

# CAUSE OF

# Uganda Asians to be housed at Greenham

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Talks were held at the base yesterday afternoon between the British and American authorities and a spokesman for the Ugandan Resettlement Board confirmed last night that the negotiations had been completed.

The Asians would be housed in empty barracks accommodation on the base and possibly in USAF quarters if any are available. Greenham has a number of empty barrack blocks.

The number of people involved was not known last night. The resettlement board's spokesman said "The board have asked the American authorities to help in this situation and there have been negotiations regarding this base. I understand an element of agreement has been reached and that Greenham could take up to 1,700 people."

Like other reception stations being set up, the base would be used for temporary accommodation while the Asians are interviewed, told of possible job vacancies and advised about where to settle.

Main contingent will be flying in to Stansted Airport, Essex, and will be received at the disused RAF station at Stradishall, Suffolk, where there is accommodation for 1,500. Another base in Lincolnshire will be used if Stradishall becomes full.

But the board do not see Greenham as being used only after the others have been fully utilised. It is expected to be used in addition to Stradishall.

"I don't know what the priority is; whether people will be going to Greenham in preference to Stradishall," said the spokesman.

Greenham base commander, Col. Ernest Wilson, said last night he did not know what decision had been reached in negotiations, which were being conducted at a higher level.

"It is true what we do have empty accommodation but I cannot say how much would be available," he said. "I do not foresee any difficulties."

Although the buildings at Greenham are not furnished, they are in a serviceable condition. Beds are kept at the base but not bedding.

The use made of Greenham will depend upon the rate at which the Asians come to Britain. If many come to Heathrow and Gatwick, Greenham is likely to be needed sooner than expected.

A team of workers including a member of the Board's staff, welfare authorities and voluntary organisations would be involved and it is possible the public might be able to offer assistance. "They might need warm clothing but at this stage we just don't know what the needs will be," said the board's spokesman.

## Enborne school rerieved

A VILLAGE school which has been under threat of closure for some years has been granted a temporary reprieve by the Newbury Divisional Executive.

The executive agreed on Monday that Enborne CE School should remain open because at present "there is no reasonable alternative."

Members were told that accommodation for Enborne children will not be available at other schools until at least 1977.

The decision to keep the school open is a triumph for parents and managers who have campaigned vigorously to save it as attendances have dropped. In 1970 there were 37 on the roll—now there are 32.

The executive are now to consider the appointment of a permanent head teacher to take over in September next year from Mrs. Vera Powell who is a member of the county emergency teaching staff.

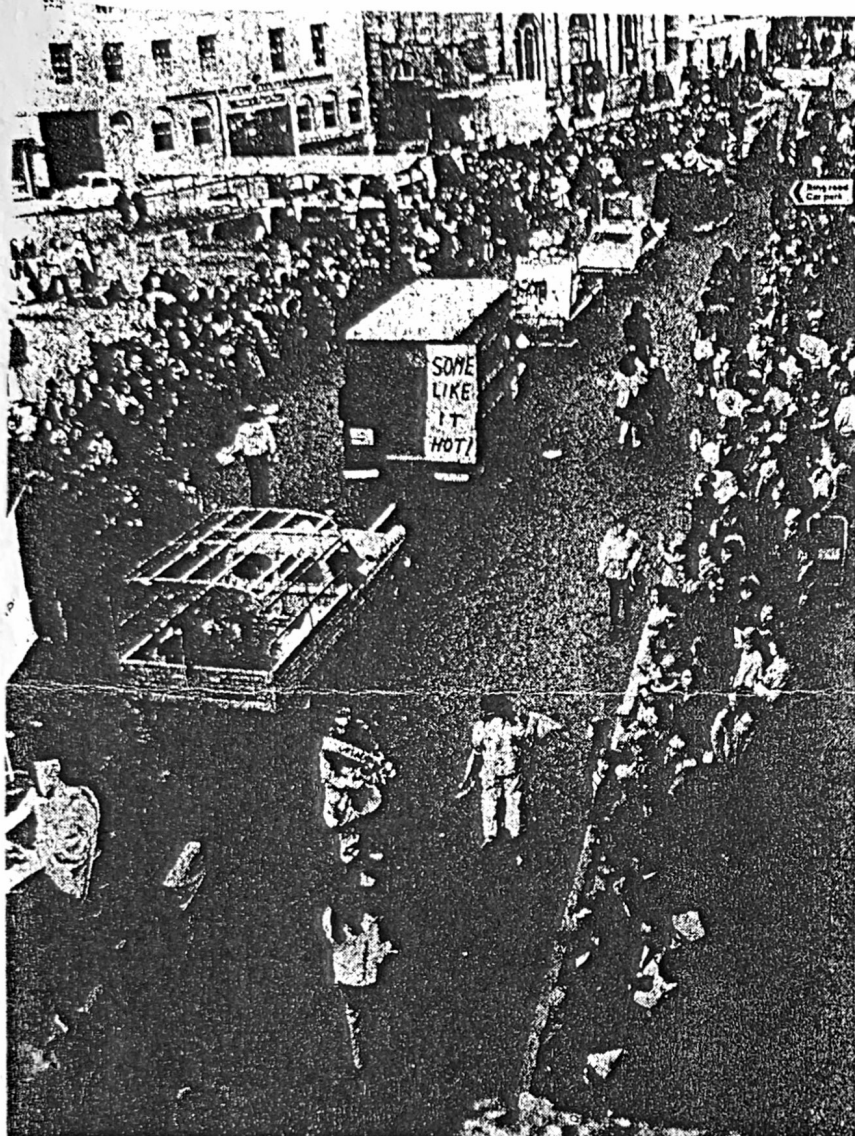
She took over several years ago at a time when it seemed certain the school must close. "But the axe has never fallen and recently the divisional executive agreed to extend her services until next summer."

Mrs. Powell said on Tuesday "I am very pleased. There is a great need for a village school here."

Divisional education officer Mr. Peter Bishop intimated at Monday's meeting that more money may now be spent on the school.

"The children have been getting the thin edge of the wedge for a year or two because the future of the school was in doubt," he said.

Mrs. Pauline Bodin felt that the executive decision might give the school a new lease of life with possibly more children attending from Newbury.



## £1,000 PROFIT ON CARNIVAL

PROFITS from Newbury Carnival week are expected to run into four figures, Mr. Clifford Wiles, chairman of the organising committee, announced yesterday.

Money collected during the carnival procession itself amounts so far to between £375 and £400 and it is still coming in.

"Though our expenses have gone up a lot this year we hope that profits from all the carnival events, including the six-a-side football, will amount to over £1,000," says Mr. Wiles.

Decorating the streets with bunting has accounted for a lot of the additional expenditure and a lot has also been spent on advertising.

We did not set out merely to raise large sums of money," says Mr. Wiles. "We wanted a week of events in which we could get everyone involved."

Profits will go to charities supported by the Newbury Round Table.

The carnival procession is pictured going through the Market Place. Other pictures and reports appear on page 4 and 5.

## Munich massacre victims remembered

More than 30 people from all denominations attended a service on Monday in memory of the hostages killed in Munich.

The service, at St. George's, Wash Common, was organised by the future Anglican team of Newbury. The Rev. Piers Nash-Williams conducted the service and the Rev. Michael Scott-Joynt read the lesson.

"We knew that the Munich disaster was something people were feeling very strongly about, and that we should give them a chance to express their feelings through the church," said Mr. Nash-Williams.

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# Council listing offers to help expelled Asians

**H**UNGERFORD District Council are "doing their bit" to help in the re-settlement of the Asians being expelled from Uganda.

At the housing committee meeting last Wednesday members decided that the council should act as the focal point of the rural district and anyone who felt they could provide temporary accommodation should let them know.

The council are also asking local employers to contact them if they felt they could provide work. A letter appealing for people offering assistance to contact the council appears on page 27.

The matter was raised last week by Mr. Hilary Bell, who pointed out that the Ugandan Asian Re-settlement Board had asked local authorities "to do their bit."

He commented "We have 11,000 people in the rural district. There might be some who could provide accommodation but don't know how to go about it."

On the question of employment, Mr. Bell added "I believe a lot of these people are qualified and they might be very good workers."

# Asians problem not racial say Labour

The influx of the Ugandan Asians is not a racial but a social problem and should be treated as such, declare Newbury local Labour party in a statement issued this week.

All Ugandan Asians who have opted for British Nationality and hold bona fide British passports should be treated in exactly the same way as any other British Nationals. They should have the same rights as other British Nationals in regard to housing, welfare, the National Health Service and other benefits on the same basis of entitlement which exist locally and nationally for other citizens.

The use of Greenham Air Base as a location for temporary accommodation should be accepted. When the base has completed its functional role in this respect consideration should be given to its permanent utilisation as accommodation for the homeless.

The government should alter its existing social policies and release resources to remedy the chronic housing shortage and other areas of deprivation to the extent that all British Nationals in need benefit. This problem should be regarded as a national emergency and tackled with the requisite energy and determination.

# WRVS READY TO HELP ASIANS

**L**OCAL members of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service are standing by to give whatever help they can to the Ugandan refugees when they arrive at Greenham.

The Resettlement Board is channelling the work of all voluntary services offering help. And in the first stage the WRVS have agreed to be responsible for refreshments and clothing — particularly warm coats and woollies.

Centre organiser Mrs. Mae Burgess, wife of Deputy Mayor Coun. Percy Burgess, says that she has not yet received firm instructions for her members.

But teams of volunteers are ready and waiting to get operations underway when required. The WRVS has been receiving offers of help daily and those willing to lend a hand are asked to ring their office at Newbury 1289.

Sept 21st 1972

# 'Help Asians' plea to churches

A plea for all churches in the district to show Christian sympathy with the Uganda Asians and to support the national plan to deal with their reception was made at the quarterly meeting of the Newbury and Hungerford Methodist circuits held at Aldbourne on Wednesday last week.

Over 100 representatives of the 23 circuit churches were told by the Rev. David Ratcliffe that the Synod for the Southampton district had urged that churches should do everything possible to help.

The view was also expressed at the meeting that Christians should refrain from making speeches which could incite racial prejudice.

Long service certificates were presented at the meeting to Mr. Stanley Buckeridge, of Lambourn, and Mr. Charles Herbert of Newbury, who have both been local preachers for over 40 years.

Newly appointed superintendent minister to the Newbury and Hungerford circuit, the Rev. F. Warren Davies, conducted a harvest thanksgiving service at Aldbourne Methodist Church on Sunday during which gifts were received from the Sunday School children. A united service in the evening was conducted by the Rev. David Laidler.

On Monday evening a harvest supper was served to over 50 people. Offerings at the services were for trust funds.

Over 50 members of Aldbourne Silver Threads were

entertained by Col. and Mrs. J. Milton at their home, Southward, Marlborough Road, Aldbourne, on Tuesday last week.

Mrs. Kathleen Clark, secretary, talked about holidays spent in Canada and compared aspects of life there and in Britain. Tea was served by Col. and Mrs. Milton, and their helpers.

Speaker at the Methodist Women's Fellowship on Wednesday last week was Mr. C. Barrett, who gave a talk on friendship. Thought for the week was given by Mrs. Barrett and Mrs. F. Sheppard was pianist.

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And the committee are prepared to send a public health inspector to inspect properties which could, if grants are available for refurbishing, be made available to the Asians.

Several members spoke of houses having been vacant for many years, the owners refusing to let them to anyone. They wondered if there were powers to obtain such properties and make them available. Deputy clerk, Mr. L. Smith, commented that compulsory purchase was not a procedure which could be used when property was required immediately.

Not all members agreed that such properties should be used for Asians. Mr. C. W. Fane said that if owners could be forced to take tenants, charity should first begin at home, and Mr. S. L. Rogers commented that it would be wrong to pick out individual Asian families and house them without regard to their problems, including finding employment. He thought the council and the area as a whole had little to offer which would be suitable.

Members were urged to "hold out an olive branch" by the Rev. K. C. Davis who was certain suitable empty accommodation could be found in the district. He knew of two properties which had been empty for years.

Mrs. D. U. D. Palmer also thought the council could help by seeking out properties which could be improved with the aid of grants. "I am not suggesting we should take hundreds, only our fair share—three, four or five families.

"These people have nowhere to go and if one has any Christian feeling at all one cannot pass by on the other side," she said.

Mr. A. F. Foster who commented "We have sympathy but have nothing we can help them with" thought that the Government should be putting pressure for housing on the GLC who had large numbers of houses standing empty in Basingstoke and Andover rather than themselves.

Members hoped that people would not get the impression that they were unsympathetic and council chairman Mr. George Beavers commented that nothing he had heard in the debate suggested members lacked sympathy.

# HOMES FOR ASIANS PLANNED BUT TURNED DOWN

## Councillor in protest march

NEWBURY town councillor Dick Easterbrook spoke this week against the plan to bring expelled Uganda Asians to Britain. A few days earlier he had taken part in a protest march in Reading Town Hall.

Coun. Easterbrook, a Labour member of the council, said the nation's resources are greatly stretched by the problems of housing, education and the aged. "We should get our own house in order before we start bringing in the rest of the world."

Coun. Easterbrook explained that he took part in the protest march organised by the National Independence Party even though he is not a member.

"The march highlighted the problems we could face, because there is quite a bit of feeling against the Asians. People are quite apathetic until they get them living next door."

News that Greenham Common Air Base is to be used to house Asians also brought sharp reaction from Coun. Easterbrook. "I shall certainly oppose it very strongly, and I would be quite willing to be involved in a demonstration," he said.

## HOLIDAY FOR OLD FOLK

Twenty-four old folk will take a Close Day Centre by coach on Saturday for a week's holiday in Pagnton. They were among a number of the county's senior citizens taking advantage of concessionary holidays arranged by the Berkshire Old People's Welfare Association.



Coun. Dick Easterbrook taking part in the "Keep-out Asians" protest march.

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## BITTER OPPOSITION to the idea of offering council houses to Uganda Asians was voiced at an emergency meeting of Newbury borough housing committee on Tuesday. As a result, a sympathetic councillor has dropped plans to plead for the Asians at next Monday's full council meeting.

Coun. John Batley said that the attitude of committee members had persuaded him against asking the council to make four houses available. The Mayor, Coun. Wilfred Cannings, had said "We would cause the biggest stir in this town if the council put them on the priority list."

Coun. Batley said yesterday "I was disappointed not only with the committee's conclusion but also with their views, which seemed to suggest that the problem of resettling the Asians would either go away if it was ignored or that it was none of the committee's business."

"I am withdrawing my request to the council because debate on it would lead to acrimony and possible resentment towards any Asians who do settle in the Newbury area. In any case it is clear that it had no chance of success."

He realised that to townspeople living in sub-standard accommodation the idea might seem unjustifiable. "But these people on the waiting list have a roof over their heads."

"I would not expect the Asians to be put into our prime housing. They could be put into our poorer accommodation and residents from those houses moved into better places."

"Some properties we would not normally consider repairing could be used in view of the Government's offer of financial aid to local authorities wishing to repair houses for the Asians," said Coun. Batley.

After some argument the housing committee decided to set up a liaison body to assist authorities tackling the problem of providing temporary accommodation at Greenham Common air base.

Some members felt that there were enough helpers already, and another group of organisers might create a hindrance.

The body will liaise with welfare organisations and contact local groups who had said they would help, such as the Newbury District Council of Churches.

In the discussion on whether to offer council houses to the Ugandan Resettlement Board it was pointed out by Coun. Percy Burgess that the council had recently turned down requests for housing police, ambulance men and teachers. They had also refused to offer council houses for sale and could not even provide shelter for homeless people in the borough.

"To turn around now and say we have enough for homeless families from abroad is wrong. It's our duty to safeguard the interests of the people of Newbury. Undoubtedly some Asians may come to live in the town," he commented.

Coun. Mrs. Elizabeth Ganf added "Provided the accommodation at the base is adequate, keeping them up there doesn't cause any problems in the town. We certainly don't want any demonstrations."

"Psychologically, it's the wrong action to take. It takes time for people to settle down. We may do a bad service by trying to make them feel that they must stay because they have been allocated a house. I think they need six months to settle down. We might be able to help later when things are better for ourselves," she said.

But the committee were told no new council houses would be finished for many months.

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## 'Make Asians welcome' appeal

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The Council of Churches met on Monday to discuss the matter and later their chairman, the Rev. Frederick Spriggs, said "Every effort should be made to welcome the Uganda Asians into the community and all practicable help should be given to them."

He said the council hoped the Resettlement Board could be given some indication of the number of Asians Newbury could accommodate.

He added "At the same time we recognise the problems which this could create for the existing population and acknowledge the Churches' obligation to do everything possible to resolve this."

The Conservatives say that they do not think the use of Greenham as a reception centre should unduly disturb local residents.

"We hope that the refugees will receive a courteous welcome and that every effort will be made to assist the authorities to settle them as quickly as possible," said a spokesman.

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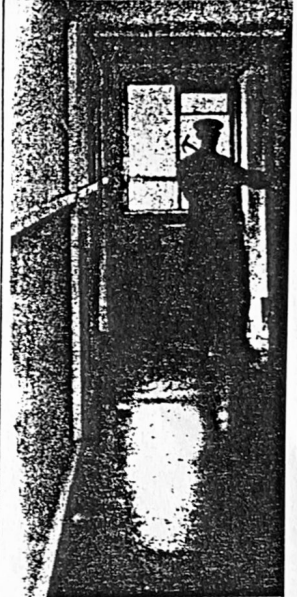
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Workmen getting rooms in a building.

## AIR BASE FOR 1,700

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Few will be staying any length of time and most should move on to permanent accommodation within a further two weeks.

A spokesman for the Uganda Resettlement Board said Greenham will not take any Asians at short notice unless an emergency arises.

News that Greenham would be used as a short-term reception centre was first published by the NWN last week.

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Coun. Dick Easterbrook commented "I can't see why they should have any priority over people on the housing list. They must take their normal turn. If they reside in the borough for 12 months they stand a chance."

Coun. Mrs. Pauline Bodin endorsed that view, adding "To ask any British families in Newbury to give up a house and go back eight or 12 months after getting to the top of the housing list is utterly wrong."

The opposite view was taken by Coun. Chris Waterman. "These Asians are British families. If all local authorities would agree to take their share of these people it would reduce the problem," he said.

Meanwhile other local councils have been discussing the questions raised by last week's announcement that up to 1,700 Asians could be housed temporarily at Greenham.

At Kingsclere RDC public health committee meeting on Tuesday Mrs. D. U. D. Palmer suggested that the council offer homes to five Asian families.

And at Newbury RDC's meeting on Tuesday, Coun. Peter Robinson suggested that arrangements be made to teach English to those Asians who did not already speak the language.

This could be done, he said, by liaison between the county council and the resettlement board. It would have the effect, if nothing else, of relieving boredom.

RDC clerk Mr. Brian Thetford said that the county council were considering the question of reimbursing local authorities who incurred expenses through settling the Asians.

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Meanwhile there has been no response to an appeal by Hungerford RDC chairman Mr. Hilary Bell in the *NWN* last week for householders to offer accommodation to Asians wherever possible.

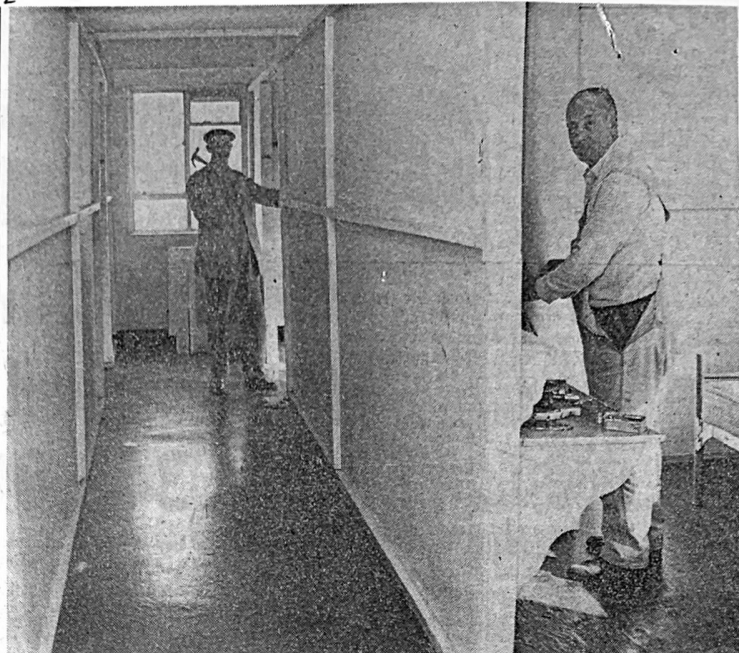
## FEW JOBS FOR ASIANS

The Newbury office of the Department of Employment have not yet received any instructions on finding Asians jobs.

It is considered unlikely that many of the refugees will settle in Newbury with neither house prices nor job opportunities favourable.

Mr. R. J. Palmer, manager of the Newbury employment exchange, said yesterday that at present there are 193 vacancies, of which a number are in the building trade.

Mr. Palmer said he was in daily contact with his regional office. If and when he is required, he will arrange interviews with the Asians to find out what jobs they want, where they want to live, etc.



Workmen getting rooms in a barrack block at Greenham ready for the Asians.

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Precautions are also to be taken to prevent the refugees interfering with the work of the Americans.

"There is no question of a wire fence or anything like that," said the Resettlement Board spokesman. "But obviously we would not want these people running around and interfering with the business of the American Air Force."

Local officials are basing their plans on coping with people who may have to stay longer than a fortnight.

Accommodation has been earmarked and plans will be made to bring in school furniture, equipment and teachers should the need arise. Play group organisations, and further education staff could be brought in if people remain at the camp longer than a few days.

One of the first priorities will be establishment of a centre for medical checks, to be undertaken by local medical officer of health, Dr. Robert Handy together with county medical officer Dr. Derek Cullington. It is likely that trained county staff such as health visitors will be involved in this work.

Catering for the Asians will be undertaken by contractors using existing kitchens.

The Resettlement Board have told authorities that they do not intend to place refugees in local employment while they are at Greenham and have assured them that if people are still there when the operation ends they will not become a local responsibility.

A county spokesman says it appears that the government agencies will be looking after the material needs of the refugees but the Board will be looking to local authorities to help care for them in the wider sense.

Base commander Col. Ernest Wilson said on Tuesday that he did not envisage any problems while the Ugandans are living at the base. "This is a humanitarian problem and we are glad to help in any way we can."

It is very unlikely that the Asians will fly direct to Greenham because they have to go through formal immigration control for which the base is not equipped.

# NEXT WEEK

## Helpers wanted to run playgroup for 150 young Asians

PLAYGROUP officials in Newbury are appealing for volunteers to help them run a group at RAF Greenham for refugee Asian children.

The county social services department have asked the Newbury and District Playgroup Association to organise a team of helpers who can start work if necessary on Monday.

## Air base seen as permanent centre for homeless

GREENHAM Air Base could be used to accommodate the homeless on a permanent basis, the Newbury Constituency Labour Party say in a statement this week.

The party's general management committee met on Saturday to discuss the Ugandan-Asian problem and supported the use of the base as a location for temporary accommodation.

"When the base has completed its functional role in this respect, consideration should be given to its permanent utilisation as accommodation for the homeless," said the party in its statement.

Mr. Tony Freke, Press Officer, said: "In the past we have suggested that it was wasted accommodation but the Ministry of Defence have always come back with the standard answer that it is required as an air base."

Support for the use of Greenham as a short term reception centre has also come from Newbury and District Trades Council who met on Thursday. They considered it a "sensible solution" to the housing problem.

A supervisor has been appointed and letters have now gone out to playgroups in the area asking for volunteers. Notices have also been posted in the public library and at the South Berks College.

Mrs. Gillian Hall, chairman of the local association, said on Monday that they have been asked to organise morning and afternoon sessions five days a week.

She said that volunteers would take it in turns to run the Greenham playgroup which is likely to have to cope with up to 150 children under five years of age.

A building has already been earmarked for playgroup use with two large rooms—one for children and the other for their mothers.

Asked if she foresaw any problems in organising a playgroup for the Asian children Mrs. Hall said "At the moment we don't know exactly what we are facing. There may be difficulties with such things as language, but we look forward to the challenge."

"Our job is to help both the children and their parents settle down after arriving in this country."

There have already been offers of equipment such as prams. The playgroups' association will be providing other items.

REFUGEE ASIANS will almost certainly begin arriving at RAF Greenham on Monday and the transit camp is expected to be full within a week.

Brig. Bill Beyts, chief administrator of the camp, said yesterday that he had given a promise that the Greenham facilities would be operational by Monday.

To meet the deadline workmen have been toiling late into the night preparing the 60 barrack blocks which will house the refugees. One of the major jobs has been checking the central heating system which has not been in use for about eight years; Plumbing and electrical equipment is all being inspected.

"The work is going superbly and I am confident that we shall be ready on Monday," said Brig. Beyts.

Up to 1,200 refugees will be housed at Greenham at any one time. Most are expected to move on to permanent accommodation within a fortnight.

The refugees will fly in to Heathrow and after the usual formalities will be brought to Greenham by bus. On arrival there will be a brief health check and particulars of the families will be noted.

They will be given a meal before being shown to their quarters to sleep.

The following morning Brig. Beyts will make a welcoming speech and then operations will swing into action to help the refugees settle down in their new environment.

The Women's Royal Voluntary Service, Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance and Salvation Army will be a few of the organisations involved.

A block has been set aside to serve as headquarters with offices for the various volunteer contingents.

One of the first priorities will be full health checks and Brig. Beyts says the refugees will be in quarantine for at least seven days.

Department of Employment officials will be interviewing the Asians and trying to place them in jobs and accommodation elsewhere in the country.

Accommodation has been earmarked for a school and playgroup. In charge of the school will be Mr. V. W. J. Roussel, headmaster of John Rankin Junior School, Newbury.

Film shows, talks and other entertainments are being organised for the refugees and Brig. Beyts says he would like to take them on coach trips — if a vehicle and driver are forthcoming.

A number of people have already offered to "adopt" a family and take them out during their stay at Greenham.

Others are offering warm clothes which the WRVS are collecting. The playgroup will be grateful for any toys and Brig. Beyts says he thinks a table tennis table would be very well received by the children.

"I have had nothing but kindness on all sides," said Brig. Beyts. "I am very impressed by the help we have had both from the American authorities and from local organisations and people."

Yesterday afternoon women from Thatcham Congregational Church were moving into the barrack blocks with brushes, mops and buckets in a cleaning-up operation. Yesterday and today Brig. Beyts is briefing the voluntary organisations on the work they will be required to do.



An informal meeting at St. Mary's Vicarage on Saturday evening provided an opportunity for questioning the former Johannesburg (right) about his experiences in South Africa.

## Thatcham cottages for Asians?

FIVE EMPTY thatched cottages in Chapel Street, Thatcham, could be used as temporary accommodation for expelled Ugandan Asians.

At Tuesday's Newbury RDC housing committee meeting members agreed to write to the owners, Thatcham Parochial Charities, asking them to consider leasing the cottages for Asian families.

Mr. Peter Robinson pointed out that the Government had offered to meet the cost of repairing accommodation for this purpose. "Nothing makes houses deteriorate as much as being empty."

He and most other members opposed any suggestion that the RDC offer council houses to the Ugandan Resettlement Board.

He said "We have a responsibility to our own housing list. I don't think we can afford to do anything that will prejudice anyone on the list."

## FAIR CLOSE COUPLE MARRIED 60 YEARS

MR. and Mrs. Walter Thorne had a special reason to await the post.

## BUSY WEEKEND FOR JAILED DEAN

FORMER Dean of Johannesburg, the Rev. G. J. Gonville French Beytagh had a busy weekend in Newbury.

He spoke on his experiences in South Africa during an apartheid situation there when he attended a meeting at St. Mary's Vicarage on Saturday evening.

On Sunday he took early morning Communion at St. Mary's Church and then preached at two subsequent services before finally dashing back to London to appear in the BBC TV discussion programme "A chance to meet."

The Dean was met in Newbury by elderly Miss Esyllt Newbery, of 1 Abberbury Close, Donnington, who raised him after his parents separated when he was seven.

In South Africa he had been sentenced to five years in prison for alleged offences under the Terrorism Act after he had spoken out against apartheid. He returned to Britain in April after a successful appeal.

He told the larger than usual congregations at St. Nicolas Church on Sunday morning how he had managed to continue practising when in solitary confinement.

Preaching on the subject of the government's policy on apartheid, he referred to the government's being in direct conflict with the broader interests of the town.

## THATCHAM MAN £1

IAN Howells, Veronice Marks Cl... were pleased to receive a competition... weeks later... called at... they had...



# ASIANS NEED CLOTHES

**C**LERGY in churches throughout the Newbury area are to ask their congregations to give warm clothes for the refugee Asians coming to Greenham.

The Rev. Frederick Spriggs, chairman of the Newbury and District Council of Churches, said on Monday that he had met officials at Greenham to discuss what the church can do to help.

He is contacting other ministers in the hope that they will appeal particularly for warm clothes but also for play equipment.

28th Sept - '72.

# Homes wanted for Asians

**EMPTY PROPERTIES** which could be improved with the help of Uganda Resettlement Board funds are to be sought by Newbury Town Council to help solve the problem of housing Asian refugees.

The idea came from Coun. John Batley at Monday's full council meeting and he hopes that four council houses would be allocated to Asians were dashed by the housing committee.

His alternative, which was approved with only two dissenters, means that housing could be provided without affecting those on the council's own long waiting list.

The council also decided to set up an *ad hoc* committee, under the chairmanship of the Mayor to liaise with the Resettlement Board, Greenham Air Base and local organisations willing to help when the full scale and nature of the problems are known.

## Meeting Asians

The Mayor, Coun. Wilfred Cannings, said that he and the chairman of Newbury RDC proposed to lead a group of councillors to go to Greenham when the Asians arrive, to find out their circumstances, and to see what could be done about finding suitable employment.

Coun. Batley asked councillors to imagine themselves in the position of a typical family of Asians, the husband having a trade or profession and the children having been at school.

"They have left the only country they know under the threat of murder and harrassment,

stripped of all their possessions and arrive in a country with different customs, way of life and climate. Surely we have a responsibility to help and surely their need is greater than the most needy cases in Newbury."

Although arrangements had not been finalised it was likely that the Resettlement Board would give grants for the conversion and improvement of sub-standard housing and possibly even for the purchase of unused private houses.

He asked the council to investigate the matter in detail and to search for suitable accommodation which he felt sure was available.

## 'Small sacrifice'

"If the scheme is successful Newbury will benefit by a small increase in its housing stock and the only sacrifice it would have to make to its comfortable existence is to accept and welcome up to 20 British citizens of Asian extraction to the town. Given the humanitarian will, there is a way."

Earlier, he said he remained convinced that the right course of action was to have made four council houses available and a number of people had commended him for his suggestion and none had criticised him.

He went on "Indeed, one of the most encouraging things is that six families have asked me about the possibility of offering temporary accommodation in their own homes. If anyone else in the town feels they may be able to help I would be pleased to hear from them."

Although only two voted against seeking empty properties for Asians, the debate was not without incident.

Coun. Batley's comment that to pursue his original proposal on council houses would

"stir up antagonism towards Asians and, much less importantly, between councillors" gave rise to an outburst from Deputy Mayor, Coun. Percy Burgess.

"There is no hostility between councillors or towards the Asians. There was no antagonism or bitterness at the committee meeting and I resent the suggestion that we might adopt such an attitude," he retorted.

And after Coun. Batley's proposal was accepted an amendment was moved by Coun. Anthony Freke over the form of words to be used to ensure that council action is dependent upon funds being available from the Resettlement Board.

Ald. Maurice Paine told members that at a meeting of the Association of Municipal Corporations which he had attended Home Secretary, Mr. Robert Carr, had begged every council in the country to accept a family and the government would pay all expenses. "If all the members of this council had heard him they would say we must do a little to help," he said.

## 'Hideous fate'

The view was reinforced by Coun. Mike James. He said "These people are facing a quite hideous fate. It is the public duty of all councils to make their contributions." Houses which were empty because of impending road schemes and other reasons could be used for Asians," he said, adding "If we all look around and make an effort I am sure houses can be found."

Coun. Freke said that there was an opportunity for the better off members of the community to dig into their pockets and give their time to help—and he was prepared to do so himself—but he would oppose the use of the local community's resources, because the

feelings of less fortunate people had to be taken into account.

Coun. Christopher Hall pointed out that the scheme would not be at the expense of the poorer section of the community. "This is the best possible solution and how anyone can quibble about this with an ounce of Christian feeling I do not know."

Like Coun. Hall, Coun. Mrs. Bodin said she was also against the allocation of council houses, not because of lack of sympathy for the Asians but it meant asking four families at the top of the waiting list, who had been waiting in bad conditions for a long time, to wait even longer. "It would be asking those least fitted to make the greatest sacrifice."

## 'Jumping the gun'

Not all members were convinced that action was necessary at this stage. Coun. Mrs. Elizabeth Ganf said "I have tremendous sympathy for the Asians but we are jumping the gun." The numbers coming to Greenham were not known and it was too soon to know whether any would need accommodation in the town. In view of the climatic changes the Asians would experience giving them sub-standard housing might not be a good idea. She and Coun. Dick Easterbrook advocated a wait-and-see policy.

This outraged Coun. Chris Waterman who declared "Whether Greenham Common is used or not is irrelevant. Some resettlement camps were established before the war and people are still in them. These people will remain and rot at Greenham unless we stand up and say 'Yes, we will help'."

The committee set up by the council to deal with the matter was not given delegated powers and will need full council approval before securing housing.

## Boy in sl tra

**A SQUAD** exped tragedy on a seven-year boy was killed by a barbed wire fence.

Ian Charles Kiln Road, Stoke District.

The accident occurred when Ian had been with his father, Christopher of 4 Hailstone.

The .410 shotgun is a grandfather's gun. Christopher was the time of the gun.

A Basingstoke man said the tragedy happened when Ian was being taken to school.

Ian was the only child of Charles Hawker and P. A. Baker.

The inquest is likely to be held at the RDC office.

# 1200 ARRIVE



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