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IN READING GAOL...

RED RAG interviewed a recent prisoner, who describes the drab and pointless life that goes on in Reading's most infamous institution.

--- How long were you there?

--- Six weeks.

--- That was last winter?

--- That's right.

--- Were there a lot of people there?

--- Yeah, it's overcrowded. Fifty per cent of the cells are three up.

--- That's three people to a cell?

--- Yes. There's only room there for two, at most. They think we're a group of goats!

--- How old were the people there?

--- 17 to 50 or 60.

--- More young people?

--- Altogether, including the remands, there must be 150 under 21. And about 250 over 21. About 400 altogether. The prison was made for 350. People that go there are just waiting to be sent to another prison, but they're usually there for most of their sentence anyway. Like, by the time they've found them somewhere it's three months.

--- So they're short sentence people anyway?

--- Yeah. There is a few lifers in there though. About five, that have been there about ten years already.

--- So the people around you keep changing?

--- It's usually the people who are nearly finishing their sentence that get changed. Should be the other way round!

--- They get moved somewhere else before they're let out?

--- They're looking for a place for everybody. It's an allocation prison, see.

--- Everybody there is going to be allocated a place somewhere else?

--- Right. Except for the few that are doing their sentence there, who somehow creep round it and have been unlucky. I know a bloke, he's been there two years, and he had another eighteen months to go. He was really pissed off, that they wouldn't send him anywhere else. It's just the way it goes. It depends how they feel: "Who shall we send today?"

--- Were you lucky to be sent to Reading Gaol?

--- Unlucky to be sent there. It's got to be the worst prison around. Apart from the Scrubs, I suppose.

--- In what ways?

--- Well, you've just got no time for yourself. You're banged up (locked up) all the time. You can't do nothing. Most other prisons are either semi-open or open. There's one wing that's open. If you're there your cell's open all the time, you can have tea or coffee when you want, make it yourself, watch telly when you like, things like that. It's more the grass people that get in there. Big jobs like. Super-grass wing. There's about ten in there. They get special treatment because, say, they've grassed up someone who's dealing cake.

--- Why did they send you to Reading?

--- Everybody that gets put down here goes there. Reading, Slough, Maidenhead, Newbury. It's the only prison around.

--- I've heard there are a lot of people from Heathrow?

--- There's a lot of drug things, yes.

--- What happens in a typical day?

--- You're woken up at six o'clock in the morning, and you're left for about three quarters of an hour. Then the doors are opened and you're let out to go and have a wash. You go and have a wash, come back. Then you're banged up for say another hour. Then they let you sleep out: that means clean the cell, empty the bins, wash the floor, make the bed. Then you're banged up for maybe another hour. Then you get an hour's exercise, walking round the

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yard - even if it's raining you've got to do that. Then you go back in and you're banged up for a bit longer. Then you go and have your dinner. Come back, eat your dinner. Banged up for another hour. Slop out again. Put your tray out, go and have a wash, wash your cup, fork, knife. Go back to your cell, sit there for about half an hour. Then you go to work. Then all afternoon you work, till about four o'clock. Then you have your tea, go back to your cell, eat your tea, slop out again, wash your knife and fork and cup. Then it's back to your cell, and that's it. Every four days you get one that you can watch telly, for one and a half hours. That costs you 20p a week, even if you don't want to do it you've still got to pay the twenty pence. Your wages are one pound 70 a week. Out of that you can buy sugar, jam, biscuits, crisps, sweets, baccy if you smoke, things like that. They've got a little tuck shop, canteen shop.

— Do you have any choice of what work you do?

— You either work in the workshop, or the kitchen - You can't get in the kitchen, everybody wants to get there 'cos there's food there. If you don't want to work, you can go to school, the education place. But it's a waste of time doing that. You don't get no money if you go down there. When you first go in there you're asked, 'Do you want to work? Do you want money or don't you?'. If you say you want money then you've got to work. The Governor finds you a job, and you've got to take whatever he gives you.

— Is it different for people who are there for a long period of time?

— Not really. We used to get gym every Monday morning. You get all sweaty with running around for an hour - and you're not allowed to have a wash after it. They just say

if you have a wash then you're holding everybody up. My mate just wouldn't have it - he had to have a wash 'cos he felt dirty. So they barred him from the gym, so he wasn't allowed to go to gym any more.

— What did you do in work?

— Sew mail bags. Make Harrods bags. We used to get £1.70 a week, for making Harrods bags like they sell in the shops for six quid apiece.

— How long did it take you to make one of those?

— About five minutes. Bags for laundries, those bags that have London subways written on them. Plastic things with cotton on the inside. They're all made in prisons. Green Harrods bags, "Guinness is good for you"... There's quite a few others.

— Presumably just cheap labour for them.

— Yeah. It's a good enough reason for them to be sending people to prison.

— How much were you able to socialise with the other prisoners?

— Well. You could talk to the one that was in your cell all day. First of all I was banged up on my own. The only time you get to talk to other people on your wing is when you have a wash, when you're doing gym, when you stand in queue for dinner or when you're at work. And when you get association.

— Association?

— Once every four days you're allowed to watch telly, play table tennis or pool for an hour and a half. You get a film on Sunday afternoons. You watch three quarters of it, then they switch it off.

— Why?

— I dunno. I used to get really annoyed about it, and start shouting about it. I just can't take people winding me up. That's what they're doing, winding everybody up. Like, if you want to see the Governor, you've got to send him a letter two days before. It doesn't matter what you want.

The first day I went there - I'd never been to prison before - I just didn't know what was going to happen next. I was brought there in the waggon. Down to reception. Go in and take all your clothes off. Straight in the shower, out the other end, and they give you a bag of clothes, prison clothes. Then they bring you to your cell. They put me in there, and that was it. This was about eight o'clock at night. That was it till the next morning. Now I didn't even know what was going to happen the next day. Like, nobody said to me, when the doors open, you've got to run like hell to the washroom 'cos if you're the last person to get there they turn you away and say, "You're too fucking slow." So they send you back to your cell and you don't get a wash. Nobody tells you things like that the first day you're there... They rush you around so much, they're always rushing you around, and making you run down the corridor with bags and things. The first night I was there I said to the screw that brought me upstairs from Reception, "Do I get out again tonight?" and he said, no. "Well, is there any chance that I could go to the toilet?" - 'cos I'd been waiting to go to the toilet for quite a long time - and he said, no. So I had to wait till the next morning. Which to him, it would have been about two minutes waiting. That's the kind of people you're dealing with in there. .. The prison officers, there might be two of them what care about anybody in there. The rest of them, the only reason they're there is for the money. They don't care if you die or live or what. There's one or two what are good screws. The rest of them are just a bunch of wasters.

— When you first got there, what was in the bag of clothes they gave you?

— Pair of shoes, pair of slippers, two pair of socks, two pairs of underpants, two vests, two tee shirts, a shirt, and a jacket.

— Did they fit?

— No.

— Pair of black trousers. And a pair of jeans. Two little towels, two sheets, one blanket, and one blanket what goes over the bed. One pillow case. No, you don't get pillows. You've got to find your own pillow. As soon as somebody moves out of a cell the others nick their pillows. Or you kind of sell your pillow to somebody before you leave. Two fags for a pillow, something like that.

— So the first night you were in you didn't have a pillow?

— No.

— How long did it take you to get one?

— Two days. A couple of cells down, they'd moved someone out. When they move somebody out the cleaners come along, and they move everything out of the cell and clean it. While they was cleaning it I walked past and nicked a pillow off the bed.



--- Do they provide you with soap?

--- They give you prison soap, which is just pigs' fat. If you want any other soap, or toothpaste, or anything like that, you've got to buy it. They give you a toothbrush. They give you a plastic mug, plastic fork, knife and spoon. If you twist them they just turn white, that kind of plastic.

--- Plates?

--- You don't get plates, you get a tray with three holes in it.

--- What's the food like?

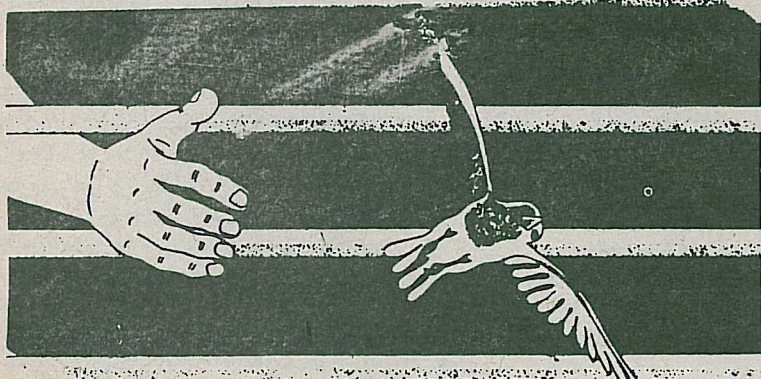
--- Terrible. Used to get more in junior school. One spud, one tablespoon of beans, or whatever, and a slice of meat what you can see through. Food is terrible. The first ten days I done all right 'cos there was a friend of mine in the kitchen. So I used to fill my tray up, and then when I got to him, he'd have another tray waiting, and he'd just throw that on as well. So I'd have twice as much as anybody else. The people in there are just starving. I lost one and a half stone by the time I got out. That's in six weeks. What they do to make sure people don't die, is give them loads of bread. You go there in the morning, and you get either one egg or one piece of bacon, and five or six bits of bread, and one piece of butter. So you can only butter one piece! I used to keep every bit of food I could get my hands on. If somebody left a piece of bread on their tray I'd have it.

--- Sliced bread?

--- White sliced bread. The bread they make there. It's not very nice. Plasticky. Big holes in. It's cheaper to make it than to buy it.

--- If you were a vegetarian, would they give you a vegetarian diet?

--- Yes, but it's curry every day! Everything that's left over they keep, and they make a shepherd's pie with it which you get at night. Shepherd's pie with fish in, bits of bread, spaghetti, curry...



--- Can you have a drink whenever you want it?

--- Water. That's if you can get near a tap. For the first week, you're always bursting to go to the toilet, and you're always dying of thirst. Once you've been there a while, you think to yourself, 'In about an hour's time, I'm going to be dying of thirst. So what you do is drink a gallon of water now that you've got the chance. So you've got to get to the toilet when you don't want to. It's not easy! Sometimes I used to stand there, trying to go to the toilet for about fifteen minutes.

--- They do give you a bucket in your room?

--- Yeah, you get a potty.

--- So slopping out your room includes carrying that somewhere and emptying it?

--- Yes.

--- Is it very far?

--- About fifty cells down the corridor. You can't go into your cell at night, shit in your pot, then leave it there till the next morning. You'd just stink the whole room out. It's just not on. Most people, what they do is shit in the potty and then throw it out the window. So you get shit all over the place. But there's no need for that, 'cos they should just let them out when they need to go.

--- Do the windows open?

--- About five, six inches. The window is made of triangular bits of metal, and bits of plastic glass, what you can't even see out of. The windows are made so you can only see straight out. You can't see beside you at all. The only way you can see sideways is by sticking a mirror outside the window and looking in the mirror.

--- Any curtains in the window?

--- No. Not allowed to have curtains. I put one of my blankets up on my window. I got hell for that.

--- Why?

--- Don't know. You're not allowed to ask why!

--- What about searches?

--- They search you three times every day. They inspect the cell every day as well. If there's one thing wrong with it then instead of having association at night, you'll be in your cell cleaning it.

--- Are you allowed to make any alterations to the layout of the cell?

--- You're not allowed to touch a thing. You're allowed to put up pictures so long as it's not more than one on each wall.

--- How big is the cell?

--- Eight by twelve? You can't get two beds in it lengthways. I tried it and you just can't do it.

--- Was your cell a small one?

--- Same size as everybody else's. While I was in there, I had three different people in my cell. The first day I was in there I was on my own.

--- What did you do in your cell?

--- Lie down on the bed. Sit up in the window. Read a piece of a book. Or you could write if you could get a pen. Getting a pen in there is a two week job. You've got to search the whole prison for somebody that'll lend you one. Then you've got to set it up so that when you meet he can give it to you.

--- What could you see from the window?

--- Outside the window was the next wing. Just a wall and loads of bars on it.

--- Any trees?

--- No. You could hardly see the sky.

--- Did you see any plants of any nature while you were in there?!

--- There was a fish tank with tropical fish in, at the bottom of the corridor! I can't remember any plants.

--- What about at exercise?

--- For exercise you had to walk around this yard in a circle. You'd see a bit of grass on the side. Now and again you'd see a pigeon fly over. You couldn't see over the wall. The wall's about 22 feet.

--- Is there just the wall there, or is there an inner fence?

--- Well, you've got the level of the ground that you're standing on, then that drops down about six feet down a bank, then you've got the wall. So you've just got no chance of getting over it!

--- That's the one with the round thing on top?

--- Yes, that's an alarm. As soon as anything touches that the alarm goes off.

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GOING OUT!

MONDAY 15 AUGUST

- The Mill, Sonning Bodies 8pm £9.90-11.90 Mat 2pm £6.90 To Sept 3rd. Price includes meal.
- Bull Hotel, Nettlebed Folk Club 8ish free.
- South Hill Park, Bracknell The Dark Crystal 2.30+7.30 £1.90+ concessions Kids/accompanied adults 75p To 22nd
- Watermill Theatre, Bagnor, nr Newbury Snoopy 7.30, mat on 20th at 4pm. Gala on 27th at 6pm £? To 27th
- Silks, Bath Road, Thatcham Against the Grain II 8-1 £2

TUESDAY 16 AUGUST

- Fiv's has closed for redecoration. Will open again early September but is probably being pushed upmarket so very doubtful if there will be bands on.
- Tudor Arms Gray Disco 8ish free
- Treats, Kings Road Rebels disco 8-late £2 (don't know what Treats or Rebels is like but there are lots of posters up)

WEDNESDAY 17

- ABC, Friar St King Creole + Girls, Girls, Girls (Elvis P) 2.30+6.30pm £?

THURSDAY 18

- Hexagon Mr Corky & Mr Balloon 10.30am, free Kids entertainment
- " Further Adventures of Corky & Balloon free 3pm
- Target After Dark 8ish £1
- Angies, Milton Rd, Wokingham Ground Zero 9-late £1-2

FRIDAY 19

- Hexagon Toni Arthur's Music Box 10.30+2.30 £1, Kids 75p. Also on 20th
- Kings Meadow Reading Show most of day £1.50 OAPS 75p, Kids 50p. To 21st
- Tudor Arms Gray Disco 8ish free
- Central Club, London St Youth's dance 11-17 yrs 8-11ish 50p
- Caribbean Club, London St Forward Sound 8-late £2
- SHP The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes Smarter Brother 11pm £1.90+conc. Also 20th
- Angies Grisha Girls £1-2 9-late

SATURDAY 20

- Target Eleventh Hour 8ish free
- Caribbean Club Beachwear Disco 9.30-late £1.50
- Central Club Dance 8-late £2.50
- Angies The West 9-late £1/2

SUNDAY 21

- Forbury Gardens Salvation Army Band 3pm free
- Treats, Kings Rd Jive Dive 8-late £1.50 (very good 'I'm told)
- Allied Arms, The Butts Readifolk 8ish free
- SHP Cumberland Giants 12.30pm free
- Angies Larry Miller Band 9-late £1-2

MONDAY 22

- Bull Hotel, Nettlebed Folk Club 8ish free

TUESDAY 23

- Tudor Arms Gray Disco 8ish free
- Treats 'Rebels' 8-late £2
- Art Gallery, Blagrove St Dusseldorf Exchange Part Two 10-5.30 free. To 17 Sept
- SHP Spiderman strikes back 2.30 £1.90, Kids/accompanied adults 75p. To 28th
- " Sophie's Choice £1.90+conc. To 28th

THURSDAY 25

- Target Larry Miller Band 8ish £1.50
- Angies GT Moore + the Outsiders 9-late £1-2

FRIDAY 26

- Richfield Ave Reading Festival Lots of bands and drunks all weekend. Details in music press. Go to Notting Hill Carnival instead.
- Tudor Arms Gray Disco 8ish free
- Caribbean Club Expresso Bongo 9.30-late £1-2
- Central Club Dance 8-late £?
- SHP The Last Waltz 11pm £1.90+conc. Also 27th
- Angies John Spencer Band 9-late £1-2

SATURDAY 27

- Caribbean Club Hurricane Force Steel Band 8-late £2.50
- Target Dynamo Joe 8ish free
- SHP Johnny & Barbara Ley 12.30pm free (comedy trampolines)
- Angies Illusions 9-late £1-2

SUNDAY 28

- Forbury Gardens Pangbourne & District Steel Band 3pm free
- Treats 'Jive Dive' 8-late £1.50
- Allied Arms Readifolk 8ish free
- SHP Croquet competition & Look Alike competition 12 onwards, free
- Angies Juvenessence 9-late £1-2

MONDAY 29

- SHP Spiderman - The Dragon's Challenge 2.30 Kids/accompanied adults 75p. Unaccompanied £1.90 To 4th
- SHP Los me sombreros free, music/comedy 7.30
- SHP The Draughtsman's Contract £1.90+conc. To 1st

TUESDAY 30

- Treats 'Rebels' 8-late £2
- Tudor Arms Gray Disco 8ish free

WEDNESDAY 31

- Hexagon The Mighty Clouds of Joy 7.30 £2.50/3.50 (should be good)

THURSDAY 1

- Target Wild Willy Barrett 8ish free

FRIDAY 2

- Hexagon Van Morrison 7.30ish £7.50-£9
- Tudor Arms Gray Disco 8ish free
- Central Club Youth's Dance (11-17 yrs) 8-11ish 50p
- Caribbean Club Casa Casino 9.30-late £1.50

SATURDAY 3

- Hexagon GT Moore & the Outsiders 12.15 free
- " Afrohair & Fashion Show 12 noon. Stalls, music, etc. Free
- " Michael Romeo 7ish £4.50
- Target Libra 8ish free
- Bulmershe School, Woodley Spotlight Revue (for Sue Ryder) 7.15 £2

SUNDAY 4

- Forbury Gardens East Woodley Silver Band 3pm free
- Treats 'Jive Dive' 8-late £1.50
- Allied Arms Readifolk 8ish free

See also details and dates for FESTIVALS which are on the end of the Events Guide

COMPACT THEATRE GROUP

Workshop session on 7, 8, 9 September 12am at Reading Centre for the Unemployed (to be continued in October)

ALSO

Performance by Compact October 28 at R.C.U. 12am. Be there!



OUR GREATEST ORNAMENT



'This new prison is from every side the most conspicuous building, and, architecturally, by far the greatest ornament to the town.' So the 'Illustrated London News' in 1944 - ah, if they could see it now, hiding behind its majestic barrel-topped outer wall and electrically operated sliding doors! I do hope it's a listed building - be a crime to knock it down, wouldn't it?

Unlike most of the other landmarks of Reading (all those office blocks, the Inner Distribution Road, Shire Hall... - the list is endless) the prison is known and hated not just by us, but literally throughout the world. And not for its architecture either.

How so? Because of Oscar Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol', published in 1898 under his prison name C3.3. Wilde spent most of his two-year sentence in Reading - and it's nothing to be proud of.

Wilde's story may be familiar, but never mind. The lion of a Society he detested, he was accused by the Marquis of Queensbury, father of Wilde's lover, of 'posing as a Sodomite' (the meaning seems as confused as the spelling), and - God only knows why - Wilde prosecuted him for libel. Queensbury raked up a good deal of sordid detail about Wilde's private life; as a result he was acquitted of libel and Wilde was arrested for gross indecency. The jury failed to agree a verdict; at the re-trial Wilde got the maximum two years hard labour and the judge's opinion that this was 'totally inadequate'. Meanwhile, Wilde was bankrupted and his house ransacked by a mob (one notes the level of awareness shown in more recent riots, directed against the oppressors rather than their victims). Former friend's burnt his letters; the great painter Frith wrote to the owner of one of his paintings to offer to erase Wilde from it, free of charge.

'All prisoners are political', yes, and of course any number of people have suffered more in the way of 'justice' than Wilde. Still, let's give honour where it is due, and while laying our wreath the cell-door of the Unknown Prisoner, spare a flower (a green carnation for choice) for this martyr, however well-known, for 'the love that dare not speak its name'.

'In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame...'

They have, I understand, got rid of the lime pit. They don't even execute people any more in Reading. So we sit back and read Wilde's ballad in complacent certain certainty that 'we've changed all that'. Why, if Wilde

had done one more year he would have got the benefit of the 1893 Prison Act!! (This, if you're interested, reduced the number of offences punishable by flogging. All right, so they still beat people to death in prisons occasionally - but at least they're not allowed to anymore...) The history of prisons is in fact nothing but a history of 'reforms', everyone who has ever had anything to do with them oozes liberal sentiment and humanitarian concern. Barbarism hides behind a mask of civilisation. Re-opening Reading Gaol in 1946 fitted perfectly with the rest of the Post-war Labour Government's 'Welfare State' programme, the schools, the hospitals, the atom bombs...

The prisons were no less 'reformed' in Wilde's day than they are now. In 1868 public executions were abolished! In 1877 the prisons were nationalised!! Reforms do not do away with cruelty but institutionalise it. Wilde understood perfectly: 'The people who uphold the systems have excellent intentions. Those who carry it out are humane in intention too. Responsibility is shifted onto the disciplinary regulations. It is supposed that because a thing is a rule, it is right.'

After his release he wrote articles on prison life and the treatment given to child prisoners; but the author of 'The Soul of Man under Socialism' was no reformist: 'A community is infinitely more brutalised by the habitual employment of punishment than it is by the occasional occurrence of crime.' In so far as 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' is propaganda, its target is not just 'capital punishment' but all punishments and all prisons:

I know not whether Laws be right
Or whether Laws be wrong;
All that we know who lie in gaol
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law
That men have made for Man
Since Man first took his brother's life
And the sad world began,
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff
With a most evil fan.

This too I know - and wise it were
If each could know the same -
That every prison that men build
Is built with bricks of shame,
And bound with bars lest Christ should see
How men their brothers maim.

- What fire precautions did they have?
- There are fire hoses locked up in cupboards on the wall.
- Were there notices to tell you what to do in case of fire?
- No. Just panic, I suppose.
- Did they have any emergency exits?!
- The fire escapes were the doors that you use every

day. Every door had a gate behind it. You had a big wooden door, with bars in the window, then you'd open that and find another gate, made of 1" steel rods.

- What were these doors to?
- To the corridors, the wings. The cell door was a big steel one, made out of $3\frac{1}{2}$ " steel -
- Just in case you got hold of a blow-torch!
- - with a little slit for the glass window what they could look in through. On the outside it's got a flap, so you can't look out of the cell. Once you're in there all you can look at is the wall.
- What about lights? Can you have a light on when you want it?
- There's a bright light, what you can put on from inside the cell, and a dim light you can only put on from outside the cell. The dim light is just the same as an ordinary light. The bright light is pretty bright - you look at the wall and you're blinded. Tube lights, both mounted in one light box. In the morning they come and put the light on, and at night they turn it off.

--- How high is the room?

--- Ten feet. The ceiling's not flat, it's round. It used to remind me of a loaf of bread. Exactly the same shape. If you stand on top of a bunk bed you can't reach the light.

--- What furniture do you have in your room?

--- One chair, one desk, one bed per person. If there's three of you in there it's a pretty tight squeeze. You can't get two desks in so they're comfortable there. The chair's got to fit between the two beds so you can get anywhere near the desk. And you're not allowed to have anything against the wall that's got the window in it. You open the door, and you've got about two square feet of standing room.



--- What about rules?

--- You're not allowed to have your hands in your pockets. When you walk down a corridor you're not allowed to walk in the middle. All along the edge of the corridor you've got grey tiles, about 18" wide. In the middle it's all white tiles. And you're not allowed to put your foot on a white tile. So when you come to the middle where all the wings meet, there's a kind of a hallway, which is quite big, and there are all these people just walking around the edge!

--- What happens if you tread on a white tile?

--- You just get a bollocking. Shouted at and threatened. If you're threatened and you don't creep, get on your knees and say sorry, then they send you down the block for the day.

--- What's the block?

--- Punishment room. It's a padded cell, with cardboard table, cardboard chair. No window. You're just locked up there. When you come out you don't know what time it is, day or night even. You just lose track of everything. You don't get no food neither. Unless you're in for more than a day, then they give you a few scraps. You can be sent there for fighting or for answering a screw back, or loads of silly things. Shouting out of your window. Or selling something. If like you ask one of the Remands for a fag - they've got loads of fags 'cos they get a visit every day - and you get caught asking, you get nicked for it. If you get nicked, you've got to go in front of the Governor, and then he knocks days off your remission. Or he makes you work for two weeks without any money.

--- Do people tell tales on each other?

--- There's quite a lot of that.

--- Do people who tell tales get any reward?

--- Well, if you creep then you get on better with the screws and they let you out when you want. Maybe give you fags now and again. Just the same as when you're at school. The little child what's creeping up the screw's arse.

--- Are you given a copy of the prison regulations, or anything like that?

--- Your rights, and what you can have? I think there was only one page in the book.

--- Did you ever meet the Governor?

--- I met him three times. He was just a little old man what used to sit behind his desk and shout at you.

--- Did he listen to what you had to say?

--- He'd listen, but he'd push you aside. Everybody meets the Governor when they first go in there. You get locked up at night, and next morning you get a note stuck in your door, 'Stay in your cell.' Later on a screw comes along and takes you to the Governor. He gives you a job, tells you the rules, and when your release date is.



--- What about visits?

--- The Remands get visits every day, and they get food and fags brought in. Convicted, they get visits once a month. Every two weeks if you're under 21, a YP (Young Prisoner). You're not allowed to have anything brought in - no fags, no food, no money. You get a Visiting Order, a and you send it to whoever you want to have visiting you. They come in whenever they want, any day between 1 and 3, and hand it in, and they go and get you. A visit lasts about 15, 20 minutes.

--- Can you see a solicitor whenever you want?

--- He can see you whenever you want, but you can't get in touch with him! You can put down for a special visit. That takes you about a week.

--- Do you get mail?

--- Yes. You get as much as you like sent in. And one letter a week to send out. If you want any more you've got to pay for them. 15p for a piece of paper and an envelope.

--- Do they read your mail?

--- Yeah. All your letters are opened and read before you get them. If there's anything in them that they don't think you should read, then you don't get the letter.

— Did that happen to you?

— No, I don't think so. I don't know - I might have got a letter that I've never seen.

— What about books?

— There's a library there. YPs had a cupboard with about 50 books in. I read one, got to the end, and the last four pages weren't there. So I gave up that idea. If you're into reading a little bit of each book, then fair enough!

— What if you want to see the doctor?

— You ring the bell in your cell and say you're not well. They say to you, "We haven't got time now. Tomorrow morning, tell your landing officer about it. One bloke was looked up with someone who was ill and needed a doctor. He was ringing the bell for hours, but they just ignored it. He had hepatitis! He was later on put down the hospital wing on his own, solitary confinement 24 hours a day.

— Can you imagine it doing anybody any good, being in prison?

— Well, for people in there for TDAs (taking and driving away), and YPs, it does them no good at all. Once you're in there it's just good fun. People just wander around giving each other a load of bullshit. One bloke was telling me he got chased over a mountain by a helicopter, with coppers in the helicopter trying to shoot him. They're just living in a dream: "Oh, when I get out I'm going to do even more." That sort of thing.

— "I'm a real man now I'm in prison..."

— Yeah, right. It's just a load of shit. Inside, they must feel the same as I do. But they just won't show it.

— Did you show how you felt about it?

— Not really, because I didn't talk to anyone.

— Did they give you any hassle, for not boasting and bullshitting?

— No, nobody gave me no hassle.

— Do the prisoners treat each other fairly?

— Yes. Apart from the YPs, who don't treat nothing fair. They're just a bunch of idiots. The only time I used to be in with the others is at work. And they were quite fair, they'd lend you baecy. If you didn't have a tag, they'd give you one even if it was their last one.

— That's the older prisoners?

— Yeah. Most of the YPs are just idiots.

— You must have been pretty lonely there, if you didn't talk to people.

— I used to be... pretty lonely. But I used to get on all right. Once you've kind of settled in there, know what's going on...

— How long does it take you to settle in?

— A few days. I used to wake up every morning and think, "Fucking hell, I'm still here." And go to bed wishing that in the morning you'd wake up and not be there. But it doesn't happen.

— You always knew how long you had to go?

— Yes, right. You count the days. If you count the days it gets worse, because you're sitting there going, "I've been here two days, and there's thirty to go..."

— Could you cope with prison again?

— I'd know what I'd be heading for. Be ready for it.

— Is prison something to be avoided at all costs?

— It's to be avoided. The point is, it doesn't solve the problem. It doesn't do you anything, at all.

— Could anyone come out of prison a better person than they went in?

— No. No chance. Because once you're in, you meet a lot of people there, and every one of them's done something wrong. If you go around and talk to people, you just learn so much about crime! Not the YPs, there's nothing to learn from that lot, all they do is go out, steal a car, ride it about and then dump it. But people that are in for smuggling drugs, say. You can learn how to do it, why they got caught. Or burglaries, you can learn so much about burgling a house. There's loads of ways of doing it! To the people that are putting you in there, it's not worth putting you in there! If they're trying to make you better. It just goes to prove that they don't give a fuck about anybody apart from themselves. "We don't want him on the street, so we'll put him away." That's the way it works, I suppose. They're just a bunch of arseholes.

— What do you think was the original point of having prisons?

— Well. I was told you're sent to prison for your own good...

— Do you think depriving people of their liberty actually makes people think?

— No. It just makes people more angry. Most of them.

— Did you meet anyone who thought that, because they'd been inside, they would not do whatever they did again?

— Yes. The other day I saw him down in Newbury police station waiting to go to prison. He's back in there now.

— Were a lot of them people who'd been in there before?

— There's a bloke in there, who said to me, "Oh, it's not too bad," he says. We were talking about what life we'd had - he's an old bloke, about fifty. And he said, "In the last ten years, I've spent two years out. I'd rather be in here. There's nothing out there, so you might as well stay here. At least you get food in here." I just couldn't believe it. He enjoyed it in there!

NIGHT NURSING SERVICE

Reading Health Watch has written to the local Health Authority asking for details of the cutbacks in the night nursing service in Reading described by Luke & Florence N. in the last issue and when we get their reply hope to get together with all interested groups to campaign for the service to be restored.

Luke & Flo. are quite right about efficiency. A lot of the highly publicised increases in NHS spending have actually been the Government telling the service that more can be spent in one area if it is "found" by less being spent somewhere else. And as more is always wanted for big high tech. projects - new surgical techniques and new hospitals - the somewhere else that suffers tends to be these individual and less glamorous services - nursing, chiropody, speech therapy, physiotherapy - that are about people caring for people. Here "savings" can be made easily and their effect is only seen by the individual patient, such as those Luke & Flo. describe, who suddenly finds the quality of his or her life grossly damaged but is rarely in a position to do anything about it.

Reading Health Watch hopes to help these patients by publicising all the cuts it can, forcing the Health Authority to explain and justify them, and putting all the pressure it can muster on the Authority to provide an adequate service. Any more information about cuts and suggestions about action very welcome; address is c/o VSC, 38 Caversham Road (tel: 54123).

Pete Ruhemann (Acting Secretary)

EVENTS

Tues 16

Peace Pledge Picnic Bring Vegan/vegetarian food, ideas and energy - possible new games - to Caversham Court (gate in wall on left hand side just past the Griffin), Caversham

Thur 18

Nuclear Transport West Reading CND, 19 Hollins Walk, Tilehurst. 8pm

Fri 19

Reading Show till Sunday, King's Meadow. £1.50 in advance, more on the gate

Sat 20

ROAR leafletting, Broad Street/Smelly Alley. 10am till noonish. (Weekend of activity on Porton Down research station)

Sun 21

Open Garden, Plant Science Laboratories Botanical Gardens, Reading University, Whiteknights. 2.00pm-6pm. Admission 50p, accompanied children free. (in fact this place is always open. If you go any other day, you won't have to pay). The neighbouring woods are worth a wander.

Sat 27

Round Reading Cruises, run by the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust. Depart from Chestnut Walk at 10.30, 11.30, 2.30 and 3.30. Fare 90p adults, 50p children (longer trips to and beyond Burghfield on Sunday and Monday).

Sun 28

Open Garden, Shinfield Grange, Reading University, Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, Cutbush Lane, Shinfield, Reading. 2.00-6.00pm. Admission 50p; OAPs and children under 16, 20p.

Thurs 1 Sept

First of the month meeting for all interested at the Women's Centre. See regulars.

Ecology Party National Conference (till 4th) at Malvern (nice place). Details from Maria, 663195.

Sat 3

SWAG paper collection : see regulars

FOE paper collection : door to door in Gt Knolly Street area. Meet 11am at George St chippy.

Art Exhibition Review of work by the Reading Borough Art Groups, St Mary's Centre, Chain Street, 10am-5pm. For Details ring 862189.

Mon 5

Closing date for objecting to Reading Borough Council about an application for a licence for a sex shop at 328 Oxford Road to be given to Jeremy Bayley of Two-Ways, Oak End Way, Padworth.

BANC Women's Group: see regulars

Vulcanicity in the Azores, lecture by Julian Maund, Room 21, Department of Geology, Reading University Whiteknights, at 7.30

Tues 6

Can anyone be truly 100% Vegan? New discussion group meeting at 38 Long Barn Lane. Time unknown. Try Liz, 581805 for details.

ROAR: see regulars

Fri 9

Another Consciousness for a New Age, talk by Johann Qwanier (editor of New Humanity Journal) at St Marys House, Chain St, 50p, 7.30pm 'This beautiful little planet is not coming to an untimely end...creative people of the world unite'.

Sat 10

Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists Trust, walk along the Ridgeway to look at downland flowers, grasses and butterflies. Meet 2.30 at White Horse Hill car park (OS grid reference 296862)

October 1 & 2

Armageddon '83, Hexagon. 'A day's entertainment for the whole family'. Sick, sick, sick!

FESTIVALS

Aug 14-20 Stoneleigh Free Fest, Stoneleigh, Coventry. Ancient Celtic site.

Aug 12-13 Fairport Convention Reunion. Cropredy, Banbury, Oxon. Tickets £10 from PO Box 37, Banbury.

Aug 15-27 Davidstow Free Fest, Heads of the Rivers, Camelford, Cornwall. Bodmin Moor.

Aug 24-31 Cissbury Ring Free Fest, nr Worthing and Brighton.

Aug 25-29 Welsh Green Gathering Festivals and Fayre, Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan. Camping, eco minded. Details Julie Bayliss, 14 Helen's Rd, Neath, West Glam.

Aug 27-9 Notting Hill Carnival, London

Sep 2-5 Solsbury Hill Honey Bears Picnic, off London Rd, Bath Avon

Sep 3-5 Leamington Cosmic Gathering, Spa Gardens, Leamington, Warks

Sep 5-30 Psilocybin Magic Mushrooms Free Festival Tach Wood, Hay Bluff, Mountain Rd, Hay-on-Wye, Black Mountains, North Wales. Amazing mountain top wilderness. Nature lovers (NO dogs please - too many dead sheep last year)

Sep 11 Love-in, Hyde Park

Sep 9-11 Otmoor Protest Festival and Fayre (against planned motorway through one of the oldest common moors in England, rare wildlife endangered) legal site of 30 acres, music, theatre. Friends of the Earth and Conservation Soc. Details Wheatley 808677 2679. £5

Oct 7-9 Nottingham Goose Fair

HOUSEHOLD HINT

Are your oven shelves as grotty as mine were? Try soaking them for 5 minutes in a sinkful of very hot water plus a handful of washing soda. Magic!

EVENTS CONTINUED ..



REGULARS

Anarchists every Monday 8pm. Write to Box 19, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St for details.

Ecology Party two Mondays per month 8pm. Ring Maria 663195 for details

BANC Women's Group 1st Monday of month 8pm, Women's Centre, Abbey Street

ROAR (Reading Organisation for Animal Rights) 1st Tuesday of the month 8pm. The Crown, Crown St. See display in Acorn at present

Socialists Workers' Party every Wed 8pm. Red Lion, bottom of Southampton St

Amnesty second Tues of month, 8pm. St Mary's Centre by the church in the Butts

Women's Centre First of the month meeting on the first of the month 8pm. Open to all interested women Women's Centre, basement of Old Shire Hall, Abbey St

Opening times: Tues 10.30 - 2
Sat 12.00 - 4

Also free pregnancy testing Tues 7-9pm. Bring urine sample from first pee of the day.

Girls' club every 3rd Saturday, 2.30-4.30. Disco and activities for ages 9-12

Music Club every second Sat, 11am-12

Reading Gay Switchboard ring 597269 between 8am and 10 Tuesdays and Friday evenings

Your rights East Reading Rights Group stall outside the church at Cemetery Junction. Every Sat 11am-1pm

SWAG (charity paper collection) Skips at Superkey, Palmer park, Northumberland Ave, St Martin's Precinct, Recreation Road, Gt Knolly's St. 8.30-12.30pm every first Sat of month

Central Club, bottom of London St. Fridays 10.30-4pm creche. 5pm 'Uprising' a new black women's support group. Come and tell us what you'd like to do, what you'd like to see and what you're interested in.

Community Action Group every 2nd Weds, 8pm, Fairview Community Centre at the far end of George St. All welcome to come along and discuss ideas or offer voluntary help on local projects. Mutual aid scheme, wholefoods co-op, new games sessions.

City Farm After the success of the Open Day, work is now starting on the site (clearance mainly). Ring Alan on 873201 if you're interested in it. Organisational meetings continue, Weds, 7.30pm, South Reading Community Centre, Northumberland Ave

Mini-market stalls of handicrafts, fruit, vegetables, flowers, plants, cakes, etc organised by Women's Institute, St Mary's Church House, St Mary's Butts, 9am-1pm every Thursday

RED RAG the next issue is 3 weeks away

Planning meeting and copy deadline Thur 1 Sep, 8pm
Typing, Thursday evening and Fri 2
Layout and paste up, Sat 3
Printing, Sat evening
Folding and labelling, Sunday morning
Distribution, Sunday afternoon

Help always wanted and much appreciated. Ring 666681 with offers of help for next issue and to find out where it's all happening.

WEA AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Rough outline only; further details later

13 Sept: talk by Keith Jerome on The Life and Times of Harry Qulech'. Venue unfixed but probably Hungerford. 7.30pm

Crisis in Capitalism 8 week course starting Monday 10 October, 7.30-9.30, Centre for the Unemployed. Probably 7 guest speakers

26 Oct: Teach-in 'Workers Music'. Centre for the Unemployed, 7.30pm. First in three part linked programme, others being Workers literature and Workers Film. Details from Centre for the Unemployed.

WOMEN'S SECTION

All dates yet to be confirmed.

Women's Studies, 10 weeks, Women's Centre

28 Sept: Teach-in - Coping with stress. Women's Centre. Oxford Therapy Centre hopefully running this.

Day teach-in on Women's Defence. Date unfixed, probably December

Women's Research Workshop, discussion and practical 1st October, 7.30-9.30 then weekly. Theme is Women and Work in Reading. See letter elsewhere

Women's Creative Writing Workshop From Tues 20 Sept for 12 weeks. £6.00

POETRY * POETRY * POETRY

We're not very keen on printing poems as there's another paper based in Reading which deals only with this, and because our funds are too limited to duplicate their efforts. Could the person who sent in the poem beginning 'The world is full of sadness' get in touch via Acorn Bookshop if they want us to send it on to the poetry paper.

WHOLEFOODS

Many readers may remember "Free Life Foods". It has now moved to Reading and is renamed. Spot the price list is nearby.

Local inhabitants can expect a much improved service, but there are a few 'teething' problems at the moment: When will I pass my driving test?; When will we complete the range of stock listed? etc....But we are still feeding people!!

My name is Mike - please 'phone me on Reading 588459 (anytime) if you need anything. Please feel free to make suggestions for additions to the stock. etc. ▶ ▶ ▶

CROSS WORDS

KNOCKING THE KNOCKERS

Whilst workers sweltered and others sunbathed in the July heat local life continued. I knocked on a few doors

Three old age pensioners inexplicably found themselves with arrears on their rent cards. It worried them sick. No-one had told them why. Eventually the reasons were tracked down. Errors by the DHSS in converting to the new Housing Benefit Scheme. The Council's Housing Department was very fond once the situation was reported. Nevertheless three people had suffered needlessly because of the errors and impersonality of this new bureaucratic system.

A woman found herself homeless - but not entitled to Council accommodation. The reasons angered me. She is not yet sixty and her ex-husband is over 60. The tenancy of the Council flat had been awarded to the man because he was deemed to be an aged person. So, from a small comfortable home she was left with nothing. An appeal to the Housing Management Sub-Committee was successful. She has now been allocated a tenancy.

The alleged incidents of child molestation received great attention in the local Press. All the evidence was from children and therefore not admissible in the Courts. The Police and Social Services said they could do nothing. So what is happening? Is an innocent man being victimised or are children in the future being put at risk? My view is that there are enough grounds for concern for the authorities to investigate the matter further. But how could so many young children go into somebody else's house so often without the parents knowing?

Two new community groups formed. The one in North Whitley received press attention. Meanwhile in Merton Road residents want to organise play schemes, youth clubs, socials etc.

One situation that my friends are dealing with:- A man who has had his leg amputated has been told he must wait till October for a ramp for his wheelchair. Cllr. Jewitt said that no disabled person would suffer by his freezing of the "disabled persons adaptations" budget. Who is the man kidding?

Back to Housing Benefits. A man who has been retired for a number of years tried for weeks to find out if he was entitled to any. Eventually he was sent to the mortgage department. The Council suggested he should buy his house

These examples show where changes in the law, policies and organisation are needed. But I mention them for a second reason - as part of the debate between Greg and his opponents. It's all very well to sit around talking about oppression and opting out of it. Many people are feeling the effects of life's injustices NOW. They don't have the luxury of opting out. Often people turn to their local representatives, Labour Councillors, those participants in conventional community politics! Sometimes we are successful; sometimes not. In any case we do our bit to change things - and help a lot of people on the way. That is why I have little time for the do-nothing knockers.

And so to our miserable friend Diogenes. Many a Labour Councillor has been scratched by his indiscriminate pen. I'm still not sure about Diogenes. Once he'd learned to get the names of the Councillors and their political parties right he did show signs of caring about people and communities. But in the last issue of Red Rag he really did live up to his name. The side-slip at the residents of "Bison" dwellings surprised me. When community action does take place that too is to be ridiculed it seems. Perhaps he doesn't care about communities after all. Or perhaps a self-gratifying ambition to display the sardonic talents of his pen has taken over. We shall see. In the meantime let me assure him that under the new order I find Council meetings as painful as he would have us believe he does. Thank goodness it's only a small part of a Labour Councillor's political activity.

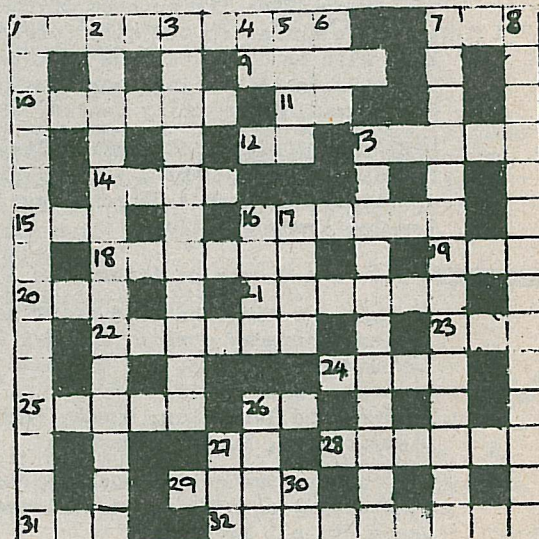
Mike Orton

ACROSS

1. Commercial Union gets mixed up in falls? Trouble in South America! (9)
7. Not? Pulling it backwards! (3)
9. Horrible gre - if you're a giant! (4)
10. Bee leaves bun - Trotsky leaves lemonade - its not put together yet (6)
11. 30 downs the other way in France (2)
12. Next to cricket extra - no point really (2)
13. As far as the sun - till inside in fact (5)
14. Graces - 'e's got 'emon 'is 'ead! (4)
15. Arise confused learner from the great philosopher - you are but a child (3)
16. Sometimes pert sounding - but only in the odd bursts (6)
18. Big wind round the gee-gee; or just a lot of geese maybe (6)
19. Ugh! Leave the plough alone. But where's Lebanon without them? (1,1,1)
20. Ban from the pub (3)
21. Does the rat all, unwell? There's a way through here (1,5)
22. He then dived in; finding the salad chicory inside (6)
23. Nix! 'e left, crazed, from the bar (3)
24. Thin, confused, and only just a mention (4)
25. Three for 32 across, or you could dress up to them! (5)
26. No tea with a hat? Just have a quick laugh! (2)
27. Me? Not for some like that (2)
28. Moving to meat? Certainly its symbolic (1,5)
29. A drinking place has a point - even if it's a short and curly one! (4)
31. Dutch disease - its a rotter (3)
32. Nice plan nothing complicated for the penny man (9)

DOWN

1. Cream cakes can be good and bad at the same time (7,3,4)
2. Chap met manager in mix up at cruise missile base (4,2,8)
3. Commies? British Rail? Wrong ideas and force? Italian freedom fighters! (3,8)
4. The Queen from 9 across; depart (2)
5. Not a pretty picture this new learner guy! (4)
6. They exist - if the beginning is lost when exposed (3)
7. A nuclear physicist does it - experiments with halving a male cat (5,5,4)
8. New Lord or scourge of the unemployed, they both conquered England (6,2,6)
13. Not to true form - the united nations regarding a register I see (11)
16. Yugo, there's maybe no point in owned servants (4)
17. This boy's name has a favourite direction (4)
26. Harry's initial boo is mistaken by tramp (4)
27. Backward puss, without first scent; gets a mouthful of his drink (3)
30. The Spanish sound green (2)

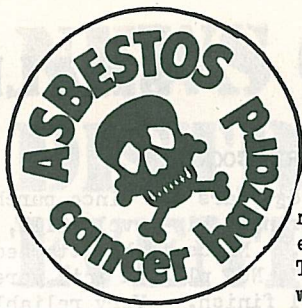


 * 4 MINUTE WARNING FANZINE No.5 *
 * NAKED, YOUTH IN ASIA, OMEGA TRIBE, BLACK *
 * EASTER, ALIEN SEX FIEND, THE MEMBRANES & *
 * MORE. *
 * Just 15p & A SAE FROM:- *
 * Steve, 41, Fifth Road, Newbury, *
 * Berkshire, RG14 6DN. *

10

 * Answers on page 96 in *
 * this issue... *

or try page 12



COVER UP

Remember the one about the Welsh textile workers who returned from holiday to find not only their jobs but their entire factory had disappeared. Remember too that mysterious Thursday (21st July) at the Hexagon when, for once, 'Mum' was quite definitely the word.

Well it seems the Borough Council are keen not to be left out from this 'Don't tell the peasants a sodding thing!' ideology.

One employee, clocking in for week-end overtime at the end of last month, was shocked to see a 'task force' of space-suited figures with breathing apparatus and monitoring equipment clambering around the office re-enacting the Seveso disaster- at least this was the first impression.

Further investigations have revealed that they are engaged in partly stripping and sealing the large amounts of grey asbestos used in the building's construction as lagging for pipes and lining of the ceiling voids.

Worried employees were last week assured by officials that the work was being done in advance of any deterioration of the asbestos and though the situation was being monitored closely there was no need for concern on health grounds. One seems to recall that they are saying something pretty similar about lead in petrol!

A member of the office administration assured enquirers that a memo would be circularised to staff as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. However as of today (11th Aug), some three weeks after the decision to stabilise the asbestos was taken, staff have not been done even this most elementary courtesy.

Is there some plot afoot, one wonders, to poison off the town hall's present incumbents? Judging by their performance to date this might not be an entirely bad thing. It could certainly explain such administrative aberrations as why it took the University's students nearly three months to get their rent rebates.

11/8/83.

TELL TALE TIT.

Currently we're needing some sheets of wood for constructing a dark room to improve our printing facilities - any offers? We're also looking out for freestanding display boards for the exhibitions of local groups. Anyone interested in having some space for a fortnight?

OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS RAID UPDATE

We've (finally) had some books returned by the Drug Squad which have not been 'deemed obscene' by the Director of Public Prosecutions. It's a random selection - Hurley but not Burroughs, Marijuana Medical Papers but not Marijuana Laws of the World, Growing the Hallucinogens but not Legal Highs. All the books on coffee and tobacco are back with us, and some comics. It was good to see them again (the books, not the police.) We've still not been charged, and there are still a lot of books to account for.

ACORN BOOKSHOP
17 CHATHAM ST
READING.

TEL 584425.

SAM, The Golden UB40

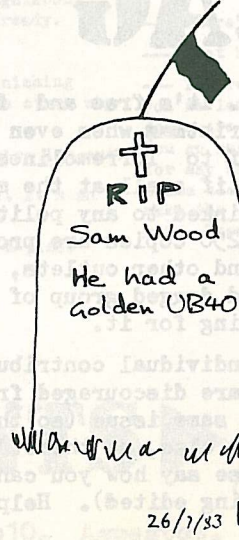


AND so our intrepid hero is kicked out of his house because he can not pay his rent.

11



So Sam has to sell his prized possession, a 1/16th of Rocky



23 March 83 DHA
Market Place
Reading.

Dear Mr Wood,
We feel unable to pay you supplementary benefit as your circumstances have now changed. You must complete another B1 and a B1 (Student).

Yours faithfully
A.B. Oltnek

26/7/83 HG

Dear Sir—?

As a Labour member of the Housing Committee, I wish to comment on the interview with Councillor Jewitt in the Evening Post and Reading Chronicle. Although I would never condone not paying rent, I can understand the reasons why there are large rent arrears. As a result of Conservative policies, many Council tenants are either in low-paid jobs, unemployed or existing on Supplementary benefit. Furthermore there have been over the last years, large increases in gas, electricity, food and rates, and it therefore brings to many people a choice between the need for the basics of life such as food and heating, or paying rent. Does Councillor Jewitt expect tenants to go hungry, cold and live miserable existences? Why doesn't he look at the problem at the beginning instead of frightening people? For example, when someone is a few weeks or months in arrears, make sure that they are notified and find out why this has happened and try to resolve the situation quickly by putting people in touch with outside bodies who could help or come to some arrangements where the arrears can be paid off over short periods of time.

Also if legal action is taken to those in arrears, one must remind Councillor Jewitt that it costs the Borough a great deal of money. Furthermore, if tenants have children, it is further expense to put them into bed and breakfast accommodation.

Also I must take up the issue regarding rent as mentioned in the interview. He states that rents are not that high, but in the past 4 years under a Con/Lib Council in Reading, and the orders of a Thatcher government, rents have risen over 100% in the Borough. How many tenant's wages have risen by 100%? It is obvious that Council tenants far from being subsidised, are themselves subsidising ratepayers at the expense of poor housing, high rents, few repairs and no new housing developments and now the threat of eviction if in arrears.

Yours faithfully
Maureen Lockey -Councillor Church Ward

Dear Red Rag

It is proposed to organise a Women's Research Workshop, on Women and Work in Reading, hopefully to start in October. The course will involve talks by guest speakers on such issues as Women and the Trade Unions, Women's Unwaged Work, Women and Childcare, etc. It will also involve finding out how to collect and use facts and figures on Women and Work, and give the opportunity to participate in individual or group projects. The intention is to equip people to find out about, and present facts on, aspects of women and work which are of concern to them and to use the information acquired to produce a booklet. If anyone is interested and would like to know more about the workshop, please contact Linda Peake on Reading 61831.

ELECTRIC COOKER

Only 8½ years use since purchased "refurbished". Four rings, hip-level grill, medium size oven, auto-timer. Needs to be attached to a 30-amp "cooker point", NOT plugged into yore 13-amp ring main. White enamel finish. Very reliable and has been cleaned (but I gave up on the spill tray). Reason for sale: we've just got gas and I hate electric cooking. New owner to fix collection from Caversham Heights and to make a sensible donation to Red Rag. 477073.

Wanted

More recruits for the Red Rag labelling job. It's easy and fun. I don't know, I'm just the typist. Also the events compiler wants to stop. Anyone who wants to take it over, tell Nick on 666681. He'll be glad to hear from you!

WANTED * WANTED * WANTED

A few people to look for a reasonably posh house for at least next academic year. Rent in the order of £20/week + bills. Contact HG on Reading 507626

WANTED

Home needed for woman and daughter in Reading. Very Urgent! Contact c/o Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St (tel: 584425)

WANTED

Calor gas heater. Cheap and friendly. Contact Liz on 584425/867955.

WANTED WANTED WANTED

Small fridge, second hand sewing machine, both working order. Contact Joan Lee on 86222 ex214

Sahara Asian Women's Centre

48 Eldon Terrace. Open from 1 August (from 9 onwards). Donations wanted, of furniture, books, stationery, kitchen things, play things, etc, etc. Phone 51158

Crossword Answers

ACROSS 1. Nicaragua 7. Tow 9. Ogre 10. Unmade 11. Le 12. By 13. Until 14. Airt 15. Tots 16. Spurts 18. Grapple 19. PLO 20. Bar 21. A trail 22. Endive 23. Inn 24. Hint 25. Nines 26. Ha 27. So 28. A totem 29. Pube 31. Elm 32. Policeman
DOWN 1. Naughty but nice 2. Camp at Greenham 3. Red Brigades 4. Go 5. Ugly 6. Are 7. Tests split atom 8. Willie or Norman 13. Unrealistic 16. Slav 17. Pete 26. Hobo 27. Sup 30. El

RED RAG

..... is Reading's only newspaper. It's free and fortnightly (except for August and Christmas when even committed politicians seem to slope off to Torremolinos) and is produced by a jolly sound (if small at the moment) group of people. It is not linked to any political organisation or the university. 1250 copies are produced; half go out through shops and other outlets, the rest distributed by a faithful and dogged group of individuals to the door of anyone asking for it.

Opinions expressed are those of individual contributors and the people in the collective are discouraged from making replies to articles in the same issue (so they're in the same situation as everybody else, so there!) Anyone is welcome to write (but please say how you can be contacted and whether you mind being edited). Help is always wanted, so is money.

MONEY MATTERS

We probably have enough money to pay for this issue thanks to a large donation and money raised at last week's Red Rag Jumble Sale. Unfortunately the proposed benefit at 5s bar is cancelled, but look out for another time another place. One of the reasons this issue is for three weeks is to save money; also the forthcoming alternative guide to Reading, apart from needing contributions and help (phone 666681 or 666324), will require about £100-150 or the guide won't become concrete. Money and cheques (payable to Red Rag) to Flat 7, 66 Wokingham Road or via collecting tins at Acorn, Pop Records or Lazer Records.
NB: Each copy of Red Rag which you receive costs about 10p to produce.



WHOLE LIFE FOODS

Reading 588459

Free delivery on the following wholefoods, chosen for quality + freedom from additives, preservatives & refining where possible. Orders taken by phone anytime (answerphone) - If what you want isn't listed here please ask as stock is continually expanding and we welcome new suggestions. Delivery in Reading anytime and other areas are easily catered for. Minimum order in some areas by negotiation. Free advice and seasonal recipe leaflets, personal, friendly and flexible service. All orders prepaid or c.o.d. - prices subject to variation (up or down) without notice. SEE YOU SOON.

Beans, peas, lentils

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|---------------------|------|-------|
| Azuki beans | 1 lb | 55 |
| Black kidney " | " | 36 |
| Red kidney " | " | 36 |
| Haricot " | " | 28 |
| Mung " | " | 33 |
| Soya " | " | 23 |
| British field " | " | 19 |
| Black eye " | " | 36 |
| Whole brown lentils | " | 37 |
| green " | " | 30 |
| red " | " | 29 |
| chick peas | " | 30 |
| soup mix | " | 29 |

Seeds, grains

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|----------------------|------|-------|
| Sesame | 1 lb | 60 |
| Sunflower | " | 63 |
| Bulgar | " | 32 |
| Barley | " | 17 |
| Long grain rice | " | 28 |
| short grain rice | " | 27 |
| Basmati rice | " | 60 |
| Semolina (w/wheat) " | " | 22 |

Nuts

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|------------------|------|-------|
| Almonds | 1 lb | 1.40 |
| Brazils whole | " | 1.90 |
| Brazils broken | " | 1.70 |
| cashews (pieces) | " | 1.40 |
| coconut | " | 60 |
| Hazels | " | 1.30 |
| Walnuts | " | 1.70 |
| mixed nuts | " | 1.65 |
| peanuts | " | 44 |

Dried fruits

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|--------------------------|------|-------|
| Apricots whole | 1 lb | 1.45 |
| currants | " | 45 |
| Raisins red | " | 48 |
| Raisins black | " | 50 |
| Lexia raisins | " | 65 |
| Sultanas | " | 52 |
| Dates, pitted | " | 70 |
| Figs, whole | " | 44 |
| Pear halves | " | 1.45 |
| Pineapple rings | " | 1.45 |
| Prunes | " | 75 |
| Banana chips (honey dip) | " | 72 |

cereals

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|-------------------|----------|-------|
| Continental müsli | 1 lb | 41 |
| Jordans crunchy | " | 45 |
| F. Plan Hi-Fibre | 1 lb 6oz | 1.12 |
| wheatgerm | 1 lb | 30 |
| Rolled oats | " | 19 |
| Jumbo oats | " | 20 |
| Oatmeal (medium) | " | 26 |
| Bran | " | 17 |

flours

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| Mapledurham 100% | 1 1/2 lb | 53 |
| Mapledurham 88% | " | 50 |
| Organic stoneground 100% | " | 57 |
| Malt flour | " | 65 |
| Rye flour | " | 58 |

Honey

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|----------------------|-----|-------|
| Chinese set | 11b | 70 |
| Bellize forest | " | 75 |
| Caribbean wildflower | " | 85 |
| Malt extract | " | 55 |

Jams

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|----------------------|------|-------|
| Oberon Plum | 11b | 49 |
| Oberon apricot | " | 49 |
| Oberon blackcurrant | " | 49 |
| Oberon strawberry | " | 49 |
| Tahini light or dark | 350g | 84 |
| Peanut butter | 11oz | 70 |

Pasta

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|----------------------|------|-------|
| w/wheat lasagne | 500g | 80 |
| Lasagne verdi | " | 82 |
| w/wheat spaghetti | " | 48 |
| w/wheat shells | 375g | 48 |
| w/wheat ramen | 90g | 54 |
| Butterfist spaghetti | 250g | 65 |

Oils

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|-----------------|-----|-------|
| Sunflower | 1l | 88 |
| Soya | " | 67 |
| cleanthos olive | " | 2.30 |

Snacks

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|
| Tropical mix | 8oz | 70 |
| Trail mix | " | 65 |
| Bombay spicy mix | " | 40 |
| Date + banana bars | each 16 | |
| Date + apricot | | |
| Date + nut | | |
| Date + apple | | |
| Jordans Crunch bars | Box of 16 | 64 |
| coconut or almond | 16 | |
| Halva | 4oz | 40 |

drinks

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|---------------------|----------|-------|
| Barleycup | 250g | 1.05 |
| Lemon Verbena tea | 4oz | 60 |
| Copella apple juice | 24 fl oz | 67 |

Home-made cakes etc.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Buns - orange, lemon or mixed fruit | each 7 |
| Jumbo flapjacks - ginger or fruit + nut | each 10 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Large date + walnut loaf | 1.30 |
| Small date + walnut loaf | 70 |

more home-made goodies coming soon!

10lb bags

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Organic stoneground 100% flour | 1.50 |
| Jordans 100% muesli 15 ingredients | 4.50 |
| Long grain rice | 2.60 |
| Short grain rice | 2.50 |
| Roller oats | 1.70 |

Miscellaneous

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|---|-----------------|-------|
| Red wine vinegar | 390ml | 40 |
| Aspalls organic cyder vinegar | $\frac{1}{2}$ l | 80 |
| Miso | 8oz | 70 |
| Shoyu aged soya sauce | $\frac{1}{2}$ l | 1.45 |
| Tofu fresh | 10oz | 85 |
| Tofu long life | 10oz | 65 |
| T.V.P. chunks | 11b | 65 |
| Vegebuerger mix | 125g | 55 |
| Glycerine + cucumber soap | 35 | |
| Rose soap | 35 | |
| Lavender soap | 35 | |
| Sugar, light or dark muscovado | 11b | 44 |
| Coconut biodegradable washing up liquid | 750ml | 50 |
| DCL dried yeast | 500g | 1.75 |
| Nigari | 2oz | 10 |

Herbs + spices

| ITEM | WT. | PRICE |
|-----------------------|------|-------|
| Basil | 1oz. | 15 |
| Oregano | " | 19 |
| Rosemary | " | 12 |
| Sage | " | 22 |
| Thyme | " | 17 |
| Black peppercorns | " | 18 |
| Paprika | " | 19 |
| Whole green cardamoms | " | 48 |
| Chilli powder | " | 15 |
| Coriander | " | 12 |
| Cummin | " | 23 |
| Hibiscus | " | 22 |
| Comfrey | " | 15 |

FREE-RANGE EGGS (when available)