

**NOTTINGHAM ACTION GROUP ON HMOs**

**MAGAZINE SUPPLEMENT**

**Summer 2008**

**AROUND THE  
NATIONAL HMO LOBBY**

**with a series of**

**'POSTCARDS from ...'**

**BELFAST**

**BRISTOL**

**LINCOLN**

**PLYMOUTH**

**ST. ANDREWS**

**SHEFFIELD**

**SOUTHAMPTON**

**SWANSEA**

**TREFOREST**

## POSTCARDS FROM ... LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS

It is claimed by some that the Nottingham Action Group is no more than a small group of malcontents making a lot of unnecessary noise and fuss, and having views and concerns not shared by the majority of established residents in our neighbourhoods.

That is to ignore the fact that there are over fifty groups in more than thirty towns and cities across this country who share the same experiences, the same concerns and the same objectives as the NAG. Together, we form the National HMO Lobby.

When one of the National HMO Lobby's Southampton members sent us a collection of photographs from her neighbourhood, we decided we'd publish them on our website under the title 'Postcards from Southampton' – just to highlight that we're not alone.

Having got that far, we thought why not see if other members of the National HMO Lobby had any 'postcards' they'd like to send us? We asked, and then we sat back and waited to see what would happen. We didn't have to wait too long!

Here's a selection of what we were sent, including the original *Postcards from ... SOUTHAMPTON.*

**PERHAPS NOT QUITE 'LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS', BUT ST. ANDREWS TO PLYMOUTH ISN'T TOO FAR OFF!**

### NATIONAL HMO LOBBY MEMBERS

<b>BANGOR</b>	<b>EDINBURGH</b>	<b>NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE</b>
<b>BATH</b>	<b>EGHAM</b>	<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>
<b>BELFAST</b>	<b>FALMOUTH</b>	<b>OXFORD</b>
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	<b>GLASGOW</b>	<b>PLYMOUTH</b>
<b>BLACKPOOL</b>	<b>HATFIELD</b>	<b>PONTYPRIDD</b>
<b>BOURNMOUTH</b>	<b>LEEDS</b>	<b>POOLE</b>
<b>BRISTOL</b>	<b>LEICESTER</b>	<b>ST. ANDREWS</b>
<b>CANTERBURY</b>	<b>LINCOLN</b>	<b>ST. ANNES</b>
<b>CARDIFF</b>	<b>LIVERPOOL</b>	<b>SHEFFIELD</b>
<b>COLERAINE</b>	<b>LONDON</b>	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b>
<b>COVENTRY</b>	<b>LOUGHBOROUGH</b>	<b>SWANSEA</b>
<b>DURHAM</b>	<b>MANCHESTER</b>	<b>YORK</b>

## POSTCARDS FROM ... BELFAST'S HOLYLAND





## POSTCARDS FROM ... BRISTOL

### A STUDENTIFIED AREA IN COTHAM

#### CITY CONTEXT

According to the 2001 National Census there were 25,573 Full Time Students (aged 18-74) in Bristol. The total population (aged 16 and over) was 279,083. (There has been significant growth in student numbers and student homes over the last 5 years – so all the figures here understate the current situation.) In 2001 students made up 9% of the adult population, less than many other University cities, and much less than some. However the great majority lived in seven of Bristol's 35 Wards, in the centre and north, from Clifton across to Bishopston. 27% of Cotham Ward were students. With no halls of residence in the Ward all the students were living in normal residential stock. Cotham Ward is divided in the Census into 7 'Super Output Areas.' ...

#### EXAMPLE

Kensington Rd Super Output Area. (basically the 'Chandos Village' area). We estimate that 75% of the population live in 7 of the 10 streets in this SOA - Collingwood, Cowper, Melville, Brighton, Lansdown, Stanley, Roslyn. From observation students now make up at least 50% of the adult population in these streets. This is a high-density area, mostly small three storey terrace houses. They face each other across narrow streets with narrow pavements, with parking both sides. They have small forecourts and small back gardens. These factors make environmental nuisance in the form of noise more damaging to residents. ... Many houses accommodate 5 or 6 students. The area is **a prime example of studentification** uninfluenced by planning or any other regime. The profitability of student letting has lead to almost all vacant houses being bought by student landlords. Remaining long-term residents, particularly with children, are driven out by the adverse effects of studentification. ... We note that the Census definition of Students includes the mature (and very mature) and those living at home. However it appears that the undergraduates prefer to live amongst undergraduates, and we believe that nearly all students in this sample area are young. The population mix is totally contrary to the 'mixed and balanced communities' that are national and local planning policy.



[Extracts and photograph taken from the Redland and Cotham Amenities Society Website: [www.rcas.org.uk](http://www.rcas.org.uk)]





## POSTCARDS FROM ... LINCOLN





## POSTCARDS FROM ... PLYMOUTH



### GREENBANK – THE TRUE STORY

Greenbank is a small area of closely packed terraced houses, mostly dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, close to the city centre and the ever expanding campus of the University of Plymouth campus.

Just metres from the university's state of the art multi-storey buildings with their carefully maintained grounds, the streets of Greenbank provide a striking contrast.



Jammed with parked cars (with illegal and inconsiderate parking the norm), with rubbish spilling out of black bags and white goods, old furniture and builders rubble dumped in the back lanes, and streets and



pavements frequently covered in broken glass and abandoned takeways, vomit, discarded clothing and condoms the area is an unhealthy and hazardous place to live.

The number of students attending the university is now over 27,000 with another 800 or so due to be added from September 2008.

Only a very small proportion of these students are accommodated in purpose built halls, the rest are housed in multiple occupancy houses within the community.

The permanent residents of Greenbank (those of us that are left) have a continual struggle to live in cleanliness and peace.

The growth of the university has been paralleled by the increase in the numbers of – pubs, clubs and bars in the surrounding area.

There are over 30 licensed premises in Greenbank alone, with many more in the city centre and in the adjacent Mutley Plain area.

The police use dispersal orders and head cams to try and deal with the disorder in the street, but residents' lives are made miserable by rowdy revellers until after 6.00 a.m.. Many of the bars now open until 4.00 a.m. and some until 6.30 a.m. The university has just applied for a license to open its bars 24/7 and, with up to 3,000 students leaving the premises at closing time, we fear this will help to extend the disruption in our streets for even longer.

The Greenbank Community Association has persistently lobbied the local council over the years, both for a limit on the number of houses which are let to students, and for a saturation policy on the number of licensed premises.

Until now we have been unsuccessful and have seen a steady decline in the numbers of families living in the area and falling school rolls. But, rather late in the day it is true, the newly-elected city council has just decided to revisit the idea of having a saturation policy on licensed premises. (The previous council having decided that such a policy would adversely affect the economy of the city.)

We would hope that the debate around this change of heart will allow us further opportunities to lobby the council.

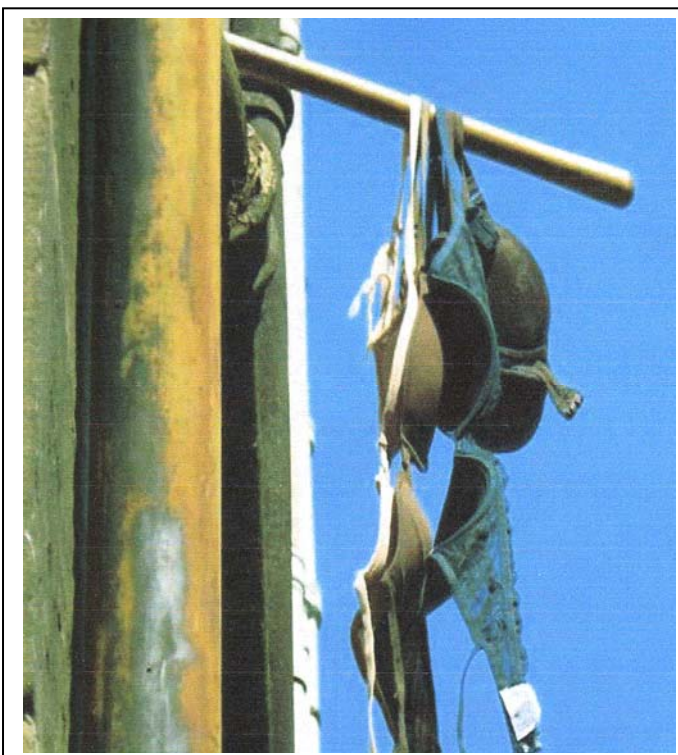
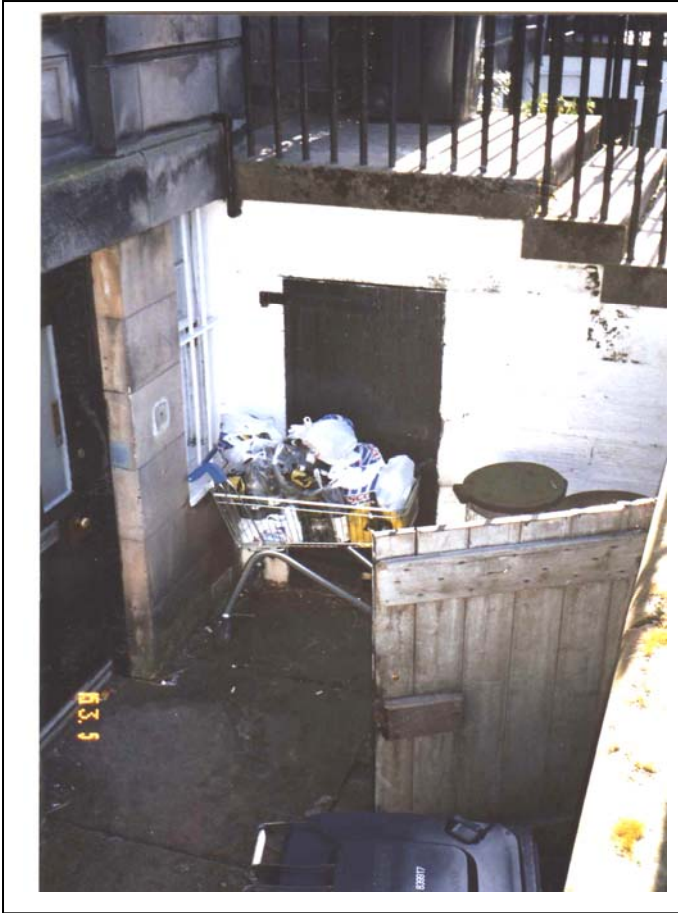
[Greenbank Community Association,  
15 June, 2007]





## POSTCARDS FROM ... ST. ANDREWS

### THE HOME OF GOLF AND SCOTLAND'S OLDEST UNIVERSITY





## POSTCARDS FROM ... SHEFFIELD

### BROOMHILL 'THE PRETTIEST SUBURB IN ENGLAND'



[Broomhill Library taken from the website of BANG, Broomhill Action Neighbourhood Group, [www.broomhillonline.org.uk](http://www.broomhillonline.org.uk)]

Broomhill, Sheffield is a conservation area described by John Betjeman in the 1960's as 'the prettiest suburb in England'.

Today, it is the city's main student suburb.





## POSTCARDS FROM ... SOUTHAMPTON





## POSTCARDS FROM ... SWANSEA

### THE DYLAN THOMAS TRAIL

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953), the world renowned poet, was born in Uplands Swansea. His favourite parks: Cwmdonkin, the setting for 'The Hunchback in the Park', and Singleton still exist. The latter, an open green space left to the people of Swansea by the Glyn Vivian family, has diminished in size as it is the focus of Swansea University campus. The green and gold mesmeric views of which Dylan spoke, once encapsulated this area of Swansea (Fern Hill written in 1933).

The proud features of Edwardian vernacular architecture: wrought iron porch canopies and gates, leaded light glass doors, quarry and marble tiled fronts and colourful gardens, are blighted.

The 70-80% multi-occupancy level in the area between Cwmdonkin and Singleton Park has resulted in festering rubbish bags, unkempt gardens awash with unwanted furniture, fridges and mattresses. Knotted and tattered curtains have replaced Edwardian net.

If this situation continues, a graceful and potentially 'tourist friendly' area of Swansea will be no more.

[From a Resident of Uplands, Swansea  
September, 2007]





## POSTCARDS FROM ... TREForest, PONTYPRIDD

### A VILLAGE COMMUNITY

It is very difficult for me to explain the history of my village in just a few words but, I will try my best.

If we go back 20 or 30 years, this village prided itself on being a very close and sociable community: everyone helped each other. They had feelings for anyone in difficulty and did all they could to help. Our schools were filled with happy children enjoying their youth.

Many people were financially poor, but very rich in the love and understanding they had for people less well off.

They kept their homes clean and tidy and took pride in their gardens. They were indeed a very proud body of people.

That pride still remains among the remaining residents. What they miss in this day and age is the laughter of young children in the streets.

Alas, that has been replaced by hoards of students who are hell bent on binge drinking and subjecting old folk to abusive behaviour.

They are turning our village into what can only be explained as Ghetto conditions.

I could go on forever explaining the downside of our village.

We must all pull together, each and every town, city or village in Great Britain, whether it be in England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales. We must all speak as one.

I really do feel that the voice of the people must be heard.

I Hope this gives you an rough idea of where I live and the conditions we live in.

[Member of the Treforest Residents Association,  
October, 2007]



## END NOTE

Thank you to all the people who sent photographs and told us something about themselves and where they live.

These 'grot' photos from around the National HMO Lobby clearly show that the problems that HMOs create for us and our neighbourhoods are not unique to Nottingham. Just as clear is the fact that there many more people who share our disquiet about what is happening around us and who want to ensure that their neighbourhoods once again will become

### Neighbourhoods where families want to live ... not leave!

If that means the Nottingham Action Group is an unrepresentative bunch of troublemakers, then we're clearly in good company.

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