

TOLMIERS NEWS

Published by the Tolmers Village Association 102 Drummond St. NW1

EDITED BY RACHEL, SHEENAGH + CHES

AT LAST! NEW FLATS READY!

On Wednesday 5th February we had a meeting with Mr Aldridge, Chief Housing Officer, and Mr Holmquist, Allocations Officer for Camden. The object of the meeting was to find out how many of the Netley Street flats were being allocated to people in Tolmers Village, when the two phases would be completed, and what they intended for the rest of the residents who will not be moving. Over 40 of the flats have already been allocated to us, and they will be ready in a matter of days. A decision has not yet been taken on how many flats in Phase 2 will go to our area, but there will be a great deal of competition from people already on the Regents Park Estate, who have been watching the flats being built under their noses and who are living in overcrowded conditions themselves. However, it is worth pushing for at least some of these. If you have not yet been visited by the Council and would like to move you would be advised to get in touch with the TVA as soon as possible, and we can press for a visit to be made to your home.

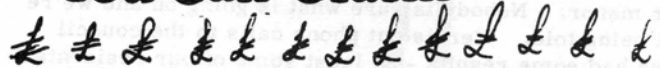
Hot Seat

Camden Housing Department has appointed a Housing Liaison Officer to deal specifically with anybody's housing problems in Tolmers Village. This applies both to those who are moving to Netley Street and to those who are going to remain in the area. She is Diana Sherston and she can be contacted at Bidborough House, Bidborough Street (telephone 2784444 ex. 2317). So if you have any queries regarding your move such as your entitlement to rates and rent rebates, compensation for moving expenses, Home Loss payments etc., either get in touch with her or with the TVA office. And for those who are not moving, it is important to press for decent housing conditions. If yours are bad you can report it to the Public Health Inspector - or the TVA can do it for you if you come to the office and let us know. The council can do nothing if they are not informed.

Legal Advice

FREE LEGAL ADVICE
 EVERY WEDNESDAY 6.30 - 9.00p. m.
 A team of Barristers are on hand to help with legal problems at the TVA Office
 102 Drummond Street NW1.

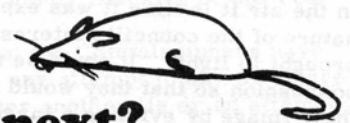
You Can Claim



When you move to your new flat you will find that the expenses incurred will not be all that small. Your rent and rates will be higher (in most cases the increase will be considerable); and the cost of moving; and the added expense of new carpets and curtains if your old ones don't fit the new place.

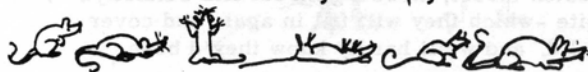
But Don't despair, because you can claim some of these expenses from the council.

1. RENT REBATES - You may be entitled to a rebate. You can get application forms from Bidborough House, Bidborough Street, or the TVA office.
2. RATE REBATES - For a rate rebate you should go to the Rates Office in the Town Hall.
3. REMOVAL EXPENSES - You should be entitled to some assistance. Write to Mr Aldridge, Housing Dept., Bidborough House, Bidborough Street, for further information. May you all settle down in your new homes happily, and don't forget to come and see us if you can manage to cross the Hampstead Road! (See Back Page for suggestions about getting rid of stuff you can't take with you).



Whatever next?

At the meeting with the council's officers we heard that Levy was being positively helpful to the council and had written to suggest that they visit certain of his properties in the area which he knew to be in bad condition to see if the tenants ought to be rehoused. He is much more amenable to the idea of rehabilitating his property. This is indeed new policy altogether for Stock Conversion, for as we well know, up to now the company has been very reluctant to spend more than £5 per house on repairs, essential or otherwise. No doubt they are doing this because they know that if they don't let the houses they will be SQUATTED!! The squatters have therefore contributed to a small breakthrough in the housing problem. They have effectively pushed a major property company into changing their policy and letting houses which would otherwise have stayed empty.



Editorial

The office has been a little neglected over the past few weeks and many people have found, to their irritation, that the place was closed when it should have been open. I must apologise for any inconvenience caused, and explain that I have not been in good health recently and had to go to hospital. However, I am now better and back in action, and the office will now be open every day between 11.00. a.m. and 6.00p.m.

While I was recovering, Vera Wood has been quietly and carefully redecorating the shop, and has done a truly beautiful job. She even laid the carpet kindly donated by Simmonds, so now it is a very pleasant place to be in. All we need now is an electric kettle. Any offers?

Meanwhile, there appears to have been a sudden excess of interest shown by various interested parties around our manor. Nobody is sure what is going on and we're not being told. Persistent phone calls to the council have had some results - at least some of our residents have been visited who otherwise would not have been. But we still have no assurance that the homes left empty by the rehousing of over 40 households will be used for short-life housing. We must try to see that these places are put to good use, and not left empty for yet another two years, or even worse, smashed up by landlords who want vacant possession. We hope that those who are leaving to live in new flats will let us know if they hear of any possibility that this would happen. And if you really want to help the homeless you know where to bring your keys when you move...

PARANOIA?

Many squatters in the area have been perturbed by the implication of the recent name-collecting by Levy's solicitors. What interest does Joe Levy have in evicting us now, when the property is about to be CPO'd? What worries the squatters is the possibility of a deal between Levy and the council concerning whether or not the properties are in vacant possession when they are bought by the council. If there should be some underhand deal in the air it is time it was exposed and the true nature of the council's interest in the matter brought to light. It could be that they want vacant possession so that they would not have to tarnish their image by evicting a large number of people. Or it could be that this is just an ugly rumour. Meeting for local squatters and anybody else who is interested at 155 Drummond Street, Monday 17th Feb. at 8.00. p.m.

Excavations

You may have noticed what looks like an oil-prospecting operation in the Tolmers Village Garden. We have been assured by those responsible that they are not looking for Camden's answer to Economic Gloom but are simply trying to discover what the foundations are like in the unlikely event of the Council actually getting round to building the Everlastingly-proposed Amazing New Tolmers Village. They will be sinking another three holes - in Euston Street, Cobourg Street and Connelys other bomb-site - which they will fill in again and cover with a metal lid, and we'll hardly know they'd been.

WATCH OUT!

there's a policeman about...

It takes a slippery policeman less than 30 seconds to sneak in through an unguarded door; and once he's in he may prove somewhat more difficult to evict than most of the squatters around here will.

SUSPICION

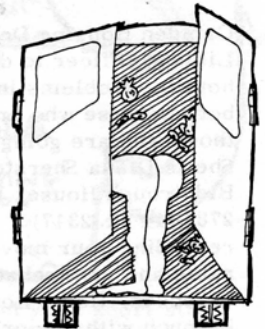
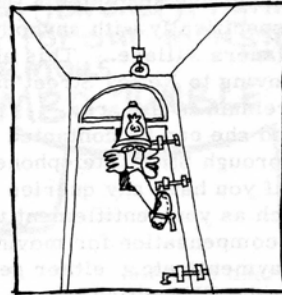
If he's got to go he'll probably try to take you with him. On suspicion of that bicycle, stereo or other item which you own but lost the receipt for. Everyone knows that squatters cannot afford luxuries, so these things must be stolen. Even if they're not, our local lawmen may impound them for a considerable length of time while 'persuing their investigations.'

WATCH OUT

Beware not to be found carrying what these cops might construe as house-breaking tools, i.e. nail files, scissors, small screwdrivers, pliers, hairpins etc. Even if they can't make it stick in court the first time they'll probably be given 2 weeks to 'collect more evidence' before busting you in the second round.

Beware also not to be seen wearing long hair and 'hippy' clothing. This seems to be enough to cause van loads of our peacekeepers to consider you a potential drug-taker, bomb-dropper, house-breaker, mother-raper, father-stabber or simply of suspicious character, and so gives them the right to force you into their van, strip you naked and leave no part untouched.

Make sure you've got lots of time if ever you need police assistance; if someone's breaking your door down with a pickaxe for instance. Because once they know you're a squatter it seems that the crime rate increases so much and so many bombs go off that it's going to take six months to obtain the assistance of one cop's big toe.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Police activity in the area seems to have doubled in the last few weeks. I consider them to be using harassment tactics. It's time we informed ourselves of the law and made the police stick to it. The National Council for Civil Liberties has produced some fact sheets which I recommend all to read. The titles are:-

1. ARREST
2. POLICE QUESTIONING
3. SEARCH
4. BAIL
5. SURETIES
6. COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE
7. SEARCH OF PREMISES & SEIZURE OF PROPERTY

These fact sheets explain your rights. NCCL has also produced a book, 'Civil Liberties', published by Penguin. Cost 60p.

Learn the law and help the police keep from breaking it. Ches.

Demolition Attempt

A car plunged into the sitting room of 60 Euston Street in the middle of the night, smashing the cast iron railing, leaping over the basement area, knocking out the window and leaving a Cortina shaped hole in the wall. Fortunately the guest who had slept in the room the previous night had decided it was too cold and slept upstairs. The occupants were somewhat shaken, but kept cool and mended the damage the next day. The driver was taken to hospital but was not badly injured. He has been charged with drunken driving.

Thank you!

Laings the building contractors, have offered us a donation of £40 to help towards work in the Bank. Thank you very much!



Queen's Cronies Crown Squatters

Originally, Albany Street was used by hay-sellers who had found that rents in the Haymarket were too high; but soon after they were forced out by the newly set up Crown Estate Commissioners in order to build a street fit for the rich. These elegant Nash houses fulfilled this purpose until after the war; but now the street has become neglected and tatty, and the CEC is now planning to demolish almost all of it and rebuild it as luxury flats and offices - thus restoring it to the wealthy.

SQUATTERS MOVE IN

Last October, finding that rents were too high, squatters began to move in to the empty houses. They were soon visited by an Inspector from the Crown, who said that it was so long since he had been in the houses that he had forgotten where the back doors were. The local police were persuaded to prosecute 3 squatters for criminal damage. But when the case came to court the magistrate declared, "It is not up to me to say anything about the fact that these houses have been empty for seven years". And he gave the three absolute discharges, awarding the Crown only £5 for a lock which they claimed was worth £10.

The first squatters offered to pay rent, but received no reply. Workmen from McGowan Liddle Ltd., a 'property maintenance firm' were paid by the Crown to secure and vandalise number 65 in order to prevent squatters. It was described as 'property management'. This house has now been re-squatted, and McGowan Liddle were sent to break in. A demonstration of solidarity from the Street and the Village sent them packing, up to their own rich end of the street.

'LOFTY'

Last December the Crown Commissioners went to court to regain possession of number 81. They admitted they did not know how long it would be before they were ready to develop it. The judge described their conduct as 'a positive scandal' and 'profoundly unsatisfactory'. He described their refusal to negotiate with the squatters as 'lofty' and he clearly did not believe the hurriedly made up lies that they told about negotiating for short-term use of the house. This was widely reported in the press and John Mills, Camden's Housing Chairman, criticised them for their 'appalling irresponsible attitude'. Even so, they were reluctantly granted an eviction order, and last Monday morning at 7a. m. the people were evicted.

ROYAL OSTRICHES

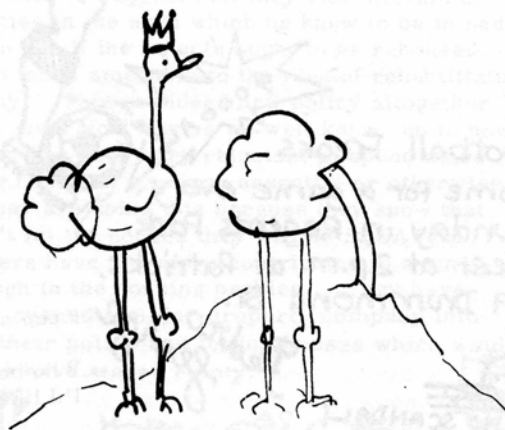
They have a pile of sand outside their offices which they use for blocking up toilets in empty houses and so they buried their heads in this and went back to court to ask for a writ against me, requiring me to pay them all the money they could have got if they had let my flat. It seems likely they will lose the case.

They have since served summonses on four other houses which come to court next Wednesday. Perhaps their chief reason for the irrational attitude towards squatters is their astonishingly large reservoir of empty property. As well as Albany Street they own Cornwall Terrace (no plans; now squatted), Cambridge Terrace and many other properties in London. They like to have a lot of houses of their own (Lord Perth has two, Walston has three). Maybe they're frightened we'll squat those too, if we're encouraged here. Right on!

CHARITY ?

They are busily engaged in finding a respectable body who will take over the street when they have got rid of us. Jim Horne, head of Mungo's Community, is the main contender for this "Charity Blackleg of the Year" award.

It must be remembered that the Commissioners have already lied in court, and any attempt to say they have a use for the street is either another lie or an attempt to pass the buck onto someone else who probably doesn't need the place either but shares their dislike for squatters. Mike Wolfe.....



Important Meeting

IS THE TVA SERVING YOUR INTERESTS?

If not, come to the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ON MONDAY 3RD MARCH 6.30. p.m.
AT DIWANA, 121 DRUMMOND STREET

ELECTION OF TVA MANAGEMENT GROUP

The TVA Management Group consists of 8 people, three of whom are elected as Chairman, Treasurer & Secretary

Some of the present group are standing for re-election, but there are some vacancies. Anyone who would like to serve on the group should come to the meeting. If you live or work in Tolmers Village you are eligible.

AGENDA (won't be as boring as it sounds)

1. Report of Management Group
2. Report by Treasurer
3. Election of new Management Group
4. Election of Chairman, Treasurer & Secretary
5. Amendments to Constitution

The TVA is a community Association. It is controlled by the people who live and work in Tolmers Village. Day to day decisions are made by the 8 people on the management group and the co-ordinator who is employed by them.

If you feel you could add to the efficient running of the Association, or would like to see new ideas put into practice, or would simply like to become more involved, come to the meeting. **ELECT THE PEOPLE YOU WANT** on the Management Group. New blood is needed.

Management Group for past year:-

- John Stansfield (Chairman)
- Gavin Brown (Treasurer)
- Jane French (Secretary)
- Maureen Holland
- Sheenagh Goodingham
- Jayant Patel
- J. D. Shah
- Mr Ahmad

Co-ordinators:-

- Nick Wates (to July)
- Rachel Syers (since April)

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are now due for 1975. Please bring to the TVA. It's still only 20p despite inflation. New members also welcome.

Football Freaks...
Come for a game every Sunday in Regents Park. Meet at 2p.m. at Patrick's, 119 Drummond St.

Pedro George

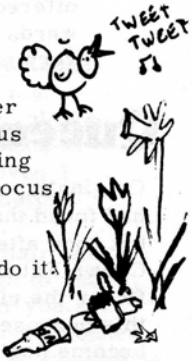
WOT NO SCANDAL?

Bank job

Work has started on installation of a toilet and a small kitchen unit in the Bank Community Centre. We are now waiting to hear from a firm of contractors who may be able to donate the materials needed. When the job is completed the Bank can be used for a wide range of events and happenings. Programmes in the near future will include Indian concerts of music and dance, a one-man theatrical show, and a showing of Philip Thompson's film, "Tolmers- Beginning or End?" Not to mention the usual activities of yoga classes, dance classes and band rehearsals. We should like to provide more facilities for the young and old - anyone who would like to run a club for any section of the community or for special interest groups please contact the TVA office.

Spring Greens

The Garden has been getting attention over the last fortnight. People have brought us loads of plants and the flowerbeds are going to be great in the spring. Snowdrops, crocus, daffs are already out. Atalia is mostly responsible, and is doing a grand job. Anyone with anything to plant, come and do it!



If you are moving to a new flat you will doubtless have odds + ends that you wish to leave behind.

Bring us your unwanted saucepans, wardrobes, fur coats, jewellery, lightshades etc. for our **MONSTER ENORMOUS JUMBO JUMBLE SALE**

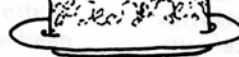
COMING SOON

Sorry to hear about your short stay in hospital MRS DESMOND, but nice to see you back again.

Congratulations PAM for being a granny again, and to SANDRA for having her new son.

VINCE - we're waiting for your release party. Chin up!

Happy First birthday.
Judith Ashley!



Keep smiling Sid, it may never happen to YOU!

Who borrowed my copy of Mayhew's London I'd like it back please. Sheenagh.

Annette Josephine Tanham will cut, style or trim your hair. If interested, leave a message at the TVA.

Before *After*