

Complimenting Cop

SQUATTERS' HANDBOOK

DEC '75

10P



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SQUATTING

& USEFUL

Squatting groups usually do more than advise people about squatting. They aren't social work agencies, and most don't like to be used like that. They are groups of people who give each other mutual support. Let them know how you get on. They often meet regularly to organise campaigns over specific issues to do with housing. The success of these campaigns, and this often means the defence of a particular squat against eviction or harassment, depends on the amount of active support from other squatters in the area.

If you want to squat in an area that we haven't listed a contact group for, don't worry- we've probably left it out. You can always go along to the nearest group and ask their advice, then go back and set your own group up. Empty houses tend to be in groups so you will probably find other squatters around. Giving your address to ASS is another way to get in contact.

Rough, Tough, Cream Puff Estate Agency
(Founded 1281 by Wat Tyler)
217A, Westbourne Park Road W11
727 3045 produce regular bulletins on squattable property-send sae

Short life community Housing
18, Camden Road NW1 4858231, 2674622

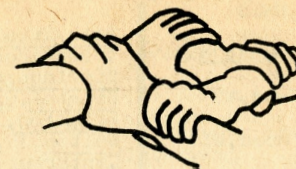
Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS)
2, St Pauls Road NI 359 8814
practical and legal advice, info on both on both London and out of London groups

Squatters Action Council, see ass for details of time and place of meeting

BIT information service, 146, Great Western Rd, W11 229 8219

Release, emergency legal service
1, Elgin Ave, W9 289 1123

GROUPS



CONTACTS

LONDON SQUATTING GROUPS

NORTH LONDON
Haringay, Alternative Housing Action Centre, 36, Haringay Park, N8 3400509 meet 1st Tues each month
Islington, 2, St. Pauls Rd NI 3598814 Wed afternoons only. Meet Tues fortnightly Old Red Lion St John St NI
Kilburn/West Hampstead, 94, Belsize Rd., NW6, 624 6618

Tolmer Village Ass., 102, Drummond St, NW1

EAST LONDON
East Stepney, 36, Parfitt St EI 247 1269

Tower Hamlets, 12, Aston St EI4, 196, Jubilee St, EI, Summer House, Maddam St, E3, 57, Longfellow Rd E3
Walthamstow, 31, Appsley Rd, EI7

SOUTH LONDON
Clapham, 78, Rectory Road SW4, 207, Railton Rd, SE24, 733 8663 daily 4-6pm for new squatters
Camberwell, 14, Rust Sq., SE5
Wandsworth, squatting Comm., 8, Falcon Rd SW11

Lambeth self help, 305, Brixton Road SW9 274 8848

WEST LONDON
Maida Hill, Old Paddington School. 425, Harrow Road open 6-7 each day
Notting Hill Grove area, The old clinic, Tavistock Rd meet every other Wed

Rough Theatre 32, Bravington Rd W9 969 7302 current production..... Squat Now While Stocks Last!

The Derelicts 403, Latimer Rd W10
Non sexist squatters rock band available for benefits in or out of London.

101'ers -squatters rock band, c/o that tea room, 37, Great Western Rd.

Zenith Cafe Freston Rd W10
That Tea Room Great Western Rd, W11
CAFE 3, Villa Rd, Brixton

LAW CENTRES

BRENT I6I, Church Road, NWIO
45I-II22
CAMDEN I46, Kentish Town Road NWI
485-6672
ISLINGTON, I6I, Hornsey Road, N7
607-246I
NORTH KEN., 74, Golborne Road, WIO
969-7473
PADDINGTON, 465 Harrow Road, WIO
969-9425
STEPNEY GREEN, Dame Colet House,
Ben Johnson Road, EI 790-672I
WEST STEPNEY, 59, Watney St., EI
790-63II
BALHAM, 92, Balham High Road, SWI2
673-373I
NEWHAM, 309, Barking Road, E6
47I-8226
LAMBETH, 506/8 Brixton Road SW9
733-4245
WEST HAMPSTEAD, 328-450I
TOTTENHAM, 800-7I79

LIVERPOOL (Vauxhall) Lime-Kiln
Lane Liverpool 5, 207 2004
COVENTRY, 62, Lower Ford Street
2305I
NEWCASTLE, 87, Adelaide Terrace
Benwell, Newcastle on Tyne 4

Lots of towns have part time
advice centres or Housing Aid
Centres, check with a law Centre
or BIT
For advice on criminal stuff and
especially if you're defending
yourself contact Up Against the
Law 66, York Way London N1, 837 4I94

PRESS LIST

A local press list would be too
vast to include, so here are the
numbers of national papers that
usually give sympathetic coverage to
squatting events.

Workers Press: 01 720 2000 (Workers
Revolutionary Party. Daily)
Socialist Worker: 01 739 1870 (Int-
ernational Socialists. Fridays)
Red Weekly: 01 837 6954 (Internat-
ional Marxist Group. Fridays)
Time Out: 01 278 5481
The Guardian: 01 837 7011
Peoples News Service, 197, Kings + Rd.
WCI, 01 837 0I82 (A weekly news bul-
letin that goes mainly to left
groups and alternative local papers.
Send in reports of events to them
by Friday night.)

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SQUATTING GROUPS OUT OF LONDON

Bath/Trowbridge, 47, Gloucester Rd
Trowbridge, Wilts 62952
Birmingham, I, Finch Rd. B'ham I9
Bristol, 6, Belton Road Easton,
Brighton, Open Cafe, 7, Victoria Rd
Bolton, 35, Davenport St, 382227
Canterbury, Sidney Cooper Centre,
St Peter Street
Cardiff, I08, Cathys Rd
Coventry, 3I, Primrose Hill St
Crewe, I75, Market St, 75748/66I59
Deal, I6, Clanwilliam Rd,
Leicester, I6, Roslyn Street, 2599I
Manchester, Student Comm. Action,
University Union, Oxford Rd, 2735III
ex 37
Norwich, 22, Mancroft St
Newcastle, I8, St. Thomas's Cres, 20609
Oxford, 42, Wellington St or 44,
Bernards Rd
Portsmouth, Student Comm Action,
Poly, Union Hse, St, Pauls Rd, 25835
Plymouth, I70, North Rd, West
Redditch, I9, Park Rd, 69950
Sunderland, I2, Ashmore St
Stockport, 320, Wellington Rd North
Swindon, II, Farringdon Road
Tunbridge Wells, 56, York Rd, 34247
Watford, I5, Harwoods Rd or I92,
Hagden Lane, 92292I
Winchester, 3, Southview
Workington, 67, Bolton Street
York, I7, Dove Street



Myrdle Street Eviction

FINDING A PLACE

There are 4 basic types of owners of empty property. Each one has both advantages and disadvantages for squatters who move in. So it is really worth while finding out (if you can) before you squat.

(i) Local Authority - County Council
Borough Council etc.etc.

Councils buy up houses in areas which they want to re-develop sometimes years ahead. They frequently leave houses empty for years. Compulsory Purchase areas are good potential areas. (see later how you find them out). Houses for renovation usually don't last quite so long but are still a good bet.

Squatters have often mounted good campaigns against the Council about empty property and gutting. This kind of action can help you in your fight against them (in and out of Court).

The main advantage of squatting Council property is that they don't usually evict people outside the Courts, but don't bank on it find out from other squatters first.

(ii) Other Authorities - e.g. hospital, education property, railway property, government departments etc.etc.

These tend to be quite good but much more variable than Councils. Many authorities leave property empty for a long time. Again local campaigns against the authority can help. They are also less experienced in getting Court procedure right.

(iii) Housing Associations & Trusts.

These are on the increase, buying up houses everywhere - resulting in a large backlog of empty property. As far as evictions go they sometimes get heavy, but are subject to concerted pressure from squatters. It is also quite often possible to do a deal with Housing Associations.

(iv) Private Landlords - 2 types
(a) Someone who has just moved and is selling their other house i.e. a private owner occupier - you are not likely to be able to stay, but they will have to take you to Court - try and find out how long the house has been empty.

(b) Large landlords and/or speculators i.e. someone who owns 2 houses! These are always the most unpredictable type of owner - prone to sending heavies in etc.etc. But they often bend if pressure is exerted - Joe Levy in Tolmer Square, Camden, 220 Camden High Street etc.etc. You have to be organised for this kind of campaign - preferably with other tenants and squatters in the area.

Despite all this many squatters have been living quietly in private houses for months and years - it's the luck of the draw!

HOW YOU FIND

ADDRESSES

You can either tramp the streets round an area noting empty houses and researching them later or sometimes the local squatting group has an empty house list or at least a list of potential areas to look. It is good to find out how much life the house has got, type of owner, and the strength of argument you would have to stay in that area.

Neighbours and local shops can be useful, although be careful not to alarm them so they tell the owner. The local press may be able to tell you something of the area too. If it has an agent's board outside, ring them up; if they say it's sold ask to whom, as you want to make an offer.



4

But the best source of information is the Council itself. Many of them (especially in London) are now wise to squatters, so be prepared with a story - "I live in the house next door and water is coming through" or "I'm interested in buying it, but can't find the owner".

COUNCIL BUREAUCRACY

THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT is the best place to get information about houses. They have plans which show development areas and if you ask, they are supposed to tell you what they are doing and when. Council agendas for full Council Meetings are available free from the Town Hall: these always have some information about what the Council is buying and include detailed maps showing exactly where each house is. By looking at these it is possible to find out both which houses are already empty and which will shortly become empty.

THE ARCHITECTS' DEPARTMENT display plans of different areas showing what they are going to do with them.

RATES DEPARTMENT
If you find a house and don't know who owns it, try the Rates Department to see who pays rates (although some are now cagey about giving this information).

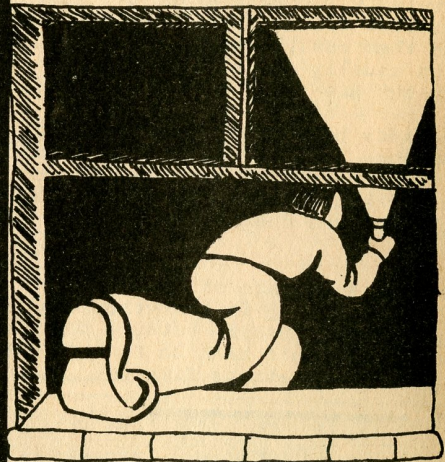
LAND REGISTRY OFFICE
You can make a "search" on the property to find the owner. You will have to give some excuse like you are thinking of renting it - a nominal fee is charged.



MOVING IN

You've found the place, now to get in - this is the exciting and frightening bit.

- A Few Tips Beforehand
- 1) Find out if there is a rear entrance.
 - 2) Find out if any window catches are open.
 - 3) If you are going through the front door check for mortice locks.
 - 4) Check for squatters or sympathetic people in the same street - roof tops are often the easiest way to get in.

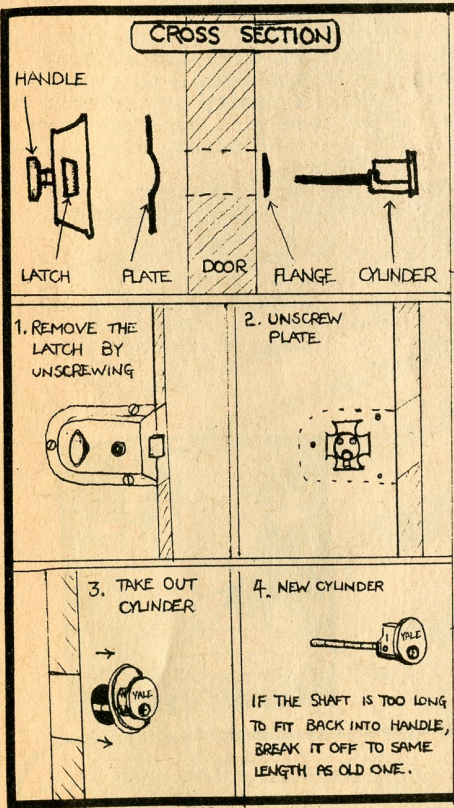


GETTING IN

It's good to carry a copy of the squatters handbook - what better proof that you are intending to squat not thief. If you are carrying tools i.e. crowbar, screwdriver, palette knife etc., do not make it obvious. Remember to take a torch (day or night), a mains tester, a small tin of plastic wood for repairing damage and of course the new lock. It seems traditional to break in at night, which is sometimes right. If it is difficult to get in without making a noise, the day may be better. Try and get some overalls, a ladder and a bag of tools and if possible a van and just go straight in - it nearly always works.

CHANGING THE LOCK

When you find a place that you want always change the lock straight away. This way you and nobody else has access. You can do it in broad daylight... it's perfectly legal so long as you do no damage to the door. All you will need is a screwdriver, use the old screws as they are the right length.



New Yale (any make will fit) barrels can be obtained at all hardware shops and cost about £1.25. The new one is fitted exactly in the reverse order as taking off the old one.

YOU ARE NOW IN OCCUPATION

It's a good idea to have some furniture with you when you occupy a house. It helps to show the police and the neighbours that you are squatters and not burglars or vandals. If the neighbours or the owner look as if they are going to get heavy then put a legal warning on the door:-

LEGAL WARNING

This house is occupied by squatters who intend to stay.

- If you injure us or damage our property we will take you to Court.

- If you attempt to evict us forcibly you are rendering yourself liable to prosecution for: assault: breach of the peace: riot: affray: battery: malicious and criminal damage.

AND WE WILL PROSECUTE.

Neighbours

It is a good idea to explain to the neighbours what you are doing and why. Only do this when you are in and secure (unless they come out to talk to you). This may help you prevent harassment like calling the police or alerting the owner, or even bricks through the window or ripping you off.

The last 2 are rare, and seem to stem not only from prejudice, but from the incorrect belief that as squatters you are not entitled to the same protection by the law as anyone else.

One thing you can practically do is to clean up the front of the house even paint the front door and windows.

Sympathetic neighbours can be valuable support: for instance in dissuading owners who come round to evict you, or giving you cups of coffee or baths before your services are connected. More generally, by squatting you are challenging fundamental values about property and the rights

of owners. It can be politically worthwhile and fruitful to discuss this challenge with your neighbours. It may be the first time they have thought about such things. Some squatters have managed to set up or join tenants and residents associations.

Before talking to the neighbours, it is probably worthwhile considering the objections they might feel to you. Here are a few we have come across, with suggestions as to how you might respond.

You're the beginning of the end of this street

This feeling has been known to be strong enough to cause local people to form vigilante squads to harass squatters and gut houses the moment they become empty. Often this is understandable especially in areas of council redevelopment. Probably the people in the street used to know the people in your house who may have been evicted against their will by the council. Often the remaining tenants are those who offered the most resistance to being rehoused. They see squatters as part of the councils plan to smash their area. It is in this situation that it is most important to join with the tenants and help them fight as well, or at least make an effort to talk with them about your position.

I've worked all my life and always paid rent, rates and taxes. Its disgusting you lot just come in and take a place over and live free.

It's disgusting that people should have to work such long hours because their rent is so high. There aren't any places to rent I can't afford to pay the kind of rents they charge round here.



You're just jumping the council waiting list

If you don't have any kids then the council waiting list in most areas isn't applicable to you. If you do have a family the council has to rehouse you, but they give you a place that nobody else will accept.

Housing should be a right- no-one should have to wait for decent housing

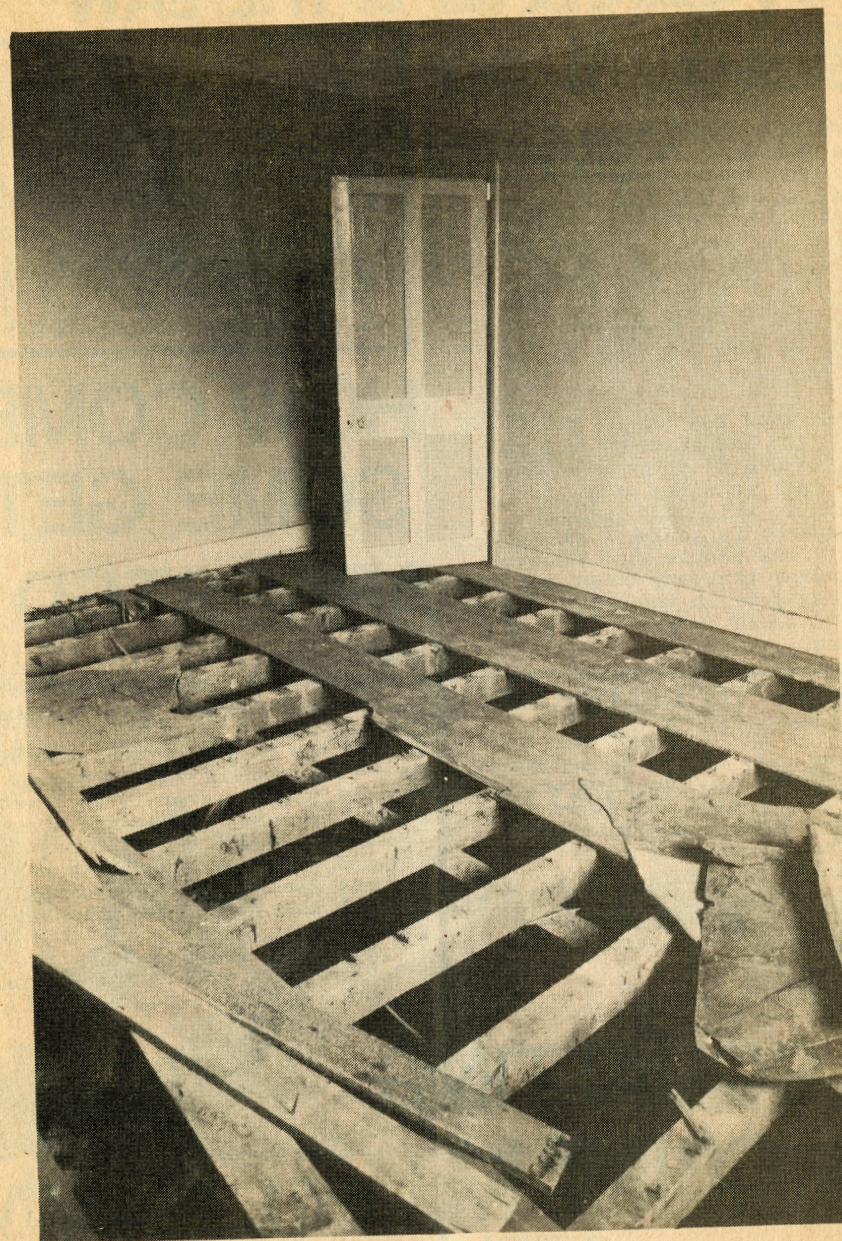
The councils waiting list has the priorities all wrong.

There are enough empty houses to rehouse all the homeless people, but it pays some people to keep them empty.



We don't want people from outside moving in- our housing problem is bad enough.

We move into empty houses which will only be vandalised and made uninhabitable
Are you really saying that people should be made to live where they were born - where were you born?



THE STATES SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS

SQUATTING & THE LAW

WHAT THE LAW IS 'ALL ABOUT

This section tries to answer some of the questions that you may want to ask both before you squat and before you get evicted. Most squatters don't come into contact with the law except if they get evicted, a few have a bit of bother with the police and the gas and electricity boards. This will tell you the things you need to know if you have any of these problems.

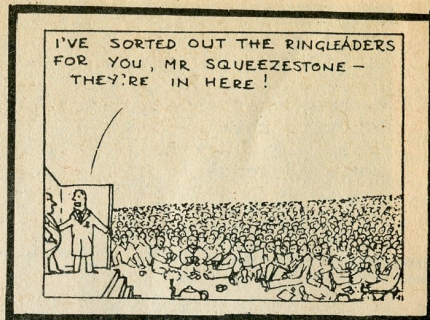
REMEMBER THAT THE LAW IS NOT THERE TO HELP YOU and although you can sometimes use it to your advantage do not fall into the trap of assuming it will help you. The legal system is there to protect property and people with money, which means that any court and the police will be on the side of the owner, however sympathetic they may seem.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. Always try and talk to other squatters if you get into trouble - practical advice is always better than 3rd hand from a solicitor.
2. If ever you write a letter or sign anything always keep a copy.
3. If things start to look black you will always get support from other squatters who have been through it too.

IS SQUATTING A CRIME?

Squatting is not a crime, it is a civil matter. Criminal cases are dealt with by the police, civil cases are nothing to do with the police. They are dealt with by different courts who do not sentence you, fine you or jail you.



HOW COME SOME GET ARRESTED?

The danger with squatting usually arises when you actually go into the house. When entering you must be careful not to attract the police as you may be laying yourself open to a number of criminal charges against you. However it is a very complex business under the present laws charging someone who hasn't entered with intent and the police may not fancy getting involved in an area where there is a lot of controversy. If you get done on any of these kind of charges you should always defend the case, either yourself or by using a solicitor on legal aid.

The laws you may get done for are....

Forcible Entry Act 1381

Your entry has to be forcible..... going through a window (unless you break it) or opening a door is not forcible. This is rarely used and can be got round by not being caught in the act. A stone through the window first and slip in later or the following day.

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Theft & Burglary

This is the charge the cops most threaten you with if they pick you up (especially if you are carrying tools). Anything in the house belongs to the owner so any removal can constitute theft. Remember to always keep the old Yale lock around as that belongs to the owner.

Criminal Damage

This is the offence squatters most get done for, but even this is rare. Taking corrugated iron off or breaking a lock will leave you open to this charge so always tidy up after you have entered.

Squatters have been charged with other offences such as obstruction, conspiracy to cause criminal damage "being on enclosed premises....." going equipped for theft etc etc. Most people get off these charges and mostly the cops only threaten you to scare you a bit.

what do you do if police arrive?

Quite often the neighbours call the police, thinking that you may be real burglars. If you are already in with the new lock on, you are in a much stronger position when they come. If they insist on "taking you down to the station" you can ask why and if you are being arrested. It does not pay to get over stropky in this situation - quoting your "rights" at them (unless there are 20 of you). Very often the police go away when they know that you are squatting, or if they take you down to the station, you're let out after stewing for a few hours.

see section on neighbours pg 7



what is the law about get- ting services turned on?

WATER

WATER is usually on anyway....you can turn it on yourself, but should tell the Water Board so that they can charge you for rates. The supply of water is governed by the Water Act 1945.

see section on water on pg 27/8

10

GAS & ELECTRIC

You should go and sign on at the Gas and Electricity Boards straight away before the landlord can contact them.

GAS AND ELECTRICITY: It's a special offence to steal electricity, so if you connect up gas or electric supplies without a meter you could be laying yourself open to a charge of theft. Even if there is a meter installed you may still be liable if you haven't told the authority. The most dangerous time is just after you've moved in, do not turn on all the lights cos the cops can then do you for theft.

WHAT IF THEY REFUSE TO CONNECT?

Gas and electricity boards have never been very keen on connecting up squatters. The situation now is that they are under no obligation to turn us on despite the Gas Act (schedule 3 para 8) and the Electric Lighting Act (section 22) which both say that they must.

Ways round this

1. Not every official will have heard of this decision (tho don't bank on it) so quote the Acts at them when you go down and sign on at the showroom.

2. Some people put down large deposits and keep a check on the amount used. If the board refuse the deposit.....keep offering - this should be enough to prevent a charge of theft. The disadvantage is that they may retaliate by cutting you off from the road. Even this has been stopped by picketing the hole or filling it back up. Even more effective is to try and get the local ETU (electrical Union) or GMWU (gas Union) to pass a motion about squatters services.

3. Say you are a tenant when you go to the showroom and produce a rent book - Smiths and other stationery shops sell them.

4. It is much easier to get connected if you have had a previous account (providing you paid the bill).

continued over



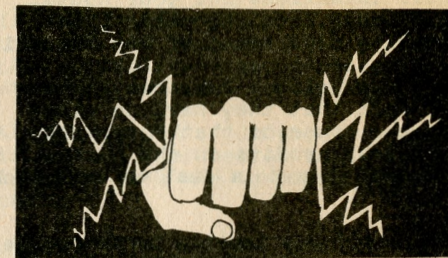
5. Some people just connect it up themselves and pray!

6. Various types of action have been used to reconnect supplies. The occupation of an electricity board showroom in Notting Hill caused the GLC to lift their restrictions on LEB right of entry into some houses in Maida Hill. Direct action is usually more successful and less expensive than using the courts.

WHEN THE GAS OR ELECTRICITY BOARDS WANT TO CUT OFF SUPPLY, THEY HAVE NO RIGHT OF ENTRY WITHOUT THE OCCUPIERS CONSENT OR A MAGISTRATES WARRANT UNLESS IT IS AN EMERGENCY, TO AVERT A DANGER TO LIFE OR PROPERTY. s2 rights of entry (gas and elec. Board) act 1954

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO BE RECONNECTED?

Deposits range from £10-£100, but they are usually less if you have had a supply with the same board before. If you have been disconnected from the road, they charge about £50-70.



can an owner evict without a court order?

The short answer is technically yes (securitor run a special service to do this) but it does not often happen.

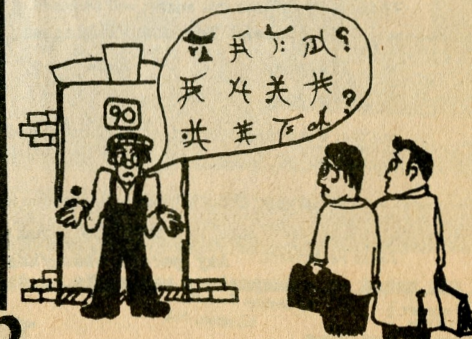
The right to do this was decided in a now famous squatting case McPhail v Persons Unknown by Lord Denning which any squatting group will explain to you.

It is very dangerous for landlords to try heavy methods, a landlord in Brighton, Mr. Hoogstraten was fined £2500 and compensation for throwing out squatters by using too much force.

Local Authorities, County Councils etc. very rarely do anything outside the courts. Public authorities i.e. hospitals, educational places, housing associations etc. usually use the courts. Private landlords most commonly use heavy methods particularly property speculators. Also if you accidentally squat someone's house when they are on holiday you could be in risk.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF THE LANDLORD OR THE COUNCIL VISITS YOU?

Be as reasonable as possible (assuming they are) tell as little as possible - if they ask for names say you are just visiting and don't know. The name asking is usually a sign that they may be starting court proceedings - but don't move out yet as there is plenty of time.



IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO BEFORE THE SUMMONS ARRIVES?

As soon as you get a whiff of action from the owner, you should start organising to resist eviction. Pressure can be put on the landlords by creating bad publicity. It is worth researching the owners and their intentions for your house. Neighbours, local squatters, the planning department of the Council and the local paper are useful starting points. Publicity about the fact that they have no plans for the house, or that they will make vast profits on the house, may make them do a deal or even back down.

Always try and involve local people, both squatters and tenants especially if you can help organise resistance with them against their landlord or the redevelopment scheme etc.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN THE COURT PAPERS ARRIVE?

You will get one or more wad of documents which will summons you to court. If you are out they will pin it to the door. The bundle will

also contain sworn statements by the landlord and his witnesses. DO NOT THROW THEM AWAY IF YOU WANT TO DEFEND THE CASE. You will have at least 7 days before the court case - probably 3-4 weeks.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO DEFEND THE CASE?

If you disagree with any of their statements and you want to call them as witnesses you can.....

1. Write a letter to the issuing solicitor (name and address will be on the back page)..... I hereby give you notice that at the hearing of my case on I will require to cross examine your witness Will you please make sure that he/she is available at court. I am keeping a copy of this letter and if he/she should fail to be at court I will inform the judge. OR
2. You can get a witness summons (subpoena) from the court which you must give to the witness who will then have to attend. You may have to pay some expenses, but ask at the court office.

Check that the summons which you have received is complete and was served correctly. The summons will consist of 3 parts. There should be a front piece (as shown) There must be at least 7 days between the date that you receive the summons and the date of hearing. There should be a statement saying that they own or are entitled to possession, and the circumstances in which the land has been occupied without consent.

The 3rd one is a record of their visits... taking "reasonable steps." Check for mistakes in their evidence and file a counter affidavit (sworn statement) at the court. In this you can bring out facts about the plans for the property (or lack of) and any grime you can dig up about the landlords.

MAIN POINTS TO LOOK OUT FOR

incorrect service of summons
insufficient time between service and the hearing
No reasonable steps
Discrepancies and lies in their evidence
Doubt in the fact that they own the property

If any of these apply to your case then ask the judge to dismiss the case (in the case of no reasonable steps) or at least for an adjournment

Always try and defend your case if for no other reason than to take up court time and to publicise your case.

Address all communications for the Court to "The Registrar, County Court, CLERKENWELL County Court."

16.—Notice to Respondent of Day on which matter will be heard.
Order 6, Rules 4 (2) (c) (ii), 6 (1) (c) (ii).

IN THE MATTER OF POSSESSION UNDER ORDER 26

AND IN THE MATTER OF 118 Offord Rd., London N.1

BETWEEN The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the London Borough of Islington

AND M. Lane (M) & All persons in occupation

Applicant,
Respondent
CLERKENWELL COUNTY COURT

TAKE NOTICE that this matter will be heard at
* 33, Duncan Terrace, Islington, London N.

on Tuesday the 29th day of July 19 75.
at 10.30 o'clock

and that if you do not attend at the time and place above-mentioned, such Order will be made as the Court thinks just.

A sealed copy of the originating application [or petition for possession] is hereto annexed.

Dated this 2nd day of JULY 1975

To the Respondent. Any person occupying the premises mentioned in the application who is not named as a Respondent may apply to the Court to be joined as JOHN WARDE a Respondent

Registrar.

RM 7/72



LONDON'S "PROGRESSIVE" HOUSING POLICY

in the court are there any defences?



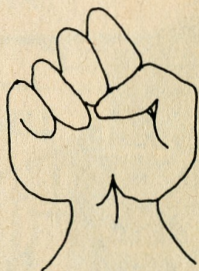
The courts are there to protect the owners of property, not the people who need to use it. So don't expect much joy from the courts. However squatters can win concessions in the court so it is worth fighting sometimes.

Courts are designed to make you feel isolated, stupid, and scared. Everything is made complicated, so always get some help from local squatters, who have been through it before. You can also get advice from local law centres (see list on page *) but always remember you have to make the decisions so use advice carefully, lawyers are only trained in law and forget that your home is actually involved.

You can get a barrister to talk for you judges tend to take barristers more seriously and there are some who will help either for a nominal fee or even for free. Make sure that they say what you want to and not what they want to. Some people think that it is worth talking yourself with the help of a friend beside you called a "Mc-kensie" who can prompt or advise etc.

Most defences will only delay the eviction, rather than put it off forever. The only absolute defence is to prove that you are not a squatter but a tenant or a licensee. The difference between these two is that a tenant has "exclusive possession" of the property, and a licensee is on the property with the owner's permission. Both may pay rent/money to the landlord. The most common place where licenses occur is flat sharers and Council granted communal houses.

If you think that you may fall into either category, ask at the nearest Law Centre (list on page 3). If you are a licensee and the license comes to an end by the owner giving you "reasonable notice", then you will become a trespasser and will be got out by a squatting order.



ARE THERE ANY LOOPHOLES?

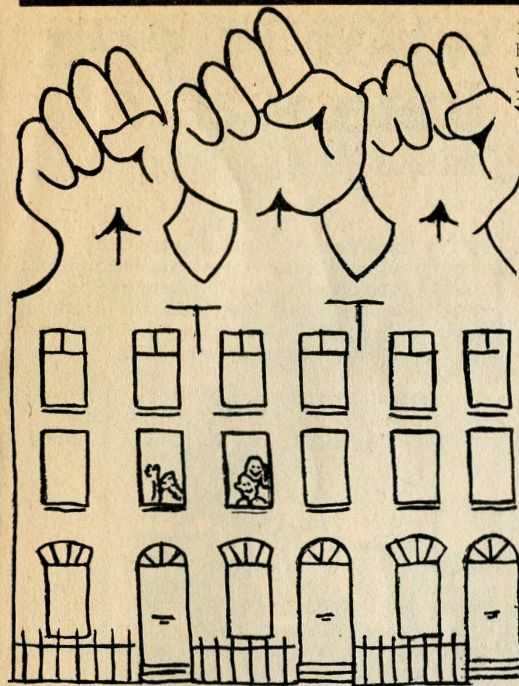
There is no legal defence which will mean that you will be able to stay in your house forever.

Sooner or later expect the owner to get possession..... YOU CAN WIN VALUABLE TIME, sometimes months.... here are some that have been used:

1. Try any reason to get an adjournment - courts take a long time to put your case up again. This can be done if the witness you have summonsed doesn't turn up.



The mckenzie principle



3. Try and do a deal before the hearing - say that you will leave within a specified time in exchange for not fighting the case and promising that you won't smash the place up before you leave.
4. Any others?

do you pay costs?

If they haven't got your name they haven't got a hope of collecting it. If they have got your name, they'll still find it difficult as they will have to bring you back to court and distrain your goods "what goods yer 'onor?"

should you appeal?

2. The reasonable steps argument is based on the use of squatting orders - Order 26 (county court) and Order 113 (high court). These orders enable the owner to take you to court even though they do not know your name. The difference between the two (apart from being heard in a different court) is that the police can assist evictions by the high court bailiffs although they often do in county court evictions.

Appeals are dangerous. An appeal gives the appeal court judges a chance to "clarify the law" relating to squatting. Their ruling is binding on all the courts, and so affects all squatters. An appeal is not a matter for any individual to decide on. Discuss with as many squatters as possible before you act.

SEE OVER

The landlord is supposed to take reasonable steps to find your name - like asking you or checking the gas and electricity boards etc. Cases have been thrown out if the owner doesn't do this. Courts are becoming less and less sympathetic to these kind of defences. Even if you can show that the owner has made a complete balls up of the procedure the judge will probably say that it does not matter ... this is called "using the court's discretion" of course they never discretize our way.



APPEALING

SHOULD YOU APPEAL AGAINST (cont'd) A DECISION?

Beware of lawyers advice over this - they have nothing to lose by a lost appeal and may want to go ahead for very doubtful reasons. Should you decide to go ahead, this is what happens: You apply for a "stay of execution" which sets aside the decision of the court until the appeal is heard. You then apply for leave to appeal where you outline your grounds for appealing. If both of these are granted, your appeal will be heard in about two months. You can withdraw from the appeal at any time. If you do before the papers have been filed there will be no costs. Costs in the High Court are very high.

what if you lose AND AN ORDER IS GRANTED?

Don't worry about being evicted the following day - ask at the bailiff's office when they will be coming. Some courts have a 4-6 week delay and some give 7 days notice before they come.



WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN THE BAILIFFS COME?

There have been some successful barricades of squats where the owner has given in and called the bailiffs off (they are never supposed to give up otherwise). The bailiffs are supposed to knock and ask you to open the door and must only use reasonable force to enter, but don't rely on it.

CAN YOU MOVE BACK IN OR SWAP HOUSES?

If you leave before the bailiffs come and let others move in, they can be evicted on your order. If you are evicted by the bailiffs, then you can move back in and they will have to start all over again. Although this stands at the moment, any appeal on this will be lost.



FLOUR FLIES AT AN EVICTION IN BRIGHTON

New Legal Proposals

In June 1974 the Law Commission published a working paper on changing the law relating to the entry and occupation of property. It is suggested that squatting and any occupations (e.g. student sit-ins and factory work-ins) could be made criminal offences. If enacted, the proposed laws would make the homeless criminals, and seriously hamper Trade Union activity.

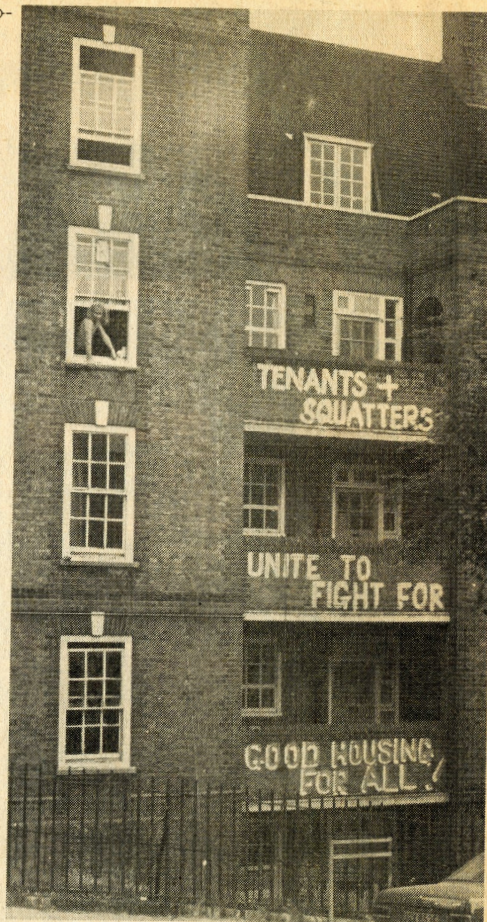
THE LAW COMMISSION

The Law Commission advises the Lord Chancellor who then advises the Government on whether to change the law through parliament. The Commission has been taken aback by "the extraordinary amount of opposition" to its proposals. As a result it may finally recommend a series of more specific offences instead of a blanket criminal trespass offence. These could include:-

1. An offence of resisting a County Court Bailiff in the execution of his duty - i.e. police involvement in evictions would become routine as most evictions are carried out through the County Court. This offence, coupled with a speed-up of Court eviction procedures, would have an effect as sweeping as the original proposals.
2. An offence of being unlawfully on residential property and failing to leave as soon as reasonably practical after being ordered to do so etc. A modified version of the original and clearly aimed at squatters.
3. A specific offence relating to the occupation of public buildings.

TORIES GET TOUGH

The Government say they won't act until the Law Commission's final report (now imminent). When they do, we can expect new offences to fill the gaps left by the abolition of conspiracy to trespass. In the meantime, Tories are already sponsoring motions in the House and are likely to introduce a private members Bill to make trespass a criminal offence.



SUPPORT CACTL

CACTL (Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law) was formed to co-ordinate opposition to these proposals. Support is still needed in the form of resolutions, lobbying of MPs and Councillors, in the T.U. movement and cash.

CACTL holds open, fortnightly meetings at 2a St. Paul's Road, London N1. Contact address - 6 Bowden Street, London SE11.

squatters and social security

HOW MUCH CAN YOU GET?

The basic rates for a person on social security are as follows:

Married couple.....	£17.75
Single householder.....	£10.60
Non-householder (aged 18 +).....	£ 9.60
Children aged:	
16-17	£ 6.70
13-15	£ 5.60
11-12	£ 4.60
5-10	£ 3.75
under 5	£ 3.10

(Single person, full board & lodging up to £12)

PLUS: Rates if they are being paid.

DEDUCTIONS AND DISREGARDS: Family allowance, family income supplement, maintenance, sickness or unemployment benefit, pensions and invalidity benefit are deducted in full. But up to £2 of part-time earnings and up to £800 of savings may be ignored.

OTHER DENIALS: The wage stop, the industrial misconduct rule, the four week rule, the cohabitation rule, strike breaking rule, married women denial etc.

FIXED ADDRESSES

People who are squatting may be told by the SS that they can't have any money because they haven't got a fixed address. Particularly in areas where squatting is a new thing, they might say that a squat is only a temporary address or not a secure address etc.

This is just an excuse not to pay out and should not be accepted. If the SS want proof that the address you give is actually your address (you won't have a rent book to prove it) then a letter addressed to you at that address is sufficient. The simplest thing is to send a letter to yourself. This is all the proof they need.

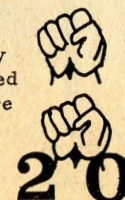
HOUSEHOLDER & NON-HOUSEHOLDER

Having proved that the squat is a fixed address, the next problem may be convincing the SS that you are a householder. They will often try to pay you the (lower) non-householder rate, telling you that a householder is someone who pays rent, or rates. Don't swallow this! Everybody should get the full householder rate.

To get the householder rate, all that you should have to do is show that you pay for your share of the gas and electricity bills of your house, but deny that you share food or cooking with others in the house (which would mean that you were all living in one household). However, many SS offices may not accept this, especially because an appeal was lost recently in the high court, (although many officers will not know this).



Another way to get the householder rate is to become the ratepayer for your house or part of it, which is done by going to the local rates office and saying that you want to pay rates for the house you occupy. The SS will have to pay the bill in full (see below), and will normally accept a bill in your name or confirmation from the rates office as evidence that you are of 'householder status'.



A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Another way for squatters to claim from the SS is to arrange that they are paying someone else living in the house a given weekly sum for their full board and lodging. The SS will pay this—up to £12 a week—plus £2.70/week pocket money and £5/week per child. All you should need to take to the SS is a letter from the person you are paying stating that you are paying her/him so much per week, in advance, for full board and lodging.

RATES

Most people squatting live collectively. If you have a rates bill take it to the SS. They have to pay it—either directly in a lump sum to the rates office or in a weekly amount to you. To avoid the SS paying householder rate to only one person in the house, then the rates bill should be made out in the names of all those on SS so that each gets the householder's rate. If the SS know that some people in the house are working they will deduct a share of the rates for them. If you are working and not earning £100 pw. you can claim a rate rebate... the forms are at the local Town Hall.

SECURITY DEPOSITS FOR GAS & ELECTRICITY

Quite often the Gas and Electricity people will ask you to pay a security deposit of £10 or £20 before connecting the supplies. Always demand that the SS pays these for you. What happens in practise is that the SS gets on to the Gas or Electricity board and come to an agreement, or give you a letter to give them. The SS don't usually pay the money, but then neither do you.

FURNITURE, CLOTHING ETC.

Whatever the SS may say, squatters are entitled to 'exceptional needs' grants for furniture, clothing, crockery etc.. In the past the SS have often refused these grants on the grounds that a squat is temporary or insecure accomodation. This must not be

accepted. Many squatters in the East End have won furniture, sink units etc. from the SS. One simple rule here is CLAIM FOR EVERYTHING YOU WANT.

HOW TO CLAIM

Sign on at your local labour exchange, ask for a B1 form which you take to your local supplementary benefit office. If you are a single parent, a pensioner or sick you don't have to sign on. Work out how much money you should get each week.

NEVER MEET THE SS ALONE

If you're on your own the SS cheat and bully, but together we're strong and can get from them everything that we're 'entitled' to and more. Always go with a friend. You can take your friend into the interview with you. Collective action at the SS works wonders. The appearance of a half a dozen or so people demanding to see the manager has a remarkable effect on changing decisions only made a short time ago.

APPEALS

A lot of people prefer mass occupations to appeals as a way of fighting back. We think you should always appeal against decisions you disagree with. After all each appeal costs them about £30 to administer. We have no illusions about the impartiality or fairness of the appeals tribunal. We know whose side they're on. But SS decisions can be reversed on appeal, and lots of goodies like vacuum cleaners, special diets etc. can be won. SS appeals don't have the disadvantage of appeals in courts that they affect everybody.

SOURCE: Adapted from the East London Claimants Union handout.

There is probably a Claimants Union in your area—ring up BIT or a Neighbourhood Law Centre (see p. 3) to find out.



HOW TO BUILD A BARRICADE!!

GETTING A PLACE TOGETHER

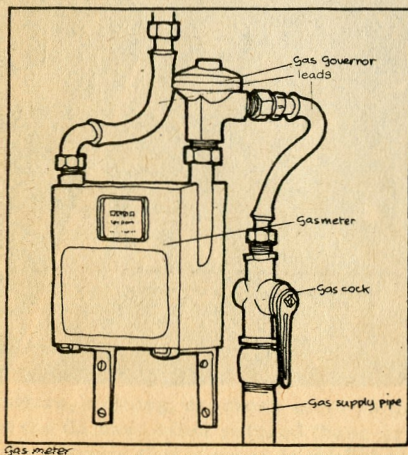
There are always a lot of things to do when you move in especially if the house has been empty for a while. A lot of things are made easy by having the right tools - other squatters usually can help you here.

Another invaluable asset is a penguin book called "Self Help Repair Manual" by Andy Ingham price 60p. It gives detailed information about general repairs, gas, electric and water. Ignore the Legal Section at the back which is inaccurate. There will also be other handy man books at the library which may be useful.

GAS

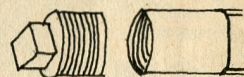
Gas can be dangerous, so don't try and do anything if you don't understand it.

The first thing you need to do is to see whether the gas is on. On the ground floor (or basement if there is one) you will find a meter or a gap where one was - and a gas cock.

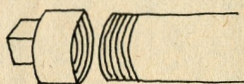


Gas meter

Gas piping is usually not vandalised because of its low scrap value, but before you turn on, check for open ends. You might find them by fire-places or bathroom, kitchen etc. You can buy caps - either $\frac{3}{4}$ " or $\frac{1}{2}$ ".



Female End and Male cap



Male end and Female cap

TOOLS

If you are going to put in some new piping, you will need:

- 1) Stillson wrench.
- 2) Boss white or PTFE tape to seal threaded joints.
- 3) Squeeze to test if joints are leaking by bubbles.

New piping can be in iron or copper adaptors can be obtained. Do not use polythene only copper or iron. You can then assemble as water pipe.

TO CONNECT A COOKER

You will probably find that there is an open pipe in which an old cooker was fixed. In this case all you need is a flexible rubber connecting pipe (cost about £2.50) - always test joints with squeeze before you use.

ELECTRICITY

DISCONNECTED

SUPPLY

One of the first things you will need is electricity. If the house has been empty for any length of time the supply will probably be disconnected. Tools: you will need a mains tester which lights up when you touch something live, also useful, are insulation tape, wire cutters and a small screw driver.

There are 3 ways disconnection may have been done:

i) CUT OFF IN THE ROAD

Signs of this are freshly laid tarmac a few feet into the road in front of the house. Or, in London, there may be "LEB OFF" written on or near the front door. If it has been cut off from the road, it'll cost a lot of money and trouble to get it turned on again. It is probably best to try another house. Do not rely on the LEB sign - Councils have been known to paint bogus ones up. You can check by touching the bottom terminal inside the company head with a mains tester.

ii) FUSE REMOVED FROM COMPANY HEAD

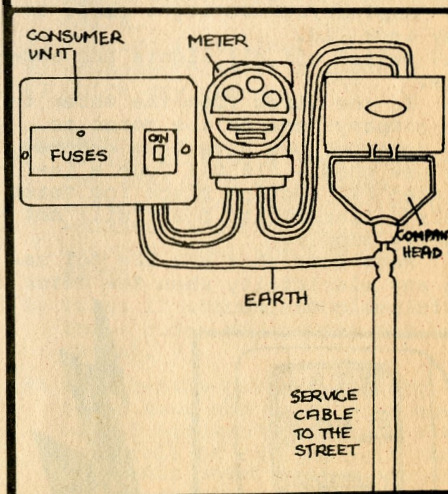
In the head there is a 60 amp cartridge fuse (3" version of one in an ordinary plug) - these are often removed to cut off supply. You can buy them at electrical dealers. If there are 3 fuses you have 3 phase supply - get advice before you work on it.

iii) METER REMOVED OR WIRES TO METER REMOVED

Again test the mains head to see if it is live.

GETTING TURNED ON

When you have found out that the supply is not off from the road, go down to the showroom straight away. If you leave it the owner may inform them that you are squatters. For example in some areas, the electricity board have an agreement with the Council so you may have to get a letter saying that you have got a licence!! They will probably ask for a deposit which ranges from £10-50 See Section on Page 11 + 12.



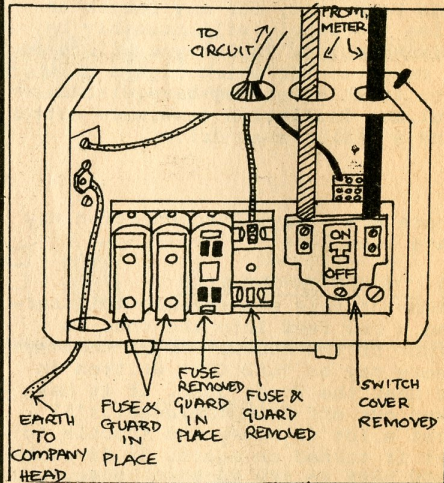
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY



If everything is intact when you come in, take a reading of the meter and take it down to the showroom. They will probably change the meter anyway.

REPAIRING THE SYSTEM

Whenever you are working on any part of house wiring, make sure you have turned off at either the consumer box or by pulling out the 60 amp fuse and check wires with mains tester (see later for why). If you have to re-wire the house you don't have to replace lights, just sockets in every room, lights can be plugged in.



Consumer Box

- 1) Lights require 5 amp fuse and 1.5 mm wire.
- 2) Sockets require 13 amp fuse and 2.5 mm wire.
- 3) ring mains sockets require 30 amp fuse and 2.5mm wire.
- 4) Cooker requires 30 amp fuse 6 mm wire. (although electricity boards say 45 amp fuse and 10 mm wire.)

A SHORT CIRCUIT

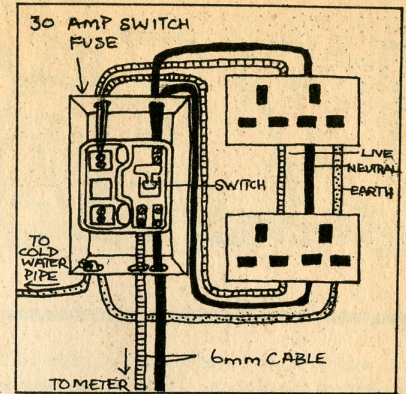
This happens when a red wire (positive) touches a black wire (negative) normally it will just cause a flash and blow a fuse.

Replacement wiring and switches etc can often be found in derelict houses as they have little value or can be picked up second-hand.

TEMPORARY SUPPLY.

If you have electricity as far as the meter but all the wiring from there looks hopeless, or the lights don't work you can wire several plug boards with fuse boxes to take extension leads throughout the house.

If you are doing any electrics, the Self Help Repair Manual by Andy Ingham published by Penguin price 60p is really good. Also short cuts and, maybe access to tools can be got through the local squatting group.



ROOFS

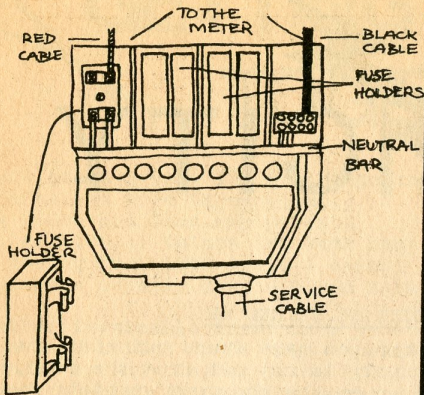
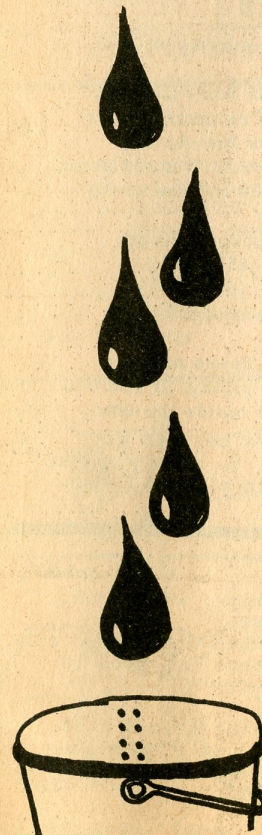
These always seem to be a problem, but usually can be fixed, providing access can be obtained, preferably on top or in attic space.

TOOLS and MATERIALS

- 1) Hammer and galvanised roofing nails.
- 2) Roofing felt/lino.
- 3) Aquaseal plastic bitumen.
- 4) Quick dry cement.

PROBLEMS

- 1) Slates missing - these can be replaced with wire hooks or the slates surrounding covered with aquaseal, and roof felt/lino slipped under the row of slates above.
- 2) Tiles if cracked or piece missing - quick dry cement and aquaseal.
- 3) Zinc centre gutters leaking - sweep down and cover with aquaseal bitumen adhesive - stick down roll of roofing felt and tuck ends under bottom row of slates or tiles.
- 4) Flashing - (joint between wall or chimney and roof) either cover with aquaseal plastic or chip away and replace with quick dry cement.
- 5) Always unblock eave gutters and drainpipes and seal joints.

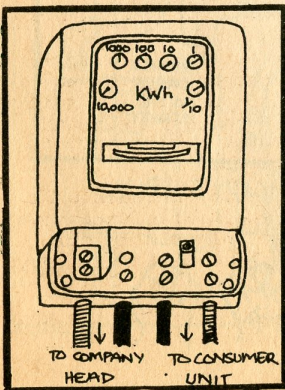


THE COMPANY HEAD

When you have signed on make sure that the house wiring is alright. They will use any excuse not to turn you on.

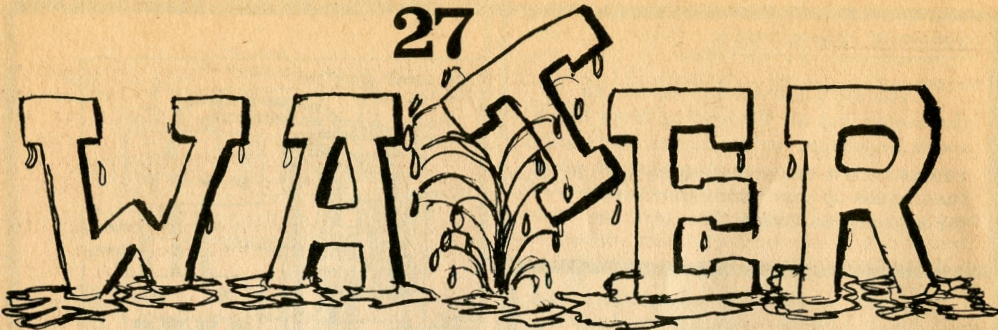
Things to check:

- i) No bare wires sticking out (even with insulating tape on them.)
- ii) Replace/remove light cords if they look old.
- iii) Switch off all lights and sockets.
- iv) If the wires from the meter to the company head or the meter to the consumer box have been removed, buy new ones - "16 mil double insulated PVC red and black for meter tails". Electricity board will not usually supply.
- v) Make sure that you are not using any electricity when the meter installer comes round.

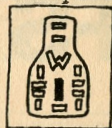


THE METER





If the water isn't on already, it may be turned off by a stopcock where the mains enter the house. This is usually in the hall or in the basement under the front door. If there's still no water when you open that, follow the line of the pipe towards the road. There will be another stopcock covered by a small iron plate set into the pavement or in the garden. You need a special tool to turn this on, but if you can't improvise or borrow one, the Water Board will come and do it for you.



Once you've got the water on, check that there aren't any leaks as lead pipes have often been ripped out.

If you do need more pipes, although some Water Boards don't like you using polythene pipes where there's mains pressure, they're much easier and cheaper than lead or copper. The poly pipe you need is low-density Grade C, which is $\frac{1}{2}$ " inside diameter and $\frac{3}{4}$ " outside diameter. It costs about 3p a foot (in fact you'll probably have to buy it in coils of 20 metres or so) from:

(South London) Stanley Works, Osborne Road, Thornton Heath
(653 0601)

(North London) 45 Duck leas Lane, Ponders End (804 7121)

Specify British Standard 1972 class C as they have hundreds of different kinds.

You'll have to join the poly pipe to lead at some point. There are two ways of doing this, and for both you have to go via copper piping. If you can get the following, the best way is solder a piece of copper inside the lead. This means doing a "wiped joint" with solder. It is best to get somebody experienced to do it for you or at least to show you how. Wiped joints are the only really skilled things in plumbing - the rest is relatively easy.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

A blow lamp, hacksaw, screw driver, solder, fluxite, wire wool, wrenches, adjustable spanner and a bending spring. This might sound like an awful lot and you probably won't need all of them. If you can borrow them off other squatters it's good to have them around as it can make life a lot easier.

Second hand taps and compression fittings can often be got from scrap dealers and sometimes from derelict houses, only make sure that you don't strip a house that is squatable. Second hand copper tube can be got but you may have problems over matching old imperial size pipe and the newer metric.

COPPER PIPING

You will only have to use 2 sizes - 22mm ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") and 15mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ "). You buy it in 3 or 4 metre lengths. $\frac{1}{2}$ " is ok to use unless you are using a roof tank. Joints are either "compression" which you screw up or "Yorkshire" which you heat up. The Yorkshire system is cheaper but sometimes awkward so you will probably need to use a mixture of the 2.

THREADED IRON PIPE

This is rare and not good to use, if there is some already in get an adaptor to copper which are readily available.

LEAD PIPE

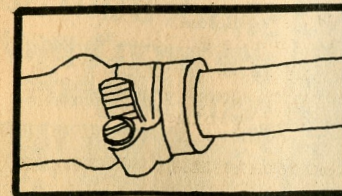
This can be difficult to get and it is very difficult to work in.

PLASTIC WASTE PIPE

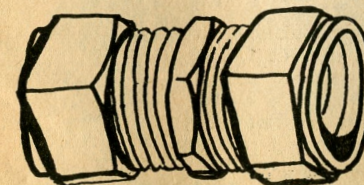
Comes in sizes 1"-6" with simple push in joints or adhesive ones.

LEAKS

These usually occur in the joints. Compression and jubilee clip joints you just tighten. Yorkshire joints you reheat (having emptied the pipe) if that doesn't work start again with a new fitting. Old lead pipes often develop "pin hole leaks" - these can often be fixed by a sharp tap with a hammer.



Jubilee Clip



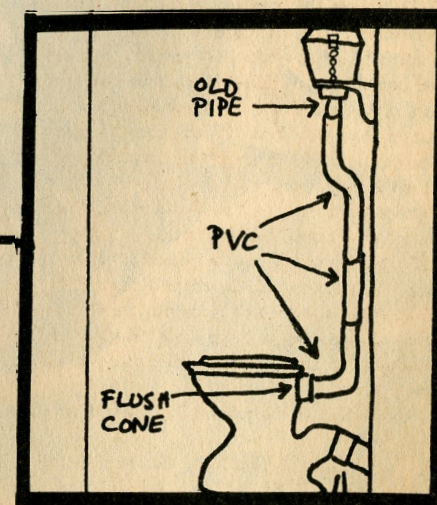
Compression Joint

BOGS

If the cistern has been left empty for some time the ball valve sticks. Tap with a hammer to release, if it overfills bend the arm downwards, if it underfills bend it upwards. If that doesn't work buy a new valve.

The down pipes from the cistern to the bog, being lead are often missing. You can buy an adaptable PVC one and a rubber flush cone which fits on to the back of the bowl.

If you are fitting a new bog connect to the drain either buy a multi-size connector called "multiwick" or by quick dry cement.



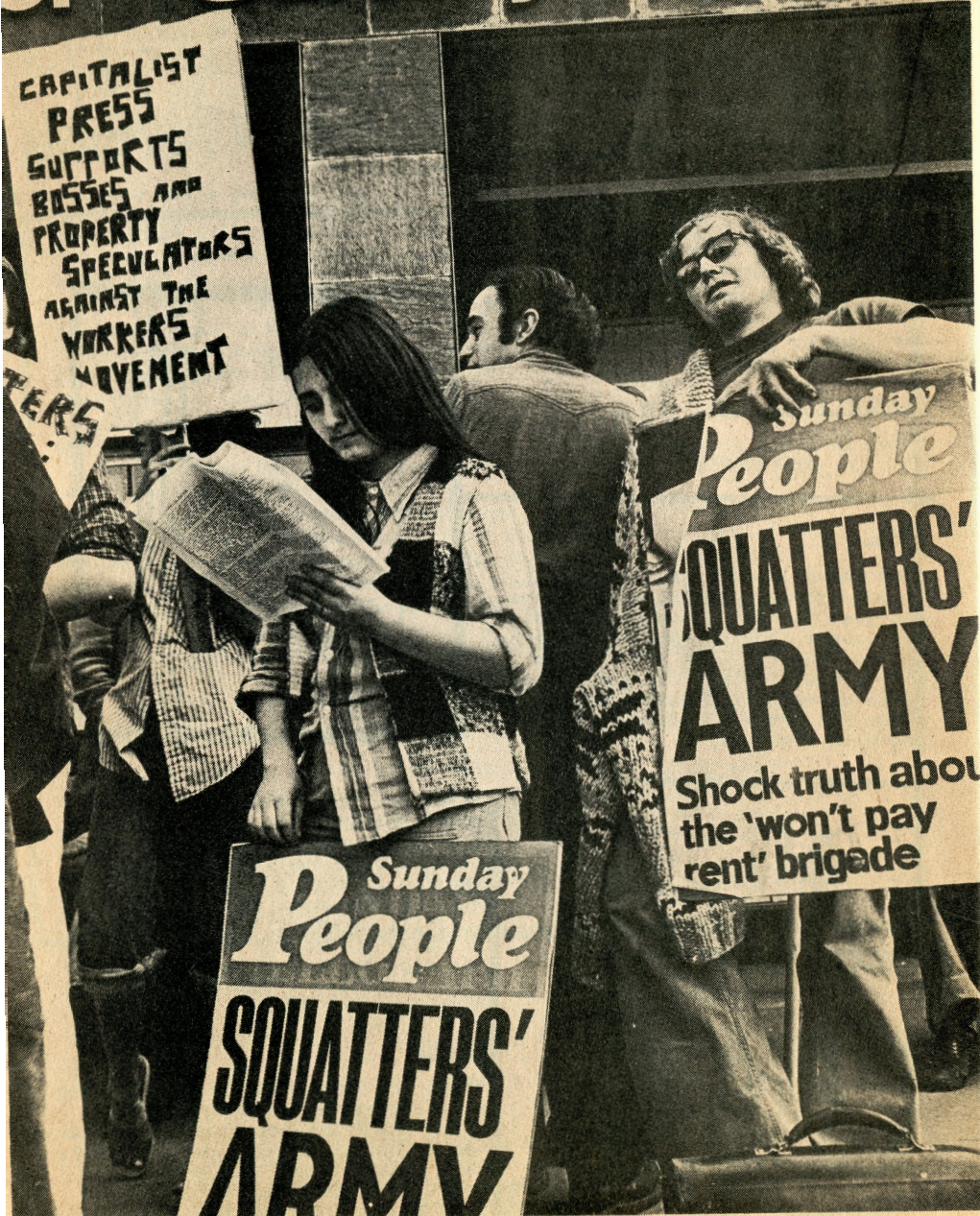
DRAINS

These are often blocked, first check the traps on sinks and baths. If that doesn't work hold a piece of hose pipe over the plug hole, sealing it with a piece of cloth turn on the water and hold firmly! ...still blocked? find the manhole or gully and direct the hose up the pipe leading to the house and turn on fully. A last resort is to hire a set of drain rods.

ASCOTS

These are the usual form of heating water. They can be bought second hand - check whether they are converted or not to natural gas. The self help repair manual has a good section on what goes wrong with them and how you can put it right.

or Sunday People



Squatting~the other side.

There have been many attacks on squatters recently.....by local vigilantes to the national press. Squatters have fought back with campaigns like the anti 'People' demo (see opposite), local anti gutting campaigns, picketting gas and electricity board show-rooms etc etc. All these actions enable us to continue to squat without being harassed. But they require a lot of work to get off the ground and for us to be organised as well. There are many areas where there are squatters but no group however informal. Make an effort to contact other squatters in your area so that at least every one knows what is going on. Also try and talk to local people about squatting, contact local tenants associations and local councillors.

At the time of writing the law commission is due to report in Feb 1976 (see page 19). Also the gas and electric authorities are often taking a much harder line about connection of services. Both of these are an immediate threat to all squatters (and many other people) we must be in a position to organise against them.

The Cuts

The government is cutting back on its spending, including housing. You might think that this is to our advantage -and in the short term you may be right. But our situation will be affected a great deal if the state's buying up program is curtailed. We will be forced into poorer conditions and will be attacked with more force. There will be more homeless people demanding fewer houses. It is in our interests to side with tenants and licensees to fight for more housing not less.



The Media

Squatters are often hot news and it's very tempting to just accept an offer of TV time or newspaper space. Before doing this remember that it will affect a lot of other squatters, so always talk it over with the local squatting group. The media is not on your side it is there to protect property. The few papers that have run sympathetic pieces on squatters are listed on page 3.

Many things have been left out of this handbook due to shortage of space and forgetfulness-it is no substitute for talking with other squatters who can help you and give you support.

FURTHER COPIES OF THIS HAND-BOOK FROM
2, ST. PAULS ROAD, LONDON NI (3598814)

Printed and published by
Islington squatters

Squatters' book stirs up crime says Tory

By PETER RUDD

A HANDBOOK circulating in Islington which tells would-be squatters how to beat the authorities has been attacked as an "incitement to crime."

Mr John Szemerey, Prospective Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Islington South and Finsbury, is investigating whether the publishers can be traced and whether any action can be taken against them.

Mr Szemerey said this week: "My reaction to this handbook is one of disgust at an attempt to cloak with respectability actions that are not only immoral but often illegal."

The 22-page booklet — titled "Squatters' Handbook" — has been circulating widely in Islington and other parts of North London. The booklet is anonymous except for a line at the end which says: "Produced by Islington squatters."

It gives a very thorough guide on how to be a successful squatter and to keep the right side of the law.

There are sections on:

- How and where to find houses most suitable for squatting.
- How to gain entry without breaking the law.
- How to deal with police, landlords and bailiffs.
- How to get gas, electricity and water supplies connected.
- The legal rights of squatters and how to fight eviction in the courts.

The handbook declares: "Despite what a lot of people think, squatting is not illegal . . . so long as you do it properly."

But Mr Szemerey disagrees. He said: "Squatting is in fact theft by occupation. As the house cannot be taken away in the same way as, a car or a purse, it is left where it is but the owner is deprived of its use in the manner outlined in the handbook."

He continued: "The more buildings that are occupied by squatters the fewer homes there are available for families in real housing need."

"People who have been on the council's waiting list for many years have been put further back in the queue by squatters."

'Twisted'

"What happens in cases involving property owned by Islington Council is that the council recognises the squatters and they become council tenants. When the property they're occupying is finally demolished they are rehoused in a council flat. The ordinary family has to wait."

"What also annoys me is that a high proportion of squatters are well-educated youngsters who are the children of wealthy families and just do it for a lark. They can quite afford to pay rent for their own accommodation."

"One may well wonder at the twisted values of these people who prefer to help healthy, well-educated young people steal a home rather than to rehouse one of the needy cases on Islington's housing list."

"Instead of using their obvious talents to improve and correct the system, they want to break it up completely — thereby hurting the very people they purport to help — the weakest and neediest members of the community and those longest on the waiting lists."

The handbook poses the question: "Why squat?"

It replies: "There are not enough decent houses — millions of people have to live in bad conditions, thousands actually become homeless."

"In London there are always many thousands of house standing empty. The logic of the system says that they should just go to waste. Common sense says that the system is wrong and these houses should be used."

Islington Council decided to adopt a tough line on squatting earlier this year. Unless squatters have entered into an arrangement with the council possession orders are sought in all cases. The council's justification for taking a tough line is that unauthorised squatting denies homeless families the opportunity of occupying short-stay accommodation and tends to hold up the building programme.