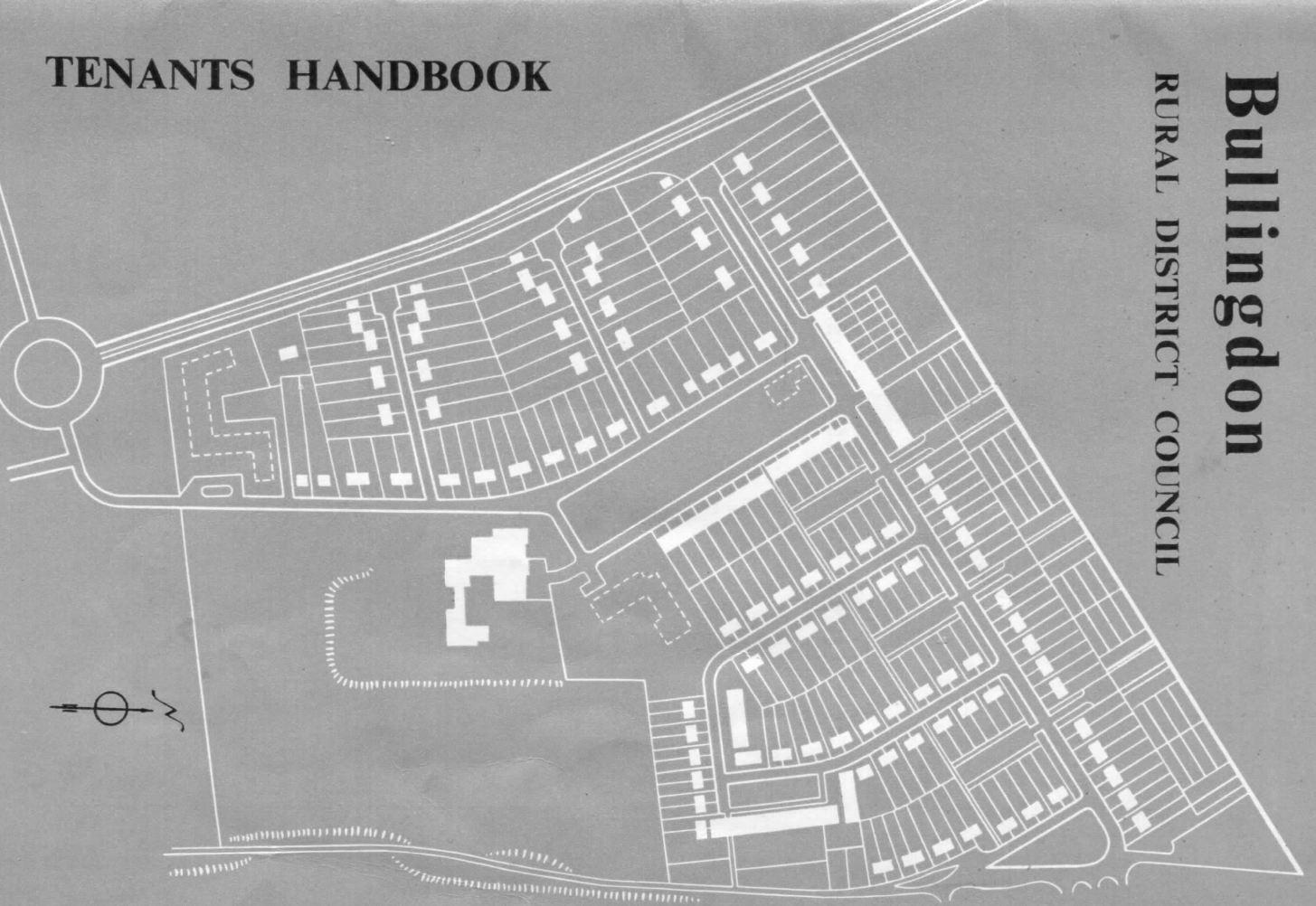
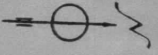


# TENANTS HANDBOOK

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## THE COUNCIL TENANTS' HANDBOOK

A COMPENDIUM OF USEFUL INFORMATION  
FOR TENANTS OF THE HOUSING ESTATES  
OF THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

### HOUSING DEPARTMENT OFFICERS:

J. E. BUSFIELD, M.I.M.U.E., REGISTERED ARCHITECT  
*Engineer and Surveyor*

W. R. GREENFIELD, A.I.H.S.G.  
*Housing Manager*

*Designed and Published by*  
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## SOME REGULATIONS

*Notes prepared for your guidance by the Housing Manager*

AS landlords of large and small estates, a local authority occupies an important position in the community. The management of such estates to be a credit to the locality, demands some measure of control and co-operation by the tenants.

At the best of times rules, regulations and restrictions are irksome, but the Council have a duty to protect public property, representing a considerable amount of public money: your money. It should be clear to everyone that it cannot be left to each individual to make his own regulations and to behave in the way he thinks fit, regardless of everyone else; far more important is the good neighbourly feeling which is so vital to a happy and contented way of life.

Suppose we look at some of these regulations or tenancy restrictions.

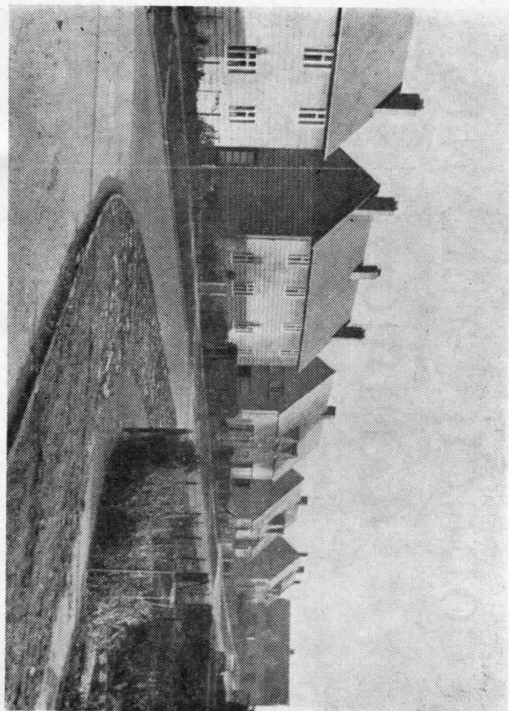
**Lodgers.** Control must be kept over lodgers to prevent overcrowding—one of the main reasons for building houses at public expense. Charges are going up as you will see from the Treasurer's remarks at the end of this book. *Any tenant who fails to notify me that he had taken in a lodger will be charged double the amount from the time the lodger is taken to the date of permission being obtained.*

**Using the House other than as a Private Dwelling.** Obviously, general permission to run any kind of business in a Council house cannot be given or allowed. One of your neighbours might start a fish and chip business, whilst another may set up a circular saw almost under your window, or carry out boot and shoe repairs up till all hours of the night. Then again, it must be borne in mind that the taxpayers and ratepayers in general help to pay for your houses and, if businesses are permitted in Council houses, other traders would, in effect, be helping to pay the rent of their competitors.

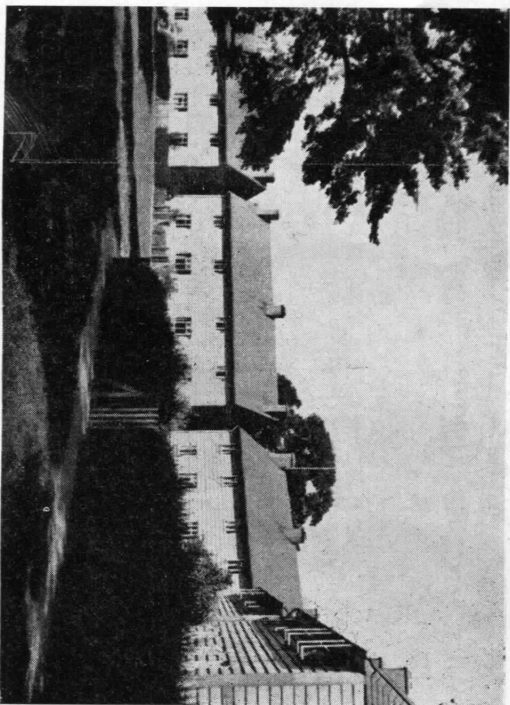
**Animals, etc.** If you want to keep a domestic animal, be sure you have time to give it the necessary attention and exercise. Application for permission to keep poultry, pigeons, pigs, etc., must be made to the Housing Manager.

### Sheds

1. Application for permission to erect must be made to the Housing Manager.
2. The structures must be of durable material in sound condition, i.e., weather board, asbestos, brick, etc.
3. Old, badly worn materials or made up structures from odds and ends of materials will not be permitted. Buildings constructed from scrap sheeting will also be rejected.
4. Structures should not exceed 70 sq. feet and should be not more than 6 feet high at eaves level.



*Prefabricated Airey and traditional brick houses  
at Cuddesdon*



*Airey houses at Tiddington*

5. All structures should be independent buildings erected to comply with Byelaws. Lean to buildings are not permitted.

Tenants can now rent from the Council a garden shed 7 feet long, and 5 feet wide with an apex roof for the sum of 1/6d. per week. Application to rent such a building should be made to the Housing Manager.

### Garages

The practice of granting permission to tenants to erect garages within the curtilage of the house they occupy has now been discontinued, and tenants who need a garage will in future have to make application to the Council for a garage to be erected on the premises. This garage will be let to the tenant at a rental of 10/- per week, the Council will provide gates and make the necessary alteration to roadside kerbs, etc., without additional charge.

On some sites the Council are erecting garages in blocks—these can be rented by tenants for 8/6d. per week. As there is always a waiting list you are advised to put your name down in good time where such buildings are likely to be available.

**Chimney Flues.** The tenant should arrange for the chimneys to be swept regularly. Never set your chimney flue on fire for the purpose of cleaning it, as by so doing the tenant makes himself liable to Police Court proceedings, and may be penalised by a fine. This method is very dangerous, as it may set fire to the house and to adjoining property and, furthermore, a great deal of soot is released from the pot, which causes great annoyance to neighbours.

**Grates.** The bottom bars of grates will burn out quickly if the ash underneath is allowed to rise and meet the base of your fire. Keep your grate clear of ashes.

Clean flues are essential if the best results are to be obtained. Proper control of dampers should be exercised. A fierce white heat (the result of dampers left open) wastes fuel and endangers the grate where it is in contact. Present-day castings run a great risk of a very short life under these conditions.

Do not poke the fire too hard, or you will break the fire bricks. Do not overheat the water or let it boil in the cistern. This causes the pipes to fur up.

**Gates and Fences.** Children should not be allowed to swing on gates and fences, thus causing the posts to lean, hinges to break on the gates, and wires to break on the fences. Where fence and gate posts are fixed at the top of banks be very careful not to undermine them during any gardening operations.

Green hedges add to the beauty of the estate and it is the tenant's responsibility to keep these cut and weeded. It is hoped that tenants will take pride in doing this, as a neatly-cut hedge is an asset to the Estate, and to their homes.

**Gullies.** In your own interests gullies should be kept clean and well flushed, and rubbish should not be emptied down them. Don't allow leaves, paper, etc., to accumulate in the top of the gullies. Clean them regularly at weekly intervals. It is a good idea to use the "weekly wash" water for this purpose.

**External Paint Work.** A large amount of money is spent on the external paintwork of houses and a lot depends on the tenant's care as to the length of time this will last. Children should be taught not to chalk on walls and paintwork, and dogs should not be allowed to scratch or disfigure the paint. A large number of front doors are damaged and spoiled in this manner. A window leather and water can be used to wash down dust or marks from your window ledges and doors.

**Windows and Doors.** When closing windows, please see that the casement stay is fixed and the fastener adjusted. DON'T leave your windows wide open in a strong wind; neglect of this kind results in the windows being damaged and the tenants will be held responsible for the cost of repairs. Oil your door hinges, window bolts and hinges, locks, etc., regularly and you will save damage by rust and corrosion. Care should be taken to see that all doors to wash-houses and coal-houses, etc., are securely latched after use in order to prevent doors blowing open and breaking off hinges, causing serious damage.

**Vermitt.** Estates are occasionally troubled by rats, mice and beetles, and tenants should report anything of this nature when steps will be taken to deal with these pests.

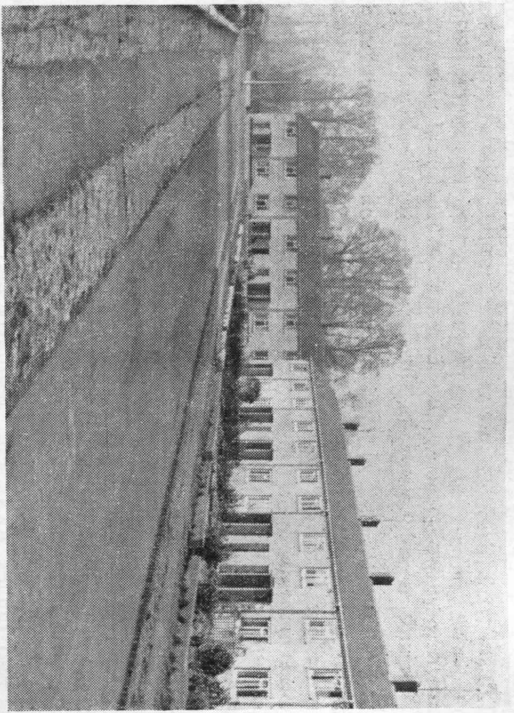
**Condensation.** Don't stop up fireplace openings with paper or cloth when the grates are not in use. These openings act as ventilators. In the home, extra moisture is constantly sent into the atmosphere in the form of steam from cooking, hot baths, clothes drying in front of the fire, etc., and every care should be taken to minimise condensation from these causes.

**Fire Guards.** The Council do not object to tenants fixing guards in any room, for the protection of their children, providing proper attachment to the wall is arranged. The attention of tenants is drawn to the following provisions of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933:

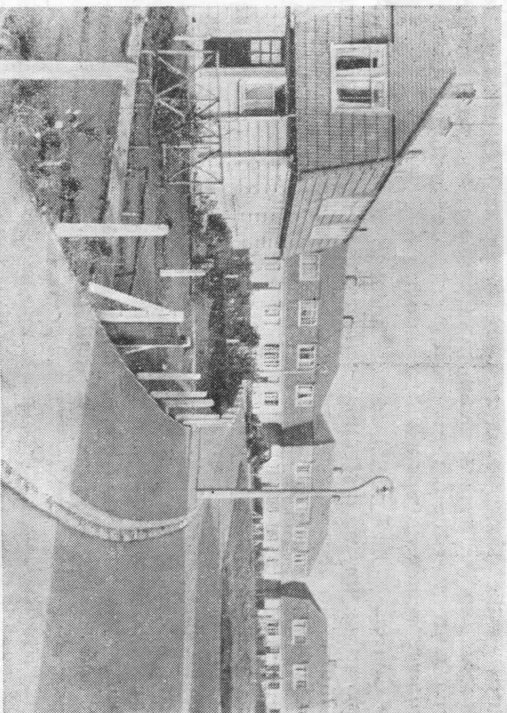
"(ii) If any person who has attained the age of sixteen years, having the custody, charge or care of any child under the age of seven years, allows the child to be in any room containing an open fire grate not sufficiently protected to guard against the risk of his being burnt or scalded without taking reasonable precautions against that risk, and by this reason the child is killed or suffers serious injury, he shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding ten pounds.

"Provided that neither this section, nor any proceedings taken thereunder, shall affect any liability of any such person to be proceeded against by indictment for any indictable offence."





*Blocks of terraced brick houses at Marston*



*Cornish Unit houses and flats at Littlemore*

**W.C.** This is not meant to take rags, old floor cloths, tins or large quantities of paper, and care must be taken not to choke it. Notification must be made immediately stoppage occurs in any drain and this will have immediate attention. The cost of any work caused by a tenant's neglect will be charged to him.

**Sink Wastes.** These need cleaning with boiling soda water and care should be taken to see that tea leaves, potato peelings, etc., are not allowed to choke them. Stoppages may result in a charge to the tenant.

**Dry Rot.** This occurs mainly in timber floors and is chiefly caused by lack of ventilation under the floor, hence, it is most important that all air grates are kept clear and free from soil. See that the damp-course is above the level of the soil and do not pile small coal, earth or coke above this level as this will result in your house becoming damp.

**Grass Verges.** See that children are trained not to dig holes in the verges and that cars are not parked or driven over them.

**Turning off Water.** A stop-cock is usually provided on the service pipe on the ground floor, either in the scullery or w.c. by which you can shut off the water supply to the house. Should you have a burst pipe or bad leak, turn off this stop-cock and turn on all your taps and empty the w.c. cisterns. It is not sufficient merely to turn off the stop-cock as you will not stop the flow of water until the system is empty. When you have done this the defect should be reported to the Housing Manager. If you go away and leave the house empty, and during severe weather at night, you should turn off the water in this way.

**Picture Rails.** You should use a picture rail if one is provided. If there is no picture rail, the wall should be drilled and plugged or a pronged picture hook should be used, as this is less likely to damage the plaster.

**Care of Cookers and Coppers.** A dirty cooker results in a greasy smell in the kitchen which will pervade the house. Wipe out your oven after use. If you do this while it is hot, splashes of grease can easily be removed.

If you have an electric cooker, great care should be taken to see that your pans do not boil over, as this is likely to cause a short circuit and put the hotplate out of action. Wipe over the top of the cooker after use, while it is still warm and you will keep it free from grease which will damage the top of the cooker if allowed to get burnt on. Cooking by electricity can be very economical if you use your cooker properly. Remember that heat is retained for a very long time so that you can do much of your cooking with the current turned off.

It is important that you should use pans made specially for electric cookers—it can be very wasteful to use others.

If there is any defect in your council owned gas or electric copper this should be notified to the Housing Manager.

After using your washboiler, wipe it out, so that it is quite dry. Never leave water standing in it for any length of time.

**Vacating Premises.** When leaving your house on completion of your tenancy, please leave it in a clean and satisfactory condition. Do not leave accumulated piles of miscellaneous rubbish for the incoming tenant to have cleared. Do not take washboilers or any other fixtures and fittings which are the property of the Council. If any of your own fittings are removed by you, remember that you are responsible for the reinstatement of walls or floors, etc., which may be necessary as a result of their removal.

**Clothes Posts.** Clothes lines should not be tied to rain water or vertical drainpipes or window frames.

**Internal Decoration.** This is the responsibility of the tenant. Tenants are expected to keep the property in a good decorative state. A good quality distemper or wallpaper can be used in most rooms except the kitchen and bathroom, where it is recommended that only light coloured paints be used. Should a tenant wish to paint any other part of the house, permission must be obtained from the Housing Manager. Any defective plaster work must be notified immediately.

**Floors.** Wood floors must not be completely covered with linoleum, but a margin of at least 9 in. wide left round the room to ensure adequate ventilation. In no circumstances must linoleum be pasted on wood floors as this prevents ventilation and often causes dry rot.

**Pitchmastic Floors.** The majority of well-known household floor polishes in common use have no harmful effect on pitchmastic flooring. This type of floor, however, is susceptible to attack from mineral oils, grease, animal and vegetable oils and fats. Great care should be taken to see that none of these materials get on to the floor. This type of floor is not proof against heavy blows or prolonged pressure. Tenants should therefore refrain from chopping wood on the kitchen floor or from dragging the piano across the living room. If any heavy piece of furniture is to stand permanently in one place, its weight should be spread, if possible, with furniture cups or some similar device.

**Electric Cookers.** Never light cigarettes or spills from the grill elements, they will burn the elements out, or at least shorten their life.

Cast, flat based utensils will be found more economical to use than the lighter pressed type and will not boil over so easily.

Never switch on hotplate to heat the kitchen or for airing purposes. If the hotplate becomes over-heated or red-hot it will crack on cooling; a pan of water will prevent the over-heating of a hotplate and consequent damage. Do not allow utensils to boil over; this can cause a hotplate to crack, or can penetrate to sockets and wiring within the cooker and cause damage.

**Fuses.** Replacement of these is the responsibility of the tenant, but if fuses continually blow, notify the Housing Department. If in doubt, switch off at the main switch.

**Additional Wiring.** Do not install additional electric wiring for lighting or power, nor alter existing wiring in any way without prior permission.

The meter, which is the property of the Electricity Authority, must on no account be interfered with. Should it give trouble, notify the Electricity Authority, and they will attend to it. You must never interfere with the meter, as this will render you liable to a penalty.

Never attempt temporary lighting with flex to outbuildings, etc. Electricity in inexperienced hands can cause shock, burns and may even prove fatal.

**Insurance.** The Council insure all properties against fire, etc., but this does not include tenants' goods and chattels. You would be advised to insure your own articles, as in case of fire, flood or burglary you have no claim on the Council.

**Requests for repairs.** Except in cases of urgency requests for repairs must be made in writing. Urgent repairs, e.g., burst pipes, electrical faults, etc., should be telephoned to the Housing Department. The Council will not be responsible for payment of accounts for which no official order has been given.

**Housing Manager.** The Housing Manager's duties are many and varied. He is prepared to give advice and assistance to tenants on many problems. On the other hand he has a responsibility to see that no tenant neglects or causes damage to Council property.

The Housing Manager desires to know you and to understand your housing difficulties and will do all within his power to ensure your comfort and happiness both in your home and on the estate on which you reside.

**Repairs.** The Council decided in October, 1961, that certain repairs should become the responsibility of the tenant.

These are as follows:—

- (a) Replacement of broken glass in doors and windows.
- (b) Rewashing of taps.
- (c) Adjustment of ball valves in W.C.'s and water cisterns.
- (d) Replacement of broken W.C. pans and wash-hand basins.
- (e) Repair of door furniture.
- (f) Repairs and replacement of defective electric light and power switches (excluding cooker panels if fault due to fair wear and tear).
- (g) Repair and renewal of gas taps and flexible connections.
- (h) Repair and renewal of electric light pendant switches.
- (i) Minor repairs to gas and electric coppers which are in the Council's ownership.
- (j) Repair and replacement necessitated by deliberate or accidental damage by the tenant.



## YOUR WATER SUPPLY

THERE is one thing which we must all have in our homes—water—but it must be in the right places, that is inside the pipes, tanks, etc., ready to do as we want it to do. Not only is it a nuisance but a positive danger when it refuses to do as we want it to, but insists on running all over the house and taking whatever course it can till it soaks through the floor boards or runs over the door sill, therefore make certain that your inside stop-tap is in proper working order.

The builders have seen to it that it can be used in the right places at the right time inside your house, but—pipes, like everything else, suffer from old age—they get furred up or eaten away by the action of the water.

Taps, valves, etc., which have moving parts, wear out. Sometimes, not often, small particles of sand get into the supply and prevent a valve from doing its proper job and, of course, nature sometimes takes a hand and freezes water. These always happen at the most awkward times and often in the most inaccessible spots.

A few simple precautions will help to reduce the risk of bursts which only bring nuisance to yourself and expense to the Council.

The following points should be strictly observed:

**Stop Tap.** Satisfy yourself as to its position and make sure it can be turned easily.

During frosty weather at night and if the house is left for long periods during the day:

(1) Cold water service: Turn off the stop-tap. Run off water by turning on the lowest cold tap (which will be over the sink downstairs). Place all plugs in lavatory basin, sink and bath.

(2) Central heating: Keep a good fire to heat circulation pipes and radiators. Don't draw more hot water than is necessary. Keep hot water boiler flue cleaned out well (at least twice a week).

(3) Protect pipes: Protect outside W.C. cistern and supply pipes on outside walls and so prevent bursts through frost.

(4) Outside wash house: Turn off the stop-tap in wash house. Run off cold water tap. Close all windows and doors at nights to exclude cold air.

(5) Outside W.C.: Turn off the stop-tap in W.C. last thing at night, then flush the W.C. cistern. Close window and door to exclude cold air.

If any explanation is required please contact the Housing Department.

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW

IT is a condition of your tenancy that you should look after your garden. With most tenants this is a matter of personal pride, and it is very true to say that the house inside can nearly always be judged by the garden outside. Unfortunately one bad garden can spoil a row of good ones. Is yours as good as it might be? Or is it poorly cultivated and spoilt by a jumble of old rubbish which would be better on the scrap heap? The Council still has a large number of people on its waiting list urgently in need of homes of their own. Be thankful for what you've got therefore, and make the best of it for the benefit of all—not least yourself, for vegetable growing saves money, as any housewife knows.

The following sowing and planting table may be found a useful guide:—

### GARDEN OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR

**January.** See that all unoccupied ground is dug and laid up in ridges so as to derive all benefit by being frozen through. Burn all refuse and scatter ashes over roots of fruit trees.

**February.** Prepare ground for summer crops. Sow peas, shallots, parsnips in the open, and radishes, hardy lettuce on warm slopes. Sow in hot beds to transplant—onions, cobs and cabbage lettuce, celery and cauliflower; also perennials for early blooming—antirrhinum, delphinium.

**March.** Ground should be ready for crops. Sow turnips, radish, carrots, cauliflower, cabbage, sprouts, lettuce, leeks, etc.

**April.** Successive sowings of all leading vegetable crops. About the second week, sow beet. French beans should be sown about the end of month. Sow hardy annual in open borders.

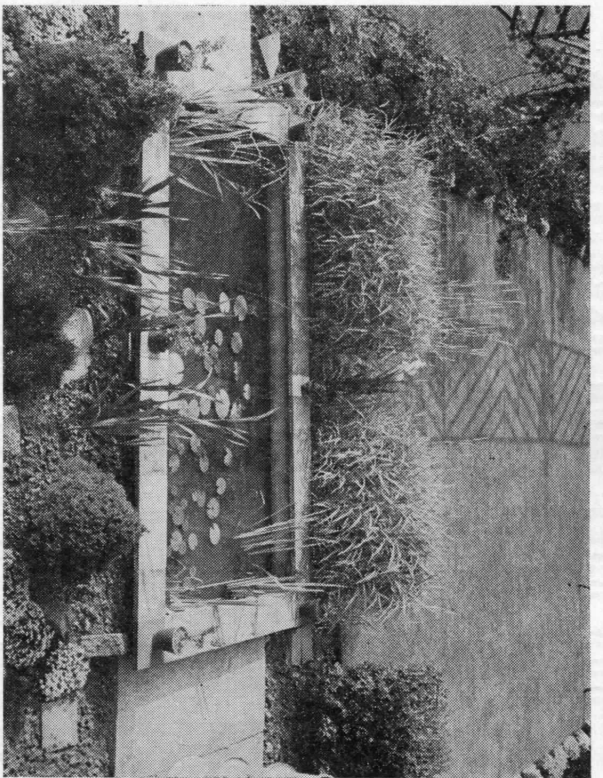
**May.** Frequent hoeing to keep down weeds. Put sticks in peas. Another sowing of peas and beans, and, for late crop, cabbage, broccoli, kale, beet, kidney beans and lettuce. Cucumbers and marrows may be sown in open ground for late supply.

**June.** Everything should be in full growth. The hoe should never be idle. Sow for late crop, scarlet runner and French beans, lettuce, radish and early sorts of peas. Earth up cabbage and potatoes.

**July.** To induce quick growth, give copious supply of water if dry season. Where early crops coming off, clear ground and plant kale, savoy, broccoli, etc., without re-digging soil. Sow for last succession lettuce, radish and salad.

**August.** Plant out wallflowers, Sweet William and Brompton stocks in "Temporary Quarters." Final planting when summer flowers fade.

**September.** Celery full grown, earth up for blanching. Potatoes to be taken up as leaves wither, but parsnips, etc., may be left in ground until required. Pot hyacinths, daffodils, etc., for early bloom.



## TWO WAYS OF KEEPING YOUR GARDEN



**October.** Tomatoes not ripe, cut with length of stem and ripen indoors. Plant hyacinths, narcissus, etc., for spring flowering.

**November.** Continue general work as last month. Give special attention to wall trees. Make planting of bulbs. Sow broad beans.

**December.** Plant roses and hedges. Complete dipping as far as possible.

**Deep Cultivation.** This is essential with practically all vegetables. Heavy soils should be dug in the autumn. Light soils should be dug in late winter or early spring. Bastard trenching should be adopted where possible.

**Adequate Manuring.** It is not possible to obtain good crops year after year without the aid of manures or suitable substitutes. Use bulky substances such as farmyard manure and supplement this by suitable artificial manures.

**Rotation of Crops.** This is an important factor for two reasons—(a) as plants take out varying quantities of the same plant food, it is obvious that if crops are grown on the same land year after year, it will become exhausted sooner than if the cropping is changed or rotated.

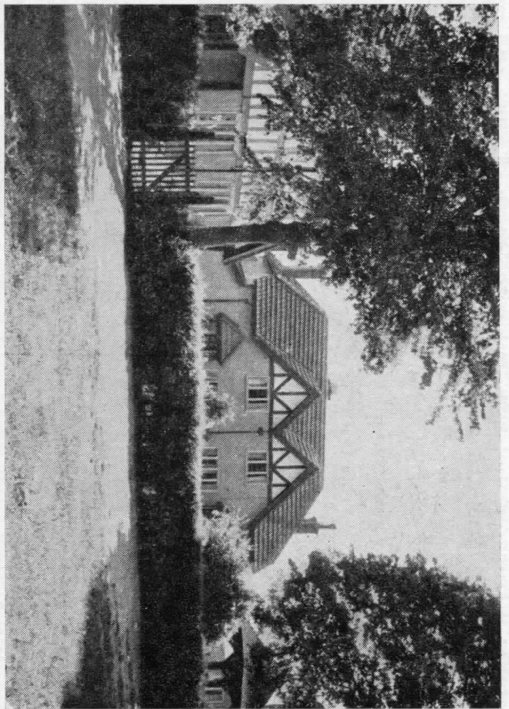
## COMMON HAZARDS IN THE HOME

*These articles appear in a booklet, Facts about Fire, published by Municipal Mutual Insurances Ltd., to whom we are indebted for permission to reproduce them.*

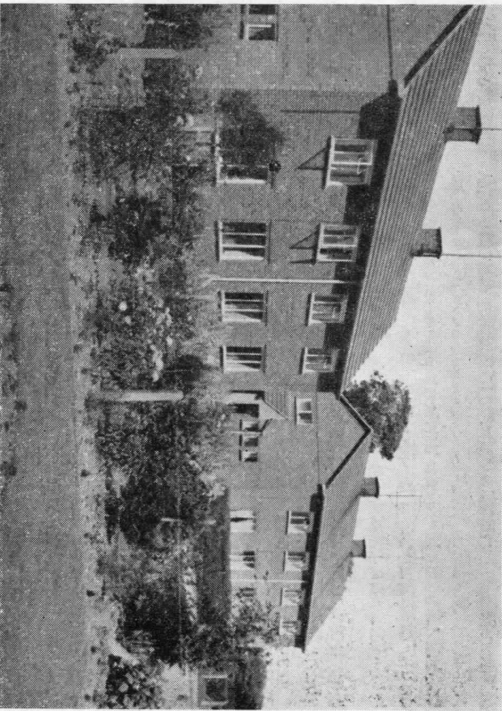
**THE** home is a place where the sense of personal suffering arising out of loss through fire is felt most deeply, whether it is to property or personal injury. Some fires in private dwelling houses are caused through defects in the construction, but by far the majority are due in the first place to carelessness.

**Use of Fire Guards.** Coal falling from the fire is one of the most frequent causes of fire but most of these could be prevented by the simple precaution of using a fire guard when a room is vacated. This precaution should, of course, be taken automatically whenever a home is left empty with a fire burning or when the householder retires to bed. In one sad case a householder had left a fire burning in the lounge whilst he had dinner. There was a smell of burning and, on going to investigate, he found the lounge full of smoke and flames. The bungalow was completely destroyed.

**Electric Irons.** Electric irons which are left switched on, whilst the housewife attends to something else, such as a knock at the door, often result in the garments on the ironing board being ignited—if the iron were switched off and placed on an asbestos tray these fires could be eliminated.



*Half timbered houses in rural setting  
at Warborough*



*Traditional brick houses at Great Milton*

**Airing Clothes.** The drying and airing of clothes in the house presents yet another of these day-to-day risks. The clothes are sometimes left too close to the fire and ignite by direct radiation, or they are accidentally knocked over or blown by a sudden draught on to the fire. If clothes must be aired in this way, then care should be taken to see that they are at a safe distance from the fire and that they are not left unattended.

**Portable Electric Fires.** Portable electric fires are also a source of danger. For instance, an electric fire may have been switched on in the morning and duly switched off at the power point when the family went out. In the evening the easy chairs are arranged near to the coal fire which by now has been lit, the wireless is switched on at the point, which is also shared by the electric fire (still plugged in) and as a result an easy chair, now in contact with the forgotten electric fire, is soon a mass of flames.

**Children.** No notes on this subject would be complete without some reference to children in the home. Boxes of matches should never be within reach of very young children. This is easily said and not so easily carried out, but it is worth a little effort. Many fires have started in this way, and children have received dreadful injuries.

Even more of a potential danger to the individual, perhaps, is the risk of fire arising out of clothing coming into contact with any ignited substances, such as a gas or electric fire. Woollen material smoulders with a red glow, but flannellette or cotton fabric burns like a torch, and a dress is usually destroyed within a matter of seconds. Many serious injuries (some fatal) would be avoided if women and children wore garments which did not readily ignite on contact with a source of heat.

All forms of heater should have an adequate guard fitted, and no children should ever be left alone in the house.

## **PETS AND PESTS**

**EVEN** pets can become pests if they are not kept under proper control. Cats should not be allowed to roam abroad at night, disturbing the rest of the neighbourhood, nor should dogs be permitted to take their exercise over other people's gardens. If you are unable to take your dog for walks, you should not keep it. It is unkind to tie it up for long periods and this may spoil its temper. Your dog likes to be kept clean as much as you do, so brush its coat regularly and give it an occasional bath. See also that plenty of clean drinking water is provided, and that dishes are kept clean.

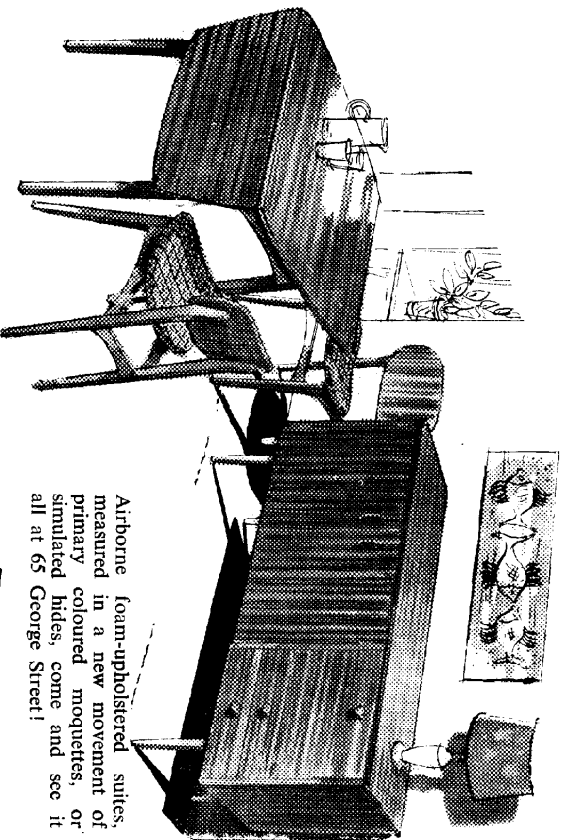
To keep your pets under control you must commence to train them early in their lives. A well-trained dog soon distinguishes between its enemies and its friends. The Rent Collector, the dustman, the postman and others are all serving you in their different ways and are entitled to courteous treatment.



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## SOME USEFUL DATA WHEN YOU ARE REDECORATING

If you are painting a wall which has previously been distempered, remove as much of the old distemper as possible before painting. Oil or grease must be removed with warm water and soda, or sugar soap. Make sure that the under coat is absolutely dry before applying the finishing coat, and use a clean brush.

**Distemping.** Under usual conditions a 14 lb. tin will be sufficient to give two coats to the walls of an average size bedroom. Make sure that the walls are thoroughly clean and that the loose distemper is removed before applying the new. Use a clean brush, and let one coat dry before applying another.

Oil-bound distempers are quite suitable for bedrooms and living rooms and can be lightly sponged down to remove marks. Flat wall paints are more satisfactory in kitchens and bathrooms, as they will withstand washing and steam.

**Filling Cracks in Plaster.** First clean out and widen cracks slightly with an old knife, working them wider at the back than on the surface. Brush out loose dust with a dry brush and then moisten the inside of the crack. Fill crack with Keenes cement mixing with a little water, pressing well home with a putty knife.

**Paper Hanging.** English wall-paper is in rolls 36 feet long and 21 inches wide, and a table given below shows you how to calculate the number of rolls you need for a particular room. Choose a plain paper in preference to a patterned one and start hanging the paper in a corner of the room or beside a door. This will assist you to get the paper hanging vertically. Work from the dark corners towards the light so that the joints do not cast shadows.

## WALL-PAPER TABLE

### SHOWING THE NUMBER OF PIECES OF WALL PAPER ENGLISH SIZE (12 yards long, 21 inches wide)

Height in Feet Measure round the Four Walls in feet, including doors, from Skirting windows, etc. The top line represents total measurement to Corner piece of Four Walls in feet.

	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	100
7 and under 7½	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11
7½	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
8	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
8½	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
9	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
9½	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
10	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
10½	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
11	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
11½	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12

Pieces

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## SOME USEFUL DATA WHEN YOU ARE REDECORATING

### COVERING POWER OF PAINTS

Materials used	Square yards per gallon
Undercoats:	
Over Paint	85 to 90
Prepared pastes (to thin with turps)	70 to 75
Ready Mixed Paints (on paper, wood or plaster):	
First Coat, Flat	50 to 55
Second Coat, Eggshell	60 to 65
Finishing Coat, Glossy	75 to 80
Enamels:	
Flat—Free working	75 to 80
Glossy—Full bodied	70 to 75
Varnishes:	
Free working	90 to 100
Full bodied	85 to 90
Distemper: 14 lbs. thinned, on Paper or Plaster	60 to 65

### CEILING PAPER TABLE

Measurement in feet round room	No. of pieces	Measurement in feet round room	No. of pieces
20 feet	1	44 feet	3
24 "	1	46 "	3
26 "	1	48 "	3
28 "	1	50 "	3
30 "	2	52 "	4
32 "	2	54 "	4
34 "	2	56 "	4
36 "	2	58 "	4
38 "	2	60 "	5
40 "	2	62 "	5
42 "	3	64 "	5

### SALE OF COUNCIL HOUSES

by N. D. B. SAGE, F.I.M.T.A., F.R.V.A., D.P.A.  
*Treasurer to Bulkingdon R.D.C.*

THE Council are anxious to encourage home ownership. To this end they make advances in the same way as a building society not only to assist in the acquisition or erection of property but to enable buildings to be converted, altered or improved. The Council are also prepared to sell to their tenants council houses which they at present rent. The terms of sale, however, must be such that other tenants are not penalised.

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What has happened is that all council houses, and particularly those built between the wars, have appreciated in value. The Council do not wish to make a profit out of their tenants but if they sell a house then, sooner or later, they will have to build another house to let. There is always a waiting list of applicants and the more houses the Council sell the fewer they have to allocate to those who wish to rent them. To put it quite shortly: they must realise enough on the sale of a house to enable them to build another house when the time comes.

Building costs have been rising ever since the end of the war and of recent years the cost of building land has risen very rapidly. The price at which the Council can sell without detriment to their tenants must take account of this factor, which is responsible for all-in costs of houses currently built being as high as £2,750.

A copy of the scale of prices at which Council houses may be offered for sale to approved tenants may be obtained free on application to the Treasurer of the Bullingdon R.D.C., 76 Banbury Road, Oxford.

Tenants purchasing are responsible for all legal expenses but sales are effected by contract providing for deferred purchase terms if required. The minimum deposit is £50 and the balance may be repaid over a period of twenty years with interest at current borrowing rates. Repayment may be made either fortnightly to the rent collector or every four weeks by bankers order. Payments by banker's order must be made in advance.

The following conditions apply to the sale of council houses and are binding on all purchasers for a period of five years after signing the contract:

- (1) The house shall not be let at a rent in excess of that which would be permitted under the Rent Act, 1957—that is normally twice the gross value for rating purposes.
- (2) The house may not be sold or leased unless the owner has first offered it to the local authority at the price which he paid for it, allowance being made for improvements or depreciation; and
- (3) In the event of a sale to a third party the price shall not exceed that at which the house was purchased plus any increase for improvements agreed between the owner and the local authority.

Where a council house is occupied by man and wife the Council prefer, though they do not insist, that it shall be sold to them jointly. Under this arrangement the house, in the event of the death of one party, automatically passes to the survivor.

## COUNCIL HOUSING RENTS

by N. D. B. SAGE, F.I.M.T.A., F.R.V.A., D.P.A.

*Treasurer to Bullingdon R.D.C.*

WITHIN the Bullingdon Rural District the collection of housing rents is the direct responsibility of the Treasurer. Other matters—the allocation of tenancies, decorations and repairs, permission to take in lodgers, to erect outbuildings or television aerials, or to keep livestock—are within the province of the Housing Manager to whom communications should be addressed at 76 Banbury Road, Oxford. In relation to housing matters both officers are responsible to the Council's Estates and Property Committee by whom all the council houses are administered. In dealing with their tenants it is the Committee's policy to be fair to all. It follows that they must show favour to none.

**Fixation of Rents.** It is with this principle in mind that the rents of all council houses have been fixed. Building costs and the rates of interest at which councils can borrow vary considerably from time to time. In 1920 a council house cost £1,100 to build and the money was borrowed at 6½%. In the middle 'thirties the cost had dropped to as low as £450 and money could be raised at 3½%. In 1946 a council house could be built for £1,500 and financed out of a loan carrying interest 2½%. Today, costs have practically doubled and loan interest has risen to 6¾%.

The Committee feel it would be wrong to charge different rents for similar houses and they have therefore averaged out all their rents which are fixed according to size, age and amenities of the houses themselves. Thus a non-parlour type house of just under a thousand square feet built in 1921, having three bedrooms but only one W.C. and provided with electric power, piped water and sewerage, would let for as little as 19/- per week plus rates, whereas the corresponding rent for a house of similar size built in 1951 would be 24/3. If, in addition, the newer house was provided with a parlour, an extra W.C., a fitted bath, built in cupboards, gas and hot water system the rent would be 27/3 per week with rates payable in addition. The Council do not impose extra charges according to the means of their tenants but a weekly addition of 7/6 for each lodger (10/- for each married couple) is normally made. This charge is waived in the case of children or of the parent of either the tenant or his wife.

**Payment of Rent.** Tenancies are weekly from Monday to Sunday and weekly payments of rent plus rates are due from council tenants but, as a matter of convenience, these are collected fortnightly, each payment due covering the rent and rates for the week of collection and the preceding week. Tenancies may be determined by four weeks' notice on either side. Rent collections are made on the first four days of each week. Should a Monday be a Bank Holiday, then the rents due on that day are collected on the Thursday of the same week.

The Council's Estates and Property Committee attach con-

# J. CULLEN

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## *Rustic Works*

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siderable importance to the prompt payment of rents, which they prefer shall be tendered when the Collector calls, being left with a neighbour if the householder is not at home at that time. The rent card should be produced at the time of payment for a carbon receipt to be entered. If (which should not happen) the rent card is temporarily mislaid, a special printed form of temporary receipt is issued which may be exchanged for the official entry on the rent card when this is found. No person other than one of the Council's Collectors provided with an official receipting outfit is authorised to receive rents on behalf of the Council.

In exceptional circumstances payments of rent may be made direct to the office. Monthly payments of four or five weeks' rent (according to the number of Mondays in the month) are acceptable if made in advance, and Trustee Savings Banks are prepared to meet the rent liabilities of their depositors in this way, but the Committee cannot countenance an arrangement under which a tenant is always shown as being in arrear. For the purpose of payments other than those sent by post, the office collection hours are from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. in the morning and from 2 to 4 p.m. in the afternoon, Mondays to Fridays. The rent accounts for houses at which the Collector has called are closed immediately on his return, so that amounts received at the office after that time are shown as payments on account of arrears.

It would be possible for the Committee to provide more frequent house collection arrangements. The Collector might, for example, call each week instead of each fortnight, but this would involve doubling the staff of Collectors, increasing their travelling allowances, and putting in twice as much office time in recording collections. All this would entail additional expense which would be chargeable to housing and which tenants would have to pay. It has been calculated that to provide weekly instead of fortnightly collections would mean increasing all council house rents by 6d. per week. The Committee feel it would not be in the best interests of tenants that this should be done.

For the same reason the Committee deprecate the necessity for making special calls on tenants who are in arrear. Happily very few tenants are in this position but, when they are, additional rent collection expenses are incurred. It is so manifestly unfair that these additional expenses should be met by the tenants at large that the Committee have adopted the policy of increasing the rents of tenants who do not pay promptly. Persistent offenders are liable to receive notice to quit, though it has fortunately been necessary to take proceedings for eviction in only a very few cases.

Council houses are subsidised by the taxpayer, who contributes about 25% of the rent. The Council themselves make no profit and the tenant is therefore called upon to pay by way of rent on an average something like 15/- in the £. In purchasing sites, building and letting houses on these terms and assuming responsibility for repairs and outside decorations, the Committee feel that they are filling the role of good landlords. They expect their houses to be occupied by good tenants.

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YOU now live in a council house and are the envy of almost nine hundred other families who are still on the waiting list. If you look after the house and yourselves well, it will pay you handsome dividends in happiness and health.

Firstly, you have space to move. Use all the rooms in the house. The idea of keeping the parlour "for best" and never sitting in it except to impress visitors is hopelessly old fashioned and out of date.

If you are fortunate enough to have two lavatories, use both of them as lavatories—don't clutter up the downstairs one with mops, brooms, gardening tools, etc. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the health value of forming regular habits. Most children unless they have easy access to a W.C. tend to put off going. They play busily at school, put it off again and finally lose the impulse. All too soon, chronic constipation develops—to the great delight of the purgative manufacturers and the great detriment of your children's health.

You have what the Queen of England herself hadn't a century ago, possibly half a century ago—a bath with running hot water. The joke about keeping coal in it (and tearing up the staircase bannisters for firewood) is getting a bit corny, these days, but quite a lot of folk don't enjoy the relaxation and luxury, to say nothing of the cleanliness, of a hot bath nearly as often as they might. Once a week is a bare minimum (no pun intended). Every other night—or even every night—is much better.

Washing the hands with soap and hot water before preparing food, particularly if you have just used the lavatory, is not only cleanly but an insurance against food poisoning, for many food poisoning germs live in the bowel and can be transmitted by unwashed fingers.

Use your bedroom windows. They are most valuable when they're not there so to speak, i.e. when they are open.

Husbands—use your garden. Gardening is wonderful exercise. Home grown vegetables are much the best and if you're "that way" about the wife, a bunch of flowers you have grown for her yourself will delight her more than most things.

Keep your house fly-proof. Flies are not only a nuisance, they are a deadly danger. They are probably the dirtiest feeders in creation, delighting in offal and excrement. Then they buzz straight into your kitchen and wipe their feet on your food (if you let them). They are largely responsible for the deadly Infantile Diarrhoea. Keep your dustbin fly-proof, keep your food in the larder and keep it covered.

Keep your cooking irons clean. Have as few left-overs as possible. A high percentage of food poisoning cases are caused by left over meat and milk products which at a temperature of over 50°F. can breed food poisoning germs which are not always destroyed by reheating.

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Lastly, relax at times. Wireless and the "telly" can be wonderful entertainers but don't have them on all the time as a background; there's enough nerve destroying noise these days without adding to it unnecessarily. Buy yourselves at least two comfortable chairs. Sit down, the pair of you, and rest awhile, now and then, by your own fireside; have a natter even if it's only for a quarter of an hour. This will do much to soothe the irritation of the day and prevent friction.

Perhaps I had just better say that I am not connected in any way with any firm of fridge manufacturers or furnishers, before passing to my final point (none too soon, you will doubtless think).

The point is that the Council are anxious for obvious reasons that their property should be kept in good repair; this will not only help them it will, of course, benefit you, so report any defects as soon as they develop. Play ball with the Council and they will certainly play ball with you.

P.S.—If you have a health problem, write or telephone me:

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