard Liverpool flavour, came out recently.

It's published by the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop. There's nothing new in writings about working class areas, but they're not often written by working class people. This is.

As in the first edition, there are no "f-----"s in it. Everything is spelt out, and mixed up with less robust writings from local school kids.

One gem worthy of note is a

recollection by Tommy Peacock when he canvassed for the tenants' candidates in the 1973 election.

"We got to this house on our way round, close by these garages. And this woman was complaining about the kids getting in them and lighting fires and everything. So she says, 'What would you do about it?' So being tenants' candidates, we say, 'Demolish the garages and build swings and see-saws for the kids to play on'."

"She said: 'I wish you'd fuck off — I'm trying to get rid of the fucking kids.'"



Still no compensation

IT IS NOW three years since I first made my complaints to the Corporation Housing Department about the state of this new house.

As you know my wife suffered terrible injuries when the cooker dropped back into holes and caused a pan of hot fat to fall on her feet, and with the evidence still here for all to see, I still can't get compensation for her.

The faceless monsters pass the buck to Cubitts who have just been to the estate and taken samples of the floors of a number of houses.

I also had no central heating or hot water for almost a year and I still have not had a refund of part rent and rates, so I helped myself to three weeks' rent. Now the faceless monster known as J. Hall is going to have me evicted from the house.

How does one get justice when dealing with this mafia-like set-up?

I rang the Area Office at Clubmoor on Friday the 13th and they now say they don't know a thing about my complaints. Yet Mr Molyneux (Estates Dept at Blackburn Buildings) told me on Tuesday August 10 that he had refused to accept the house and Cubitts had not been paid because of the complaints made by me.

I have got Councillor Ken Stewart trying to do something about it but it all seems impossible. A bunch of bandits in public office — they can't be sacked, questioned or brought before the court because I don't have the money and Legal Aid is just a myth.

Do I have to smash the Town Hall to bits to get action? Since your staff visited us my wife's health has deteriorated. Yours sincerely — EDGAR GREEN, Blythe Way, Liverpool, L6 2NS.

Thought that counts

AT THE MOMENT I'm over £50 in the red and can't afford to pay anything to you for your appeal.

On Monday I'm starting with the corpy as a sweeper and in a few weeks time hope to have enough to let you have some money 'coz the Free Press is very cheap at its price and is worth defending from extinction.

I hope to be back in Liverpool one day and hope all the things which I read about such as the Free Press and Liberty Hall are still there 'coz they weren't when I left several years ago.

I pass the Free Press round down here and people who've never even been to the Rainbow City still read it with great interest.

I especially enjoyed the article on Robert Tressell a few months back and have since read Fred Ball's book which was recommended. Anyway, yours for the cause — BRIAN DUNN, Chesterton Road, Cambridge.

Our thanks to all who have contributed to our appeal. In particular we would like to thank the anonymous person with swanky notepaper who sent £20.

Books + Pamphlets.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE
48 Manchester St., Liverpool 1
Tel: 051-227 2514

Wide variety of books on politics, history, education, psychology, racism, women's liberation, etc. Over 1,000 different titles to choose from.

Also over 300 political pamphlets on a wide range of topics.

STOP PRESS: JUST IN: Peter Reich — A Book of Dreams (hardback, 60p)
Brian Inglis — Roger Casement (paperback, 20p)
AND MORE BOOK BARGAINS!