

VAGRANCY

QUESTIONS

1.HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE TERM “VAGRANT”?

2.DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A VAGRANT?

3.IF YES, WHY DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A VAGRANT?

3a.IF NO, WHY DON’T YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A VAGRANT?

4.DO YOU THINK VAGRANCY IS A PROBLEM IN THE PRESENT LOCAL ENVIRONMENT?

5.IF YES, WHY DO YOU THINK VAGRANCY IS A PROBLEM?

5a.IF NO, WHY DON’T YOU THINK VAGRANCY IS A PROBLEM?

From dust we come and to dust we return; betwixt and between a drink comes in handy.

Yiddish proverb.

**OBSERVATIONS ON LOCAL VAGRANCY
PLYMOUTH**

ROBERT O. LENKIEWICZ

PREFACE

Robert Lenkiewicz always puts me in mind of the theatre. By this I mean no disrespect. He is a little larger than life, as well as being physically big. His conceptions are big. I know next to nothing about him personally, but I wouldn't be at all surprised to learn that he comes from a long line of actors. In a way, he has missed his vocation. He is a first rate mimic. He likes to declaim. His urge is to dramatise situations and that means an instinct to recreate them, pump fresh life into them.

People are curious. Leaving aside Robert Lenkiewicz's metaphysical speculations, his sense of history, his erudition and preoccupation with death and the Fool, this statement would perhaps be a fair summing-up of his attitude to the misfits of all kinds who pass through his studio and in and out of his life. As far as I can understand, this flow of people is not just something that happens to him, it is something that he invites, that he wants to happen. This is his element, if you like. These are his characters, his performers; they climb onto his stage, they are his passing show.

He himself is far from being exempt from this process - and I'm sure the irony of this too has not escaped him. He is not simply making pictures, he is making and re-making himself. In other words, he is at the centre of his own creation, for better or worse. For this reason alone, his occasional protestations about the essential futility of art are, to my mind, in vain. He is obsessional about art; and not only art. To see him at work is to recognise some sort of compulsion. Also, he is a man of alarming facility, so that he is being constantly lured into more than one field of activity.

His whole exhibition could be entitled "The Dance of Life and Death", orchestrated by Mahler, conducted by an alcoholic in pierott's costume, capering madly with a bottle in his hand. I am not being facetious and sometimes the more extravagant we are, the nearer we get to the truth. The fact that most of the figures are stationary is part of the truth. The dance of life is to this artist a mere shadow-play, distracting us from the greater reality that is the open secret of the universe. He holds up his hand, like God, and calls a halt to it. To this man, social problems - of which vagrancy is one - are in the end irrelevant and all attempts at their solution an indulgence.

All the same, there is more than one Robert Lenkiewicz. There is the artist and there is his double. Balzac labouring to create a vast human comedy was forever being contradicted by his other self, the mystical author of Louis Lambert and Seraphita. It is an enigma that repeats itself throughout the realm of art. It confronts us again here. The veracity of these moving portrayals of friends, dossers, hippies and addicts, indeed the very scale and nature of the canvasses, is to me intensely puzzling. Is there a clue I am missing? What is the point of such realism? What is going on?

Oil painting is a medium evolved by Western culture to body forth a solid world, even if it happens to be a world populated by angels and demons, by visions of heaven or hell, or in this case by their modern counterparts. The artist is inevitably involved in humanity despite himself. He shares a common mortality with the most obscure of his models. His impatience with the trivial lives of men and women rooted by their very natures in the mud of the planet and ignorant of spiritual adventures finds its counterpoint in the bewildering ironies of his own flesh.

The art of the artist is there to remind us that the reconciliation of all things can come about, for the moment anyway, only in a visionary form. Government decrees can make better or worse an existing state of affairs. Whether he would agree or not, what Lenkiewicz's pictures say to me is that he is aware of a completely different order of things and that the order exists everywhere around us.

There is something ethnic, as well as deliberate, about the fog of sorrow rolling through the greens and browns and blues of one painting after another, whether large or small, and sometimes, glancing over your shoulder, you may catch a glimpse of a procession of Ensor-like masks, held aloft by bodies like ragged sticks. Look again and the illusion has vanished. The uncanny likenesses everywhere are of people you can see daily around the Barbican, in Basket Ope, Citadel Ope, The Parade, Pin Lane, New Street. But was it an illusion? Are we being subtly deceived?

Many of the characters on his canvasses are people I have met. On one of the largest, entitled "The Burial of John Kynance", Doc, Blue, Harmonica, Barney, Cockney Jim, Taff, Wee John, Diogenes and Cyril line up to commemorate the burial of a forgotten dosser who is at the same time you, and me, the viewer. In another picture, equally large, "Mr Edwin MacKenzie Flying Past the Salvation Army Building at King Street, Plymouth, at Twelve Noon", a vagrant floats in a gay dance of death, surrounded by his cronies outside a deliberately localised doss house. For this isn't a never-never land; it is Plymouth, Devon, the year is 1973, the season is winter, the weather a steady drizzle, clammy as death itself. The people are alive and real, they are bone poor, they quarrel, they ache in their bones and food and shelter are problems they are never going to solve.

What a vagrant is, why they are vagrants or why they don't think they can be classified in such a way, are matters discussed by the men themselves. And of course their words are far more illuminating than a sociologists can ever be. The most august, as well as the most profound and comical utterances are by one Albert Fisher, who crops up in a number of paintings. He comes out with things like this:

“I’m what they call the unwanted guest and that’s the way I’m always going to be.”

“Why should it be so? And yet it is so?”

“Seagulls don’t need sheets and blankets, all they need is rocks.”

“What you see is nothing, the head manufactures the world.”

“It takes a lunatic to find out what is really going on. You are now talking to a lunatic, sir.”

The modern vagrant in England is not picturesque and he is seldom in rags. Perhaps out of self-interest, he makes himself fairly presentable. Before I came to know them a little better I used to imagine their attraction for the artist lay in their lack of pretension. It isn’t true. Notice the gestures they strike, the poses, the pipe-dreams they indulge in. Their pretensions are in tatters, but they are never going to be relinquished. No, they have one great appeal for anyone who wishes to get close to them, to study them, to learn from them: they have endless time. They sit about. Or stand, as in the paintings, mute and exhausted. The heads glare out balefully or dreamily or with their eyes rolling, stupefied by existence or by nothing, seduced by a vision of fish and chips or a doss down on a real carpet in front of a roaring fire.

And the artist grabs hold of another empty canvas and he paints. Like the writer with his blank sheet of paper, he has one more chance. All the failures have led up to this moment. He is Cezanne, he is Don Quixote: he wants to capture the world’s virginity. The freezing studio is forgotten, so is the model. He makes haste and he knows he is going to fail, because the dream which suddenly choked him with its beauty in the street, in the cafe, is always a thousand times more marvellous than anything he can get down on canvas or paper.

Features common to all the paintings in this exhibition are a powerful sense of drama, a medieval delight in the absurd and the macabre for their own sake and an undeniable compassion for the outcast which burns in portrait after portrait, whether the artist wants it to or not.

For a long time I have wondered why these overpoweringly melancholy compositions do not depress me. On the contrary, though they seem to be making a most gloomy commentary on the human condition, in some strange way they sharpen my appetite for life. Partly, as I know from watching them being painted, this is because of the furious energy that has been poured into them. But in addition to this, they are making a statement with which I wholeheartedly agree. They are accepting the world as it is, they are even dignifying it, and they want it to continue.

Philip Callow.

Biographical note

Philip Calow was born in Birmingham and grew up in Coventry. He has worked in factories and offices in the Midlands and South West, becoming a full-time writer with the award of an Arts Council bursary in 1966. Since 1956 he has published novels, stories, poetry, essays, criticism and has had plays produced on television and radio. His most recent books are a trilogy of novels: *Going to the Moon*, *The Bliss Body* and *Flesh of Morning*, a further novel, *Yours*, and a new volume of poems, *Bare Wires*.

Melancholy, the “Dance of Death” and Fool Symbolism in relation to Vagrancy.

Robert O. Lenkiewicz

Don Quixote: Sancho, tell me, hast thou carefully preserved Mambrino’s helmet?

Sancho Panza: Body of me, Sir Knight of the Woeful figure, I can no longer bear to hear you run on at this rate! Why, this were enough to make any man believe that all your bragging and bouncing of your knight-errantry, your winning of kingdoms, and bestowing of islands, and Heaven knows what, upon your squire, are mere flim-flam stories, and nothing but shams and lies; for who can hear a man call a barber’s basin a helmet, nay, and stand to it, and vouch it for four days together, and not think him that says it to be stark mad, or without brains?

I have the basin safe enough here in my pouch, and I’ll get it mended for my own use, if ever I have the luck to get home to my wife and children.

Don Quixote: I swear thou art the shallowest, silliest, and most stupid fellow of a squire that ever I heard or read of in my life! How is it possible for thee to be so dull of apprehension, as not to have learnt in all this time that thou hast been in my service, that all the actions and adventures of us knight-errants seem to be mere chimeras, follies, and impertinencies? Not that they are so indeed, but appear so; either through the officious care or the malice and envy of those enchanters that always haunt and persecute us unseen, and by their fascinations change the appearance of our actions into what they please, according to their love or hate. This is the very reason why that which I plainly perceive to be Membrino’s helmet seems to thee to be only a barber’s basin, and perhaps another man may take it to be something else.

And in this I can never too much admire the prudence of the sage who espouses my interests, in making that inestimable helmet seem a basin; for did it appear in its proper shape, its tempting value would raise me as many enemies as there are men in the universe, all eager to snatch from me so desirable a prize; but so long as it shall seem to be nothing else but a barber’s basin, men will not value it.

The History of Don Quixote,
by Cervantes
Book One, Chapter XXIV.

Whatever the word “vagrancy” may mean in contemporary terms it has always been identified with the experience of isolation. We can all remember a time when the sense of being alone was uppermost in one’s mind, for whatever reason.

The sense of isolation has always gone hand in hand with terms like “irony” or “the human condition”. The word most frequently associated with this state is “melancholy”. It is interesting that melancholy has for centuries been part of western culture. It was originally related to medieval medicine, which argued that an increase of black bile created depression. This bile - one of the four humours governing the human temperament - had to remain balanced with three other elements; if it defected or operated in excess it allegedly created the imbalance known as “melancholie”.

Each of the four humours were associated with a planet. Saturn, because of its slow apparent movement and great distance, became associated with melancholy. The mythological origins of Saturn the god reflect a disturbing list of traits: castration, imprisonment beneath the earth, time, old age and death. The Saturnine mood is familiar to many through the engraving by Albrecht Durer; the brooding figure of Melancholia.

A fascinating manuscript in the British Museum (Sloane, 160: fol. 39) records that:

“Some of these malancholike persons... troubled with this disease imagine manye straunge, incredible and impossible things. Some that they are monarches and princes, and that all other men are their subjects: Some that they are brute beasts: Some that they be urinals or earthen pots, greatly fearinge to be broken: Some that everye one that meateth them will convey them to the gallows; and yet in the end hang themselves. One thought that Atlas whom the poets faine to hold up heaven with his shoulders, would be wearie, and let the skie fall upon him: ...One (person) that had killed his father, was notablye detected; by imagininge that a swallowe upbraided him therewith: So as he himselfe thereby revealed the murder. But the most notablest example hereof is one that was in great perplexity imagininge that his nose was as big as a house...”

Du Laurens, writing at the end of the 16th century, has this to say about the melancholy man:

The melancholike man properly so called... is ordinarily out of heart, alwaies fearfull and trembling, in such sort that he is afraid of everything, yea and maketh himselfe a terrour unto himselfe as the beast which looketh himselfe in a glasse; he woulde runne away and cannot goe, he goeth oftentimes sighing... with an unseparable

sadness, which oftentimes turneth into dispayre; he is alwaies disquieted both in bodie and spirit, he is subject to watchfulness, which doth consume him on the one side; for if he think to make truce with his passions by taking some rest, behold so soone as hee would shut his eyelides, hee is assayled with a thousand vaine visions, and hideous buggards, with fantasticall inventions, and dreadfull dreames... he cannot live with companie. To conclude, he is become a savadge creature haunting the shadowed places, suspiciois, solitarie, enemie to the Sunne, and one whom nothing can please, but onely discontent, which forgeth unto it selfe a thousand false and vaine imaginations...

The above description is clearly psychological and does not relate to the more cultured variant of the malcontent that developed at this time. Melancholy was to become an art; a touch of irony, a dash of unrequited love, the merest flavour of heavy-lidded eyes, folded arms and floppy wide brimmed hats, these and more were the ingredients for melancholy pie.

It became equated with the absurd, the tragi-comic and the fool. Nothing could be taken seriously and yet the “secret” may be under one’s nose. Jaques, in Shakespeare’s “As You Like It” says:

“It is ten o’clock:
Thus may we see, ...how the world wags:
‘Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,
And after one hour more ‘twill be eleven;
And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot
And thereby hangs a tale.”

Melancholy can also be allegorical; through symbol it may be possible to bypass a host of preconceptions about terms like “sad” and “happy”.

Kyd’s “Spanish Tragedy” has Hieronimo declaim on melancholy with several “Images” that strike deeper than a more literal approach:

There is a path upon your left-hand side,
That leadeth from a quilty conscience
Unto a forest of distrust and fear,
A darksome place and dangerous to pass:
There shall you meet with melancholy thoughts,
Whose baleful humours if you but behold,
It will conduct you to despair and death:

We have, it seems, the twin factors that seem to relate the “melancholy state” to the “human situation”. The image of the Fool and the image of Death.

It is at this point that we leave the Elizabethan melancholy tradition with all its gentle innuendo, its preoccupation with the love theme, and metaphysical thought, for a period that is earlier and somehow less refined, but riddled with a stark and sinister duality, Death and the Fool.

Early medieval culture in Europe inherited a wide variety of symbols from antiquity. No symbol was more common than the image of death.

Though not everywhere, the symbol of the skeleton is the most common image of death that was employed. It is said that Egyptian festivals were preceded with presentations of small skeleton figures to all the guests in order to remind the party that - *in media vita* - death may be ever-present.

A second century Roman mosaic depicts a skeleton pointing to flames at his feet with the motto “Know Thyselfe”. The flames indicate the cremation process characteristic of Greek funerals.

Christian iconography was not to become familiar with this symbol until roughly the 14th century; but when it was introduced to this theme it welcomed it with enthusiasm. The skeleton became a symbol for the vanity of the world as well as for death.

In the 1850’s considerable research was done on the origins of the Dance of Death; theories abound and differ greatly. Most agree, however, that the rabid epidemics of bubonic plague and the inability to deal with it probably influenced, if not created, the concept of the “danse macabre” first published in Marchand in 1486.

All versions of the Dance of Death, both French and German, depict a skeleton leading one or several partners. Frequently, he carries a musical instrument or a pick and shovel, the tools of gravediggers. In the “Heidelberger Totentanz”, the German edition, the title page records: “Come ye sires and servers, rush here from all estates, young and old, pretty or ugly, all must come to this house of dance.”

The most famous cycle of woodcuts on this theme were produced between the years 1522 and 1526 by Holbein. Here, Death presents itself in a number of guises: he appears to kill, to serve or to help, to fight the living as an opponent, and sometimes he leads the person, as would a close friend. Holbein’s cycle were cut under the impact of the Reformation; his skeletons dance less but fight and punish more.

It is reported that in Paris people spent their Sunday afternoons watching a play performing the dance of death. The figure of Death might have remained on the stage throughout the performance whilst partners entered, discussed and left the scene.

One acceptable conclusion as to the real origins of the Dance of Death is put by Eisler in his article on the “Danse Macabre”. His research indicated that the term ‘macabre’ originally meant gravedigger. Thus “Danse Macabre” would mean the dance of the gravediggers; an idea supported by the fact that the skeleton images often carried the shovel and spade. There are reports of guilds of gravediggers performing dances in annual pantomimes and even as late as the early nineteenth century there are tales of Hasidic Rabbis dancing behind the coffins of the deceased. The “wake” in this country has similar parallels. Indeed, the early variant of the dancing skeleton does imply that he is having fun, rather than criticising the human predicament.

Constant and close contact with death, particularly in the 14th and 15th centuries, quite probably made part of the duties of the gravedigger more entertaining. The custom of the gravediggers dance may have cheered the mourners and distracted them from the idea that death was monstrous or satanic.

The relationship between Death and the Fool might in these terms become clear. The Fool survives where the wiser person might die; the survival of the Fool does not make sense, it is as if part of the Fool operates in another dimension. An aspect of this immortality is preserved in the circus clown who jumps to his feet having been hit over the head with an enormous sledge hammer. To quote from Paul Vercor’s novel “Sylva”:

It is because the human species is the only one which knows that death is our common lot that it is also the only one to know laughter as a saving grace...; during the moment when laughter shakes us we are immortal.”

Death makes a fool of life’s joys or purposes, or at any rate appears to. In order to tolerate him he is dressed in the costume of his ambition. Durer, Holbein and Beham have all recorded him in jester’s apparel. The symbol of the Fool relates to Death in so far as both survive inevitably, they have something innately in common. In one sense death is merely change, a rearrangement; similarly, the Fool, unable to stabilise his situation or mood, reflects the vacillatory undertone of chaos and order, life and death. Unlike the more self-conscious person, the Fool remains unperturbed by his own actions or those of others.

Like the “little get up man”, that child’s toy, weighted at the bottom and often painted as a clown which cannot fail to return to an erect position no matter how many times it is knocked over, the Fool survives the difficulties of life. One senses his affinity with chaos, his passive, innocent, even benign violation of the rules and laws that are the stock in trade of survival. Our affinity with him is precisely this detachment from the event, his ability to remain unaffected by the very things we hate or admire, work for, or fail to work for. In fending off chaos we hope to assuage the sinister overtones of

such concepts as “freedom”, we hope to avoid the nothingness of the human dilemma. The Fool reminds us of the ancient and essential possibility that life is not what we think it is and that there may be another order of things operating under our noses.

It is possible that attempting to resolve the “problem” of vagrancy as we recognise it today is to fail to see that it may be the modern counterpart of earlier symbols. Chaos may be an essential ingredient in society and the organiser and law maker may, by his very interests and ambitions, be creating the “problem” in all its complexity. Like trying to remove an air bubble from a closed container, we merely relocate it for the time being. Today’s vagrant is much the same as yesterdays and not in any romantic sense: he is a product of the social pattern and perhaps an inevitable and necessary one.

In 1568, a Fool society elected itself in Poland under the name of the “Babiniian Republic”. Its structure was a duplicate of the Polish constitution and it filled its offices by employing fools. Those activities perpetrated by non-members that were considered sufficiently foolish were admired and the person responsible for it was forced to join the society. He was supplied with a license, a seal and a position which suited his folly. The society became so large that hardly any person of consequence in the church or government was not a member of it. Eventually the king of Poland, Sigismund August II, asked the Babiniian Republic if they had a king. He was informed that as long as he lived the society would not dream of electing another. A “Fool society” does not have to be self-consciously elected, it may happen by accident.

The Poor Law legislation of 1388 forbade the relief of able-bodied beggars without any attempt to differentiate between types. It took over five hundred years for repressive and punitive techniques to be replaced by rehabilitative ones. It would be a mistake to think that attitudes towards the vagrant have changed as much as the laws.

Sympathetic and more positive approaches are the product of only the last few decades and by and large they are represented by only a small section of the social services. To put the law or service into effect does not carry with it the commitment or the responsibility of the person paid to do it. A service may be enlightened while the person responsible for putting the service into practice remains retarded in his private attitude.

NOTE

These notes and observations are designed to draw attention to an aspect of local community life.

Plymouth, like all other cities in this country, has a number of people who are classed as vagrant from one point of view or another. Experience and familiarity with these people quickly reveal that their circumstances are at times very difficult for them to come to terms with. Facilities for the rehabilitation and/or accommodation of these people are limited. This much is known.

The following pages may help to indicate some of the problems involved, from the point of view of local welfare and other voluntary agencies. There are also many contributions from people who for one reason or another consider themselves vagrant. These contributions were collected with the full co-operation of the individuals quoted.

The notes conclude with a more philosophic collection of anecdotes collected from those individuals who were inclined to contribute. This much is not so well known.

R. O. Lenkiewicz
Barbican, Plymouth 1973.

GORDON WRIGHT

Bath Street Mission

1. Vagrancy is the act of living within a community but never becoming part of it. A vagrant's lifestyle is ill-defined but usually includes homelessness, unemployment and severed relationships with family and friends. Its causal factors include traumatic experiences (e.g. sudden bereavement), inability to adjust after prison sentences or, more often than not, an addictive problem such as chronic alcoholism. It is characterised by suspicion of authority, unreliability and social irresponsibility.

2. No.

3. Because for better or worse I conform! I do what is socially acceptable and have a stability based largely on secure family ties, a regular job and a dominant motivation for living a full life.

4. Vagrancy is certainly present in the local environment, but what is more, appears to be growing. Its recognition as a problem, however, is dependent on the attitude of the observer.

I regard it as a serious problem.

5. Like most towns and cities Plymouth's vagrant population has increased since World War II and particularly so during the last decade. Plymouth offers its own special attractions to the person living an itinerant and shelterless life. The climate is temperate, its Police force is regarded as lenient, it has close associations with the sea and is within easy reach of the holiday areas of South Devon and Cornwall. Vagrancy, however, is not admitted as a local problem by the authorities.

It is this refusal to acknowledge the need that has continually frustrated and often thwarted the attempts of voluntary bodies to provide basic aid for the vagrant. And the basic requirement surely is a shelter of some kind. Unconditional and available.

I believe it is rare for a vagrant to be such through choice. It is usually a question of the lesser of two evils. The assertion that men prefer to sleep rough, which is often quoted as an excuse for indifference, is not consistent with the numbers of vagrants who come to Bath Street Mission seeking food, warmth and a bed for the night. The Mission has many times drawn attention to the deficiency in our City in this regard. Manpower is at present available to staff a hostel. We need a property. Facilities for regular medical inspection, de-infestation and rehabilitation are urgently needed.

I do not accept that the lot of the vagrant is inevitable, nor that economic and political pressures should deny him the quality of life deserving of his status as a human being.

HAROLD JAMES FROWDE Born: Plymouth, Devon. 17.10.1923

**Station Sergeant
Central Police Station, Plymouth.**

1. A person who has no means of support or, alternatively, a person who having the means of support lacks the wherewithal to use it properly.
2. No.
- 3, I am financially able to look after my family and myself; I am aware of the value of money.
4. I think it is in Plymouth.
5. I think first of all that there is not enough accommodation provided for this type of person. We have two hostels in the city: the Salvation Army hostel and St. Peter's hostel, both of which though helpful to the police are limited in their capacity to accommodate. Quite a number of their beds are allocated to people classed as residential. To my knowledge only two beds are provided for people who are absolutely stranded. This may be enough in the summer when most of these persons prefer to stay out rather than pay for a bed. Inclement weather, however, means that all the beds are full quite early in the day and the late-comer has no chance.
I deal with quite a few of these people after the pubs have turned out; you get to know the regulars. The genuine person arrives now and then and if the two beds are occupied, there's nowhere for them to go.
Vagrancy, like crime, is related to unemployment.
I feel like Plymouth made a mistake when they demolished the old hostel - Clarence House - at Stonehouse. It had a resident warden and was relatively unconditional. It was run by the Local Authority.
You get the Samaritans, the Alcoholics Anonymous or the Bath Street Mission; they supply advice and food, but when it comes to the problem of a bed there is nowhere to send them; then the problem comes to us. I've had fellows come here in a state of collapse and there are no facilities available to help them.
According to the Vagrancy Act one has the power of arrest in respect of vagrants who are directed to any reasonable place of shelter and who fail to do so. But in view of the fact that the hostels are full and there is no reasonable place of shelter to direct him to, your power of arrest falls by the wayside.

WILLIAM ROBERT BLACK Born: Cookstown, Northern Ireland. 01.11.1941

Police Constable, Plymouth.
Known as “Paddy”.

1. Someone who through his own choice, or force of circumstances, has no permanent address. In the majority of cases it would be through their own particular choice.
2. Being Irish, and by the nature of my history, I go where the work is; in that sense I could be considered a vagrant. And for promotion purposes, I would have to become a vagrant, in so far as I would have to be prepared to move around.
3. Very much so.
4. Because the official sources have not provided sufficient means to cope with homelessness. The established institutions for dealing with it have become too class conscious and can't be bothered with the real down and outs. In my experience, the Salvation Army in Plymouth just don't want to know. Through force of circumstance or otherwise, there seems to be a change in policy, that means that the real down and outs are ignored. The Salvation Army is the only place that really gives them help as there is nowhere else for them to go.

The number of people involved in vagrancy has increased and modern facilities have failed to keep pace with this increase. Vagrants, in my experience, rarely want to be reformed. They just want a place to sleep.

The Salvation Army has built a reputation on the image of helping people in all circumstances of vagrancy. Consciously or unconsciously they have now undergone a discreet change of course where they “select” those vagrants that are likely to conform to their standards and requirements. You can understand why this is necessary; many of these vagrants have no control over themselves and really cannot, for all intents and purposes, be helped. But nonetheless, the Salvation Army does have a reputation for helping vagrants and where real vagrancy is concerned, they don't. From the point of view of the law in Plymouth, vagrants have it easy; it is unreasonable and impractical to arrest a vagrant in Plymouth, as there is nothing that can be done with him.

Policemen, being human, realise that the law cannot be complied with. It is required under the law that a vagrant be first directed to a place of reasonable free shelter. (There are two free beds in the Salvation Army, but we have no control over the allocation of those beds; this is entirely at the discretion of the Salvation Army). The only place of this kind is in Bristol. The vagrant would need to refuse to go there before he could be arrested and for this reason he is simply “moved on” instead of being arrested. In any case the Plymouth courts don't like it, as the only option would be to send the man to prison. They take the view that prisons are not designed to resolve this sort of social problem.

It may appear that I am very critical of the Salvation Army but they are more or less the only institution designed for this problem in Plymouth. Proportionately, they probably do quite a good job; but they, like the rest of society, choose to ignore the “real” down and outs. And the public, as usual, want the police to do their dirty work for them.

HARRY GREVILLE Born: Oldham, Lancashire. 11.03.1916

Principle Probation Officer

1. Someone who has defied the efforts of society to make him conform. He rejects responsibilities except for his own survival and opposes any attack on his independence.
2. No.
3. I am a member of a family unit for which I am responsible. By and large, I conform to the rules and laws of society and subscribe to the doctrine "Take what you need," said God. "Take it and pay."
4. It is a problem to the vagrant. Since the local reception centre, Clarence House, was closed vagrants have had to bed down either in the open or in unoccupied property. Both these factors create problems both for the individual and the environment.
5. I deplore the local government attitude that if you don't make residential provision for vagrants, they disappear. This is a kind of irresponsible social existentialism. If charity organisations are left to deal with vagrants, then the state, through local government, must make finances available. Perhaps because the vagrants are usually unable to make known their needs, are inarticulate, are not a formidable force, society and its elected representatives can choose to ignore their needs. Unfortunately, the more sophisticated society becomes, so will the vagrant have less chance of survival unless someone has concern for their welfare.

STEVEN HOWSON Born: Yorkshire. 08.02.1907

General Secretary of the Guild of Social Services.

1. The man that nobody wants to know, because he's dirty, he won't work, either from choice or his inability to be regularly employed.
2. No.
3. Because I am endowed with the faculty to wish to live a useful life.
4. Yes.

5. Because the standard of living has risen so rapidly over the past 50 years and our society has become so affluent, that the "vagrant" stands out like a sore thumb. During the 1920's when millions were unemployed, the so-called vagrant or inadequate was simply submerged in the near poverty that then existed.

In other words, the problem has always been with us, but now it is highlighted by its contrast with affluence. There are far more people with a social conscience, motivated not from "wanting to do good", but from a genuine interest in the lame duck, be they university students or business tycoons.

The high standard of care at present evident and applied to our less fortunate members of society, makes the truly vagrant more vagrant than ever.

When I was young, a tramp was member of society, if he came to the door for food, they'd say; "Hey you, go to the back door, that's your place!" Then they would give him food; you see he had his place in society, now he is turned away, probably very pleasantly.

There used to be a comic called "The Tramp" when I was young, I remember "weary Willy" and "Tired Tim".

They've closed the workhouses which were the country seats of your vagrant, and they knew every one in the land. Each county sent them on, they were only allowed to stay a few nights but they knew exactly how far they had to walk to the next one, where it was, and when it shut. That doesn't exist today.

I would say that Plymouth is a delightful city, it has none of the problems that Birmingham or Wolverhampton have. But much like the Victorians, Plymouth does tend to sweep under the carpet one or two problems that it does have. A greater problem on this issue will develop when they pull down Wolsely Home. They say that it's substandard, but substandard is what these people need because they will be turned away from any highly professional local authority residence - and they will be turned away - there's no doubt of that.

Some are turned away from Wolsely Home as it is.

JEAN GREEN Born: Hertfordshire. 05.09.1922

Senior Social Worker.
The Plymouth Guild of Social Service.

1. Someone who is a homeless wanderer, usually associated with unemployment and frequently rendered inadequate by alcohol.
2. No.
3. Because I have the advantage of a settled home, employment and good health and education. I also have stable family relationships.
4. Definitely.
5. Through my work here at the Guild, I have encountered many men and women whom I would term vagrant. There are frequent requests here for clothing, money and accommodation.
37 of the 55 cases that came to my department in the month of February were requests for clothing, financial aid and accommodation. Of these, six were technically vagrant. That may not sound very much but that works out at more than one a week. It is also important to remember that I only meet the vagrant that has the courage or common sense to approach us in the first place and I should imagine that this is a very small proportion of the vagrant group in Plymouth.

ROY HARRIS Born: Birmingham. 18.02.1924.

Director of Samaritans, Plymouth.

1. Generally a person who has opted out of society either through their own free will or by force of circumstance. He has no means of support and, by and large, does not care to look for any.

2. No.

3. Because I am fortunate enough to have had the kind of background that has enabled me to integrate myself into society. I have a steady income, a home and a job.

4. Yes, indeed I do, very much so.

5. There are the “local” vagrants and there are a fair amount of men passing through to Cornwall ostensibly looking for work or claiming to be looking for work. Most of them have nowhere to go and the fact that there is nowhere west of Exeter for these people to find a roof aggravates the problem. I have been in touch with Cornwall and there is no accommodation for them there.

I am of the firm opinion that the local authority should take it upon itself to provide, if at all possible, - and I think it should be possible - some form of shelter for all types. I do not think that this should be left to voluntary agencies.

As Samaritans we find it very difficult - especially in winter - to turn a man away from our door and tell him he will have to sleep in Bretonside Bus Station. But by our rules we cannot provide accommodation and Bretonside is the only form of accommodation, as far as I am aware, apart from the Salvation Army and St. Peter’s Hostels to which such a person can go.

CAPTAIN JOHN YOUNG Born: Selkirk, Scotland. 12.07.1941

**Salvation Army Officer.
Officer in Charge,
The Salvation Army Hostel,
102 King Street, Plymouth.**

1. A vagrant is a person without any means of support and who is unable to look after himself or herself, and who has fallen out of society.

2. No.

3. Because I am able to look after myself and I support myself.

4. Yes, I would say it was.

5. The problem of vagrancy is such that many down and outs - because of their social behaviour - have nowhere to go. It is true that we are unable to take some of these people because of: (a) the lack of facilities such as medical supervision for the alcoholic and the drug addict; (b) when you have a great percentage of men who want a restful night's sleep, the disturbance caused by these types of men can create quite a problem.

It would be untrue to say that we have turned away all such people but when we have given such a person a chance to redeem himself, he has invariably abused the opportunity.

Therefore, what is required in Plymouth would be a hostel solely designed to cater for the "problem" person. It is a full-time job to look after the "problem" person, and this is the main type of person that we have to refuse. However, we are accommodating people who are alcoholics and others who would be down and outs if we didn't accommodate them.

I think that we as an organisation need more staff and more appropriate training. I speak of an organisation that I respect and believe makes a valuable contribution to the community.

Local authority is technically responsible for the well being of every person that enters the city. This city needs people who have been trained to deal with the problem person. We believe that God ultimately redeems such persons but we believe that a man also needs material help. Therefore, it is up to the local authorities to provide finance to train people for this type of job and then to establish a suitable residence for them.

ALFRED GEORGE ELLIOTT Born : Plymouth. 18.06.1918

**Manager of St. Peter's Hostel for Men,
100 King Street, Plymouth.**

1. A person that has no means of support.
2. No.
3. Because I am able to look after my wife and family and to keep a roof over my head.
4. Yes.
5. There are not enough hostels in the town for these people. There are people who are dirty in their habits, who need medical treatment, and it is just not possible nor practical for me to take them in. We do not have the facilities to cope with their sort of problem.

I think I should explain that the only funds we receive, from which we operate, comes "over the counter"; that is to say that we are not subsidised by any other bodies. We are self-supporting and we only just make ends meet. To accept the sort of person that makes life in the hostel difficult would be to undermine the whole purpose of the hostel.

Drink is the biggest problem of all where vagrancy is concerned. What's needed is some sort of hostel where they can get the treatment they want or need. It is a difficult problem; I wouldn't envy anyone who had the job of looking after such people, I've seen so much of it here during the last sixteen years. They want doctors and people that understand their problems better than I do. I honestly think that closing Clarence House was a very bad mistake; there was a need for it then and there is a greater need for it now. Sometimes, I'm so full up that I've got to turn away some of the regulars. Another problem that occasionally contributes to vagrancy is the person that arrives in the city with no money; he's too late for the MSS and he comes into my place to be let in for nothing on the agreement that he pays after the weekend. When I let him in, invariably I never see him again. Arrangements could be made where I could have an official form for him to sign, promising to return with the money. This suggestion has not even got off the ground.

There should be no need for any man to be sleeping rough. But what can you do? They've got nowhere for these poor devils to go, have they?

ANONYMOUS Born: Motherwell, Lanarkshire, Scotland. 22.02.1901

Known as: Crabbit Jock.

1. A man who hasn't got the price o' his bed.
2. Not at all, I've loads of money, I've been a man o' the road but not a vagrant.
There's a difference.
- 3.
4. I don't think so.
5. It's a problem for the people that are sleeping out, but not for the other people.

ANONYMOUS Born: County Limerick, Eire. 1925.

1. Somebody that sleeps “abroad”. No fixed abode, in other words.
2. At the moment, yes, I suppose.
3. Well, I’ve been roughing it quite a bit of late and I haven’t done any work for some while. No settled home of any description, a night or a week, that’s it maybe then. I should imagine that’s enough reason , isn’t it?
4. Well I think it’s a problem all over the country. All these poor areas are being pulled down and these are the only places where you can get a cheap room or lodgin’ house. They’re being pulled down and you’ve got nowhere to go, there’s no new places going up, no new hostels, really. You gettin’ conned left, right and centre with digs and places like that. Seven eight pounds a week and no food, it’s ridiculous. The honest fact is that I’m a drinkin’ man, some of us can regulate the drink and some can’t. Most of us are on the way to becoming alcoholics, you know that as well as I do. That’s the honest point, isn’t it? You can put it down to the person themselves I suppose, there’s just no go in them, no ambition, it’s as simple as that.

ANONYMOUS Born: Freedom Fields, Plymouth.

1. I've seen a man goin' through the bins and I feel sorry for him, but he likes to have his own way, he likes to keep to himself. It's like the old fellow at my place, he's eighty one and he had property down Ebrington Street and they took it all off him, and now he just sits there, and he gets 27 shillings a week, but he seems quite happy, with his pipe.

2. No.

3. I can get out and about, if I got money I can spend it, not like some that can't even move from the Sally. I'm still young ain't I?

4. Yes.

5. Everything's going up, we're going into the Common Market now aren't we? The old people can't afford to buy the things with the money they've got. We had a chap out at our place, but as soon as he runs out of money, he goes and sleeps rough, see? Then when he's got a few bob, he comes back again. They say there's a lot of jobs going round, but I don't see them and I've really been looking.

ALAN BAIRD Born: Fife, Scotland. 02.07.1928.

Known as:“Tich”.

1. A person with no money. No visible means of support, that's what they class you as.
2. I do at times, especially when I'm sleeping rough. But you're still a vagrant as far as “they're” concerned, if you're at the Sally Anne. It's no fixed abode, isn't it?
- 3.
4. It is in this town; they don't want you in it.
5. They don't give you enough money to feed yourself in this town. Everything goes up in price after a week.

WILLIAM HENRY BANFIELD Born: Indian Queens, Cornwall. 04.12.1903.

Known as:Joe, Bill, Ernie, Henry.

1. No visible means. If I'd gone in the bloody Sally, they'd want two an' six; well, I ain't got two an' six, see? No visible means.
2. Yes.
3. No income, no weekly wage. No accommodation in Plymouth, is there?
4. Yes.
5. Well, there's no accommodation, no room, no lodgings, no home. Can't be nothin' else, can it? I'll go to the Mission tonight and see a dozen of 'em an' they'll be sleepin' rough.

CHARLES CHRISTOPHER BYRNE Born: Dublin, Ireland. 06.02.1914

Known as: The Singer.

1. Now vagrancy is what you want to do, that's all. The word vagrancy is stupid, we're all human beings. It's bad to call a man a vagrant, he's a human being, that's all.

I've met all kinds of people that were called vagrants, their clothing might look a bit rough, but the mind is the most important thing in the world and some of them have wonderful minds you know.

2. Now come here 'till I tell yer, I consider myself a human being like anybody else. Someone might have a lot of money, but he's got nothing more than me when it comes down to basics. Anyway, Paul Getty's a vagrant, and all the lords and peers are vagrants, they live off the fat of the land and they do no work, they're all vagrants, aren't they?

I used to be a "spider-man", a steel erector. I was a man, I mean a man, I'm old now, I won't accept defeat. You think that you're the man you used to be, so you hate charity, so I prefer to sleep rough, you know?

3.

4. It's not a problem anywhere, I'm tryin' to tell yer; if he wants to be that way - he'll be that way. Can't you see that, now accept that, accept it, it's as it is. I'm going to tell yer something my friend, if you want to be on the monorail of life, you'll never sleep out. I mean, they'll give you a bowl of rice pudding with a bit of religion or whatever, and you've got to be in at nine. Don't drink, don't do this, don't do that, don't do the other; Lord above! You've got to drift away from that. To be yourself, you've got to sleep out, you know. It's a problem all over the world, not only in Plymouth. Human beings are everywhere, aren't they? Sleeping out all over the world, right at this minute. God knows what they're fighting or what they're fighting against. The vagrancy act according to law is wrong, if a man has nowhere to go and you arrest him, and you make a criminal out of him right away. I was a "vagrant" in this country in 1930. There was no need for me to do it - not a bit of it - it's my way, you see, it's my way.

Vagrancy is not a problem, the problem is just to be able to understand each other. If I go to the Social Security, he looks at me as though I'm a German or somethin', it's a problem of understanding.

When you tell the truth - it's bad news.

PATRICK CONNELL CAMPBELL Born: Port Glasgow. 31.03.1931.

Known as: Paddy.

1. Well now, it's a bloke that wanders about with no aim in life, eh? Ninety percent of them from what I've seen have taken to the hard alcohol, you know, the "Jake". I've noticed that the cause of all that is blokes that's got broken marriages; there's a hell of a lot of that. You know this "Justice Manual", well I've read that an' it's got a clause in that dealin' with vagrancy, and it seems to me that it's been cut and dried to suit these magistrates. You'll be walking from town to town, like me, I've walked from Bournemouth to Torquay - pulled up fifteen times by police patrols, and I was tidily dressed, sober, and I'd got myself a job which had lasted twelve weeks in a hostel. This word vagrancy seems like a term coined to suit the law, to whip someone inside for being a "vagrant".

2. No.

3. Because I can get work and a place to live, providing that the money is reasonable. That is one of the reasons that I keep on the move, to find a better job all the time.

4. Well now, I won't mention any particular spot, but I've been all round the country, I've been in Sally armies, doss-'ouses, and from what I've seen in these places, it looks to me like a collection of alcoholics and head cases; and what I think causes a lot of it is that they've become a bit disillusioned about themselves, they might have been good workin' class people, who hit the drink. It breaks the mind up, and they can't stand on their own feet, I've seen some of the concoctions that they get up and they definitely need some kind of help. As I say, I've been all over, I sit and read the paper and I listen and watch, and it seems to me that there's something missin' up top, you know? Something missin'.

HENRY CANN Born: Stonehouse, Plymouth. 08.04.1932.

**Member of staff at the Salvation Army Hostel,
102 King Street, Plymouth.**

Known as:Henry or Harry.

1. Someone that's got nowhere to live, he's on the streets all the time.

2. Yes, basically.

3. Put it this way, at the moment I'm on the staff of the Salvation Army. If I get another job, I can't live 'ere, they say so. So I got to find other accommodation. To find that - which I've tried to find - it's a matter of seven to eight pounds a week.

4. Yes, definitely.

5. Because, to start with, we 'aven't got enough hostels to accommodate for the likes of these men. A man comes into the town, he goes to MSS, they gives 'im what they think they'll give 'im. He's got to live on nothing for a week, a man's bound to be a vagrant, he can't afford to do anythin' else. He sleeps rough, he gets loused up, he drinks, he's up in court and fined. What's the reason, eh?.

I see 'em here every day, they got a few bob, they're goin' to starve themselves, to drink themselves stupid. They got six quid, "We'll sleep rough", they reckon; they're down on the Hoe, the bus station.

They're killin' the workin' man in this town. You know who I mean.

JOHN CASEY Born: Mile End, Bow, London. 22.05.1937.

1. It's an 'ard question; it's a fear - not bein' able to communicate with people.
2. I work, sometimes - but it covers up my real self. I'm far 'appier walkin' down the Hoe with a few pence. But then you've got to 'ave the money for food, sleep, an' all that. You're not in society unless you workin', are you?
In the eyes of the public, I suppose I am a vagrant.
3. No qualifications. My appearance - I seem to look a suspicious person to some people. I'm not really, but there you are.
4. Yes.
5. I'd say it was accommodation, any town you go it's the same, accommodation. It's easy to fall into the atmosphere of despair, depression and all that when you're livin' in a place that costs two quid a week or somethin'. You know what I mean, the Sally Anne, for instance, it's no good for you, you're not encouraged to do anythin' livin' in a place like that. They go into their own cocoon, their own world, you know what I mean? The distrust that is caused by livin' in those places.
In a proper lodgin' house, if things get bad - you look for a likely guy that you can put the 'ammer on - if things get bad, you know; but in these places they're all locked up in themselves, they don't want to know about anythin'.
I know what it's like, I mean I've lived in parks and dossed around for ages and when I settled down somewhere for a bit it would take others two months or more to get a word out of me. So I know what it's like not being able to talk to anybody. I'm English and all that, but I went to the foreigners in the West End for three or four years, which was a mistake. I mean, you can't escape your own in the end. It catches up with you. I went right down and ended up in a rehabilitation centre and the group therapy and the talk definitely did it for me. I saw others there like me and it made me realise that you've got to push yourself.

JEREMIAH JOSEPH CRONE Born: Cork, S. Ireland. 15.05.1909.

Known as: Corky or The Irish Compressor.

1. A person who is not prepared to help themselves and who prefers the wide open spaces.

2. No.

3. Because I am prepared to help myself as regards work. And owing to illness, it's what's keeping me down at the moment.

4. A considerable amount of it is prevailing here in Plymouth.

5. Plymouth is an open door for chaps that have been in trouble. They make from London to Exeter and finish up in Plymouth.

At the same time, they're wonderful people. Many of them possess a great deal of education, 'cos I've met them. I've been in Plymouth 24 years now. I've seen them come and I've seen them go.

**ALEXANDER DOUGLAS Born: Alloa, Clackmannanshire, Scotland.
19.03.1942.**

Known as:Dougy or Jock.

1. Someone who don't get the chance to improve himself, I should think. Definitely someone who's had it so hard that they've hid themselves away from the rest of society.

2. I have been a vagrant, I'm not at the moment 'cause I've got a bed and breakfast place to stay at.

3.

4. Of course it is.

5. You've got people who know that all this is going on, they've seen it on television an' all that but they don't do nothin' about it.

It's one of the most beautiful things that can happen, to see someone the likes of me an' the others bein' built up from nothin'.

I've been an alcoholic since I was eighteen years old and I've done eleven years inside now, off and on. All for the drink, you know? It's since the parents died, you see. The world represents the wild side of life, you know? You steal and you drink an' things like that. The daffodil represents the divine thought as a child, which I'm sure is still in me it gets a chance to bloom. I wrote this poem, see; goes like this:

When I was young, I loved to roam
O'er moor, o'er hills and craggy stone,
O'er fen and glen, aye, fields and shore,
I even loved this all the more.
But growing to a certain age
I seen the world with all its rage
With lust and greed with urge to kill
Soon I forgot the Daffodil.
So out to the world I then did go
I was an orphan then you know
Lost the best friends I'd ever had
Pertaining to my Mother and Dad
Now in the wicked jungle
Where the main thing is a bundle
Of money, dope and cigarettes
Even urges of blackmail threats

Were these things meant to be
Like living in a cage not free
With darkness daily as a cloak
On a pathway no one can cope
Or is there something still in store
Something else worth living for
Like finding a pathway to the light

Which at the end is great delight
Now in my mind I wander
And let my heart just ponder
Of lust and greed how it did kill
And stole away my daffodils.
If I go find my daffodils
Would they hate or love me still
For if they didn't anymore
I'd wander and wander
O'er many a shore.

THOMAS DUNSTAN Born: Rochdale, Lancashire. 21.04.1914.

Known as: Tom.

1. Personally, a vagrant is a tramp, a man who's got nobody at all to worry about him. He's got nowhere to go. It could have been caused by a marriage break-up or home troubles - an' he's never bothered to worry about himself or anybody else. It could have been a soldier or a sailor returnin' from the wars to find his wife and kids dead or gone.

A vagrant is a man without home or habitation - he has no future in life. A little while ago - almost twelve months now - I found myself put in the streets at 12 noon by bailiffs - my wife and son and me - we was treated callously and very unjustly. It was more or less the rich overidin' the poor. I nearly packed up everything and took to the road. But then I sat sown and thought sensibly that if I run away and give up hope everythin' would be lost an' I decided to put me back against the wall an' hit back with everythin' I had.

After a week of terrible hardship, 'avin no proper meals an' no recognised place to sleep, I was eventually helped by the social welfare an' we was given the sanctuary of the old workhouse, St. Mary's, King Street. Another reason I didn't give up, I 'ave a very sick wife who has got heart trouble an' if I 'ad become a vagrant it would 'ave been very a selfish act, an' I would only 'ave been thinkin' about meself.

2. No.

3. Because I 'ave a recognised place of 'abitation. I 'ave my son an' wife an' me dog an' I 'ave a regular job which I built up - as a window cleaner. Everybody knows an' trusts me.

4. I think it's a major problem.

5. Because a lot of people don't want to be 'elped - they just want to carry on in their own crazy way of livin' an' it is impossible to 'elp a person that will not make an effort to 'elp themselves.

There should be no such word as vagrancy 'cause in this day and age if you're willin' to work you can become a first class citizen an' you can get a regular place to sleep - an' be somebody.

The majority want the drink, they are content to carry on with the drink an' stay wherever they can. They've got no outlook on life.

You must make an effort to establish an' help yourself before you can expect other people to help you. There is no need for vagrancy today 'cause there are enough jobs for any man.

This is not 1925 - in the days of the old work'ouses - the tramps an' the soup kitchens.

WILLIAM ELLIOTT Born: Durham City. 30.03 1920.

1. A vagrant is a bloke, he's just a down and out, he's just thrown aside, nobody seems interested.
2. No.
3. At least when I get the money, I try to get a bed.
4. Yes.
5. There's not enough places for blokes, not like there used to be. The simple reason as to why there's lots of vagrancy today is that they've closed so many of the old lodging houses and they've not bothered opening any new ones.

ANTHONY EDWARD FENTUM

Born: Redhill, Surrey. 08.05.1944.

Known as: Tony.

1. A person that has nowhere to live.
2. No.
3. Because I always have somewhere to live.
4. Yes.
5. I did a year's work at the Bath Street Mission and met several vagrants there. I think that there are people outside the benefits of Social Security. You will never solve the problem of vagrancy because there are people who want to be vagrants.

ALBERT ERNEST FISHER **Born: Belper, Derbyshire. 20.01.1920.**

Known as: The Bishop or Lord Nelson.

1. Apart from the vicissitudes of fortune, I would say it's one of those things that comes to you automatically.
2. Yes.
3. I was a typical wayfarer and it was my ambition and desire to travel to those different places there and found it to be a very important and vital thing.
4. Yes.
5. I don't think anyone can explain it.

JAMES FOSTER Born: Sunderland, County Durham. 15.11.1920.

Known as: Butch or Harmonica Jim.

1. Outcast.
2. No.
3. I can work if I want to, I can get a room if I want to. I'm just happy as I am, that's all.
4. No.
5. Well, it ain't no problem to me.

TERRY ALEXANDER GOLDSTONE Born: Lipson, Plymouth. 09.11.1938.

Known as: Terry.

1. We're all vagrants in the sense that we're not here to stay and in that most people are educated for the past and not for the present, which makes them feel that they don't entirely belong in this society.
2. As much as anyone.
3. From a legal point of view I am not a vagrant as I have property and sound relationships. I feel myself vagrant, however, because society is not aware of the individual and consequently does not educate the individual to play a meaningful role to the best of his natural abilities and talents. I don't blame anyone for dropping out; I've known destitution myself and almost regret that I was too sane at that time to retaliate more aggressively. As it is, I didn't find the courage to strike out blindly. I satisfied myself with philosophy and verbal fisticuffs and became a convinced Marxist.
4. Yes.
5. Because Plymouth, as much as any benighted bastion in this crumbling empire, is unaware of its own real problems. The quality of its government demonstrates this. Many smaller cities have attempted to deal with their social problems in a more positive way, with some effect, despite the strangulating bumbling of Whitehall. The City Fathers, in their anxiety to attract foreign industry, ignore the immense natural potential of such a large population. Education is neglected - whatever they say - the Dockyard continues its futile production. The arts and social services are a travesty in a city of this size. Only the dole queues are booming, despite Plymouth's subservience to foreign capital.
There will be many more of these vagrants outside the Labour Exchange and only a vagrant city would continue to sit around with its begging bowl extended.

HUGH HARGIE **Born: Greenock, Scotland. 19.05.1936.**

Known as: Jock.

1. A man of no means.
2. Yes.
3. It's a way of life - you travel from job to job - you sleep rough.
4. Yes.
5. A lot of hostels are too dear. You only get just enough to keep you and that's not enough for proper meals.

REGINALD FREDERICK HAWKE Born: Wadebridge, Cornwall. 15.03.1924

Known as: Jan.

1. Going around with nothing in your pocket.
2. Yes.
3. Sometimes I've got a fixed address, then I walk out of it. Maybe I can't mix. I keep my own counsel.
4. Yes.
5. Like a sheep trying to get off his back.
You start off by choice; I regret it now.
It's like an escaped convict - everybody's against me.

JOHN DONALD HAYDON
Exeter. 08.05.1917.

Born: Precincts of the Parish of the Cathedral,

Known as: Jack.

1. It's a term that could apply to anyone. I could be that way if I let myself go. The word is too severe. There's a lot in vagrancy: you're nervous or suffering from a complaint. There's alcoholism, could be your home life. You might have been upset in your home life, you might have been...

ANTHONY HEGGADON Born: Bristol. 20.03.1942.

Known as:Tony.

1. I'd say a man that's got no money - down and out.
2. At the moment, yes.
3. Simple reason is that I've no money. The family don't want to know me.
4. Definitely.
5. I don't know why, really. If they could get some money for some place for the likes of me to go it would be a good thing, I think. That's my opinion.

DAVID LOUIS HELINGOE Born: Looe, Cornwall. 20.07.1944.

1. A wanderer.

2. No.

3. Because I have definite kinds of accommodation, from hotels to rooms to hostels.

4. I don't know. A vagrant is a wanderer, a wanderer is a vagrant, nobody can stop them. Who can stop them? They put them into prison sometimes - they used to anyway. I don't think they do nowadays. It is a problem; bound to be a problem, isn't it?

5. A problem to who? A problem to society or a problem to the vagrant himself? I'm not sure what "problem" means.

Society wants to make a community and a vagrant wants to wander, don't they?

LEONARD WOTTEN HILL Born: New Haven, Sussex. 16.09.1909.

Known as: Rodhi.

1. A man that wants to go his own way through life.
2. No, I consider myself a hobo, a bushwacker, not exactly a vagrant.
3. Because living in the bush most of my life, all over Africa, having seen elephants and been bitten by various insects and catching a good dose of malaria and having travelled all over there for over thirty years, that is why I consider myself a bushwacker.
4. Yes, it is a problem, a big problem.
5. The simple reason is that there's no decent hostel in Plymouth for people to go to. Hence, if what there is full up, you've got to go into empty houses and live it rough for a bit. It's not only the old, but it's the young that are doing the same thing because there is no suitable accommodation here.
I should say that broken homes - through the man or wife, that's most of the trouble. It's one of those awkward questions that even a psychiatrist couldn't answer really, isn't it? Naturally, I drink; but I can go without it. And the average vagrant likes to get a few "shakers" just to get out of the world, pro tem; that's why he lives a life on his own in parks and so on.
I slept under a hedgerow near Home Park one particular night and by five o'clock the next morning people were bringing their dogs out and nosing around and I had to get up. On another occasion I slept under a shelter near the same place, had some drink with me and sandwiches. Police came at 12 p.m., 2 a.m. and four o'clock a.m., with a dog, and said "Shift on", so I moved.
So much has happened, you know. I used to be in the Rhodesian Air Force and now, since Smith and Wilson have had an argument, I'm neither in the place nor out of it. I wonder sometimes why I raced around the skies helping people and I think, "Was it all worth it?" But I'm fed up thinking and worrying about it. There's no point in talking about it for the simple reason that nobody wants to listen.

CYRIL HOCKING Born: Penzance, Cornwall. 24.10.1914.

Known as:Cyril or Mephistopheles.

1. Somebody a bit off they 'ead.
2. No.
3. Cos oi'm not.
4. Yes.
5. Cos they want their brains examined.

**LLEWELLYN WILLIAM JAMES HOWELLS Born: Tiverton, Devon.
26.06.1933.**

Known as:Chris or Jim.

1. A person who's sleeping rough, who has no money, who has no help.

2. Yes.

3. It's a most peculiar thing; I'm a vagrant because of my own fault. I love my mother, but I'm an alcoholic so therefore it puts me down as a vagrant.

Being an alcoholic, I am unable to stay in lodgings. I need people who will understand me, which I've never found.

My shaking of the hands, and absolutely peculiar looks when I've not had a drink, makes me conspicuous.

4. Yes.

5. All vagrants want someone to love them. A man would not be a vagrant if he had someone to trust him.

MAURICE HUSTLER Born: Manchester. 12.12.1934.

Known as:Rose.

1. Poor people, penniless people.
2. Not quite.
3. Part time work sometimes comes. Umemployment pay comes each week.
4. No.
5. Plymouth is a fairly high-class city. The environment is well above average.

WILLIAM JOHN HUXLEY Born: Worcester. 23.03.1919.

Known as:Bill.

1. Well, trampin', drinkin', which is the biggest fault of the vagrant.. A vagrant is just a tramp of the road; there's some cause that makes him that way.
2. On and off, yes.
3. Everythin' went wrong after the war, you know? We come out of a farm house and we went into tied cottages and we had to come out of them just after I come out of the army. At that time, I'd come from a prisoner of war camp, I had a nervous disorder which an army doctor says to me many people would 'ave for a short spell. To cope with that nervousness that I 'ad I started drinkin' and after a time it did go away; the nervousness, that is, but it left the problem of the drink. Then we got evicted from the tied cottage through a court order. At that time there were no 'ouses goin' up after the war. Any lodgings an' things, that time, was full of refugees. My parents at that time couldn't get no other accommodation. My aunt took my parents in, my other brother managed somehow to get into lodge and I kept to the road.
4. Yes.
5. Vagrancy is a problem of society; they're more or less away from society, ain't they? Myself, I think that somethin' should be done outright to get men off the road. It's not just Plymouth; it's all over, isn't it?

FRANCIS JACKSON Born: Garston, Liverpool. 10.08.1928.

Known as:Scouse or Jacko.

1. A man that's in need.
2. Sometimes I'm not sure.
3. I'm capable of working and earning my own living, if given the chance.
4. It is the most minute problem and yet an overbearing problem.
5. Because it's been created by society. A government, and when I say government I mean N.A.B. (National Assistance Board). If a man has no fixed abode, whatever nationality, he has no call or demand upon any of Her Majesty's royalties. Before a man can be given assistance he has to find a home.

JAMES JOHNSTONE Born: Belfast, N. Ireland. 17.03.1938.

Known as:Momo.

1. There's no definition really, is there? Alcoholics - you're used to the scrumpy; the only thing you're lookin' for is your drink, isn't it?
2. Yes.
3. Too fond of alcohol. All my money goes on alcohol.
4. Definitely.
5. There's no accommodation. If you come into the Salvation Army a bit drunk and all that, they won't even let you book in. That's the reason for most vagrancy in Plymouth.
Plymouth's only got two hostels: there's nothing else, so you go skipperin'.

**VICTOR JONSON, ALIAS JAMES HOWARD Born: St. Pancras, London.
12.08.1905.**

**Known as: The Scarlet Pimpernel,
Sturmwaffer or Cockney Jim.**

1. A man who has outlived his usefulness to society and is a society drop-out.
2. Yes.
3. Before World War II I was on the road because there was no other alternative - mass unemployment - and I had at least my freedom from commercialisation.
4. Yes.
5. They wander from place to place in order to get away from capitalism and all that applies to it.

ROBERT CHARLES WILLIAM LEE Born: St. Austell, Cornwall. 26.09.1930.

Known as:Rob.

1. You can be down and out and then come up again, and keep up, if you can. You can get marching orders from any job and that takes you down again, don't it?
2. Sometimes yes, and sometimes no.
- 3.
4. With some, yes.
5. You get some people that are given jobs but don't go to them, then they start to wonder why they get their dole money stopped. It's a waste of time stopping it 'cause they then go to the Social Security. If they didn't have that they'd have to get work.

EDWIN JAMES MACKENZIE Born: Camelshead, Plymouth. 30.03.1912.

**Known as:Mac, Gabby, Ed, Steptoe, Jim,
Lofty, Diogenes, Blackie.**

1. I'm not much of a scholar.
2. Yes.
3. Cos I'm in every bugger's way.
4. In some cases it is, in some it isn't.
5. Cos you'm making yourself a bloody nuisance, not only to yourself, but to everybody else. Some can control theyselves, some cain't.

HENRY JOSEPH MCDONALD Born: Guyana, South America. 31.01.1938.

Known as:Henry.

1. It is not necessarily true that a man who wanders around and has no money is a vagrant. It could be that he's a sick person suffering from an incurable illness and society just neglects him. Whether the injury was a natural injury or it was inflicted by someone does not matter.

If a person walks around all day and he has no employment, you still can't call him a vagrant: for you to call him a vagrant you'd have to prove to him that he's done something wrong, you know what I mean?

2. If I'm a vagrant person, people wouldn't like to say, "Yes, I consider myself a vagrant". I would term myself a person who walks about all day and don't have no employment; I would refer to the first statement I made. I don't think I have an injury but I "feel" I have an injury that has been inflicted on me that caused me to walk all day on the street, to have no job, without any money.

3..

4. I don't know how much about Plymouth, really. I am just here a few days wandering around, you know? Sometimes I get 65 pence a day and sometimes I goes around people for 10 pence, to have a sandwich or some cigarettes.

As far as I see, I haven't seen anyone - if I see someone stealing I would get a hundred pounds for it, wouldn't I? I would willingly give information. But I haven't seen anyone, you know? I don't have any clue of what really goes on you see.

You ask some people for a bit of money to save you from dying, you know? A bit of money, perhaps 10 pence or somethin' for a cup a tea, 'cause you is hungry.

I was working in the Dockyard about seven years ago. Someone inflicted an injury on my eyes, so it is not easy for me to identify anyone now. Someone put on a torch light when I was walking in the dark, you see; it affected my eyes, it just did, see?

An injury has been afflicted on me in the Dockyard in January 1964 aboard the surveying ship, the Hecla. It's an injury which after I look at it for a few years is absolutely incurable, you see. It leads to... it leads to... to... the statement I made in question one.

EUGENE MCDONNELL Born: County Cork, Eire. 26.06.1925.

Known as:Mac.

1. No visible means of support - just fiddling, a bit of scrounging.
2. Not really.
3. I'm just sort of down and out and I can't get a job. Bit I don't want one, to be honest. It's one of those subjects that you could talk for ever on, or say little.
4. Yes.
5. Well, basically it's insufficient jobs to go around. If they had more jobs they'd have more prosperity and everything. I did one of these government courses as a carpenter, but I'm no good with me hands so I packed it in.
It casts a reflection on the social set-up, the rich and the well to do, they don't want to know 'em 'cause they got a bit of a guilty conscience about it, I should think.

PETER ANTHONY PEPPERELL Born: Bournemouth. 23.05.1934.

Known as:Peps or Big Pete.

1. A person that is out of work, on the road and skippering.
2. Not at the moment.
3. Because I'm working.
4. Yes.
5. Because I think there are not enough hostels to take the people in and there is not enough public support to finance them.

KENNETH OWEN PHILLIPS Born: South Wales. 16.08.1941.

Known as:Ken.

1. I define the word vagrant as a person who has either voluntarily or involuntarily bowed out of the rat race. By some people he may be identified as a court jester or perhaps he has put his own fantasy into practice and retained his own identity. I also identify the term “vagrant” with that of Christ, the reason being he stores up no worldly possessions.

2. Yes.

3. I consider myself a vagrant for the following reasons: I am more than capable of joining the ranks of industrialised battery chickens and earning a so-called living. I received a university education, which I do not use to earn myself a living. I would prefer to retain my own identity and not become indoctrinated with the useless literature of that dreadful creeping mass affectionately known as the Establishment.

4. Yes.

5. I think vagrancy is a problem in the local environment mainly for the reason that the local environment happens to be situated reasonably out of the way from the rest of the country. I don't think, personally, that the local environment has anything to do with vagrancy, as this exists in other environments. But I must stress strongly that the inhabited, repressed, uninitiated people who represent the so-called local environment are remarkable for their own degree of inadequacy. It is a case of the inhibited and repressed leading the illiterate and uninitiated. They would rather think the problem did not exist.

SAMUEL ERIC ROBERTS Born: Plymouth. 09.03.1912.

Known as:Black Sam.

1. Sickness - mentally sick. They're barred no matter where they go. Religion's a fraud.

2. A misfit. An escapist. I'm not a vagrant. I'd like to be, I'd like to disappear somewhere.

3. I never married. All these bums and layabouts, there's some answer.

Now I've got an old mother of 87 in this town. Now I know the gypsies around here. Poor old bugger laying out rough all night. If he's a half pence short he wouldn't get his tea.

4. Yes.

5. Nine out of ten of these fellas are mentally sick. They get their N.A.B. money, they go bonkers. They escape, that's how it is. You neglect yourself, you forget to eat, all you're worried about is a bottle. You wake up in the morning, you put your hand in your pocket - is there enough, enough for a bottle, a bottle, a bottle.

I've met some good men among them. But it boils down to one thing - you're mentally sick; searching and searching and searching, but you get no breaks.

Once you've been in the nick a few times, you've had it.

Something must have disturbed him to push himself off the rails, something must have; you push and push and he goes to hell.

The brain can stand so much, you don't know it, you're mentally sick, you don't know it. You think you can fight 'em, but you can't. Another bottle, yes then you can. And you carry on and carry on and the next moment you're in the gutter. People gape at you. I used to be smart once but I'm going that way myself - no interest.

JAMES EDWARD SMY Born: Prince Rock, Plymouth. 20.09.1904.

Known as:Big Jim.

1. Somebody of no fixed abode or habitation.
2. Definitely not.
3. Because I am an ex-police officer of Palestine.
4. Yes, with the present state of affairs.
5. Because there is prosperity everywhere; there's no need for vagrancy, especially with young persons.

KATHLEEN STEVENS Born: Ireland. 20.02.1932.

Known as:Kathleen.

1. They start drinkin' too much, they end up with no money and nowhere to go. I expect that's what it is, that's all I know about it anyway.
2. No, I wouldn't say it was. I was a long time ago.
3. Well, I've somewhere to stay, haven't I?
4. No, I don't really, I don't think it's much of a problem here.
5. I don't know Plymouth all that way, I just go by what I see and there's not much of it really.

VERNON SAMUEL STEVENS Born: Tregeazel, St. Just, Cornwall. 26.02.1915.

Known as:Digger.

1. The whole word vagrant means bein' out of accommodation plus havin' nowhere to sleep. You've always got a couple of shillin's from the Security to keep yourself goin'.

2. I'm not.

3. I was born and bred in a responsible home, brought up following the Methodist chapel all my younger days. I joined the Navy at eighteen: I done twelve years there. I'm used to being in a good home an' I like everybody else around me to be the same, that's the way I feel about it.

4. It is at the present moment.

5. Because there's more and more comin' in from other towns. The majority of persons have been drummed out of the other towns and they comes to Plymouth 'cos it's a new town, you see? Well, the top and bottom of vagrancy actually is that a lot of these boys like to take a drink. Some of these boys overdo it an' take to the wine. They can't get into any of the decent public houses. That's the whole reason for it I think, that's the problem in Plymouth.

I'm not talking about the teenagers - they're real good boys really and they are going to come to the top in the end. The majority of these lads have gone into places like the Salvation Army an' St. Peter's, the only two places for that sort of person in Plymouth. Meself now, I mean I like a drink but my limit is cider. These places now, they chuck the boys out if they've had too much; their next choice is just to go on the wine and all that. Of course, I've no proof of that, it's just my opinion. Wine drinkin' has gone to excess, I think you could enjoy a pint of beer more than goin' onto this wine, but there you are. If you go for a job now all they want is young people. I've been in most of the really good bakeries in town over the years an' I tell you as an experienced man, if I go there now, a man of 57, I just can't be entertained.

Another big problem is the lack of good accommodation. I mean, I pay £7.10 a week an' I can't afford it, you know? I'm supposed to live on two pounds a week, you know, for a midday meal an' smokes an' all that.

JOHN HENRY WALKIE Born: Truro, Cornwall. 19.05.1936.

Known as:John.

1. The term vagrant I always understood to be someone without means, somebody on their own. I always thought of someone who're really scruffy, dirty, but I find now that it can be all classes of people.

2. No.

3. I can't put it in words. It's due to ill lick, being pushed from pillar to post. Nobody wants to take any responsibility, nobody wants to know.

4. What I've seen around in Plymouth, it is. There's so many blokes sleeping rough in old houses. It's about time the council did something. The Salvation Army here has nine empty beds in a room and they say they're full up! It's not helping anybody, is it?

5. I think it comes back to the fact that nobody wants to be responsible. You go and see so and so, he sends you to such and such who says, "No, we can't do this or we can't do that - go to somebody else".

I come from Cornwall and they sent me up here to Plymouth - give me a railway ticket an' all, just to get rid of me. When I gets to Plymouth nobody knows anything about me, nothin' about me coming, just nothing.

TERENCE PATRICK DANIEL STOTT Born: Liverpool. 08.05.1933.

Known as:Blue.

1. A person with wanderlust, that likes to move on.
2. Yes.
3. Because I can't sleep in enclosed premises, I like to sleep in the open air. It's care free and easy, no rent to pay.
4. No. It's up to the vagrant.
5. It's a man doing what he wants to do, living the way he wants to live; it's independence.

ALAN PUL-WRECE Born: St. Judes, Plymouth. 01.10.1925.

Known as:Lofty.

1. Vagrancy is a symptom of a society that's gone wrong, a society that does not cater for the needs of the individual. A vagrant is someone who thinks he's escaping to somethin' when in actual fact he's escaping from somethin'.
2. Not yet. Time will tell.
3. Because I'm not sufficiently disenchanted with the world yet, I'm still trying to make a go of things. I'm optimistic enough to think that things will change, it's just not good enough to stick an old fella in a doss 'ouse when he's got a drink problem and just wait for him to die. This is not the answer, it just isn't.
4. Yes.
5. 'Cos there's somethin' definitely wrong and no one's interested enough to find a real solution. They'd rather sweep it under the carpet. The problem's not just with the vagrant but with the whole community. A community is a group of people living together, not a framework for some people to go up and for some to die in the gutter. It's criminal to see some people with cars and two houses when there's others starvin'. Not that the answer's to give them a doss 'ouse, but to give them dignity. And that would be just the starting point. These people haven't just got nowhere to live, there's a real psychological problem and they're rejected. I think that they can see that society lacks in many ways, they just can't adjust to that. Some of us will wait for a change to take place and some can't stand it and drop out. The thing to remember is that they're human bein's an' not things that get drunk and piss themselves. People reckon we're useless but we helped this artist with his stupid survey.

MAXIMS, APHORISMS AND OPINIONS

“THE BISHOP”

I go to bed and I think, “What’s it going to be tonight, Albert? A dream? A nightmare? An hallucination?”

What few brains I’ve got, I’m destroying them! What few brains I’ve got, I’d best keep them.

I’ve been called to higher service about two years ago: I’ve not gone yet though!

I’m not a gangster, I’m a lunatic. The slightest thing gives you away.

I’m glad I’m poor. If I’d been rich, I’d have been dead years ago.

Why should it be so? And yet it is so!

What you see is nothing; the head manufactures the world.

Wally: My favourite actor was George Sanders

Albert: Well there, Wally, I’ll tell you my favourite actor.

Wally: Who’s that, Albert?

Albert: My bloody self there!

I’m saying my prayers to the hidden powers. Don’t tell me I’m dying.

Talk is cheap, but never let imagination run away with you; it can’t see where it’s going.

Always keep the creases in your trousers. But don’t shit ‘em; that will take the creases out.

You’re like horseshit Albert; you’re all over the place.

There’s quite a lot of Fisher’s around; there’s quite a lot in the sea, too.

I’m like a piece of newspaper blowing here and there in the gutter; it all depends on the wind.

Seemingly there are better things to do than what I’m doing.

This is what they call reality... but I’m beginning to find one thing out there, one great thing there; there is something further afield than what there is here.

The mind builds fear... and lots of other things besides.

When you go to sleep at night times or early morning there, you seem to pay visitations to other planets there. Of course, that may be the drunken man's talk - I know a fool can talk.

I'm not worried about opening time. All I'm worried about is closing time.

The ash goes on the carpet: where are you going?

There is no death. The so-called death is only transition and that is a major factor.

I never asked to come into this world and yet I'm here. And now that I know what it's like, if I had been asked I would have said NO! I would have stopped where I came from. But the hidden powers said one thing there, "Give it a trial".

A bigger liar than Jeremiah, but I like his rubbish, I do.

Watch the action there! What's seen and unseen there!

Full stops, question marks and commas, there!

I have a gift. Maybe it's flowing away. But then, that gift never flows away.

Seagulls don't need blankets and sheets, all they need is rocks.

Let it remain stationary.

Sometimes I get afraid of myself there.

It's just as well to look a fool as not to be one.

I'm what they call the unwanted guest and that's the way I'm always going to be.

There are tributaries and estuaries and they go into the great deep sea there to be obliterated.

It takes a lunatic to find out what is really going on. You are now talking to a lunatic, sir! A lunatic is someone who takes an interest in something no one else takes an interest in. For the rest there is no escape.

“THE SINGER”

After a few years you don't want to hear or listen to guys and their troubles 'cause our troubles are nothin'.

Most of us people have been around and can't live with stupid people with their wristwatches and rings and all that sort of business. Sure we're not worried about all that any more.

This man with his wristwatch, his emblem for life - ah, 'tis rubbish!

If you're goin' to prepare yourself for life, why not prepare yourself for death? College may prepare you for a bit of life, but what about death?

Retrospective thinking is bad news.

I'm goin' to die with the roses. I've only one lung, so I'm out of the game, you know. I'll not die in hospital.

Why shouldn't a man prepare his own death? I'll go out gracefully with the flowers. I'll even clip my toenails for the pathologist so that he can't look at me and say, "The dirty bastard!"

Now you've got a long distance talker and you've got a quiet talker; indeed, you've got all kinds of talkers. Now this is the quiet talking champion of the world and this is the loud talking champion of the world; and this is such and such a talker and that is so and so a talker, and we get to meet them at the Olympic Games place or somewhere so they can battle their brains out, just talking. You see, my friend, the world will go on anyway, the world forgets everything. Now these talkers will all be wearing uniforms and they'll have a big mouth emblazoned on the pocket of their jackets in bright colours. An' they'll yackety yack for the rest of their lives. I think such people are called politicians.

Without suffering, I'm lost: I wouldn't know what to do without suffering.

You know them aviary designers in high places? Well, Lord Snowdon designs aviaries for birds; Mountbatten designs aviaries for humans.

Sure they like to go to church, and why not; they can't go into a pub and sing, you know, they haven't got the nerve, so they just go to the church instead. They go there and they sing, just like some South American tribe, you know. The organist thinks he's Mozart and the man in the pulpit thinks he's Christ and yacks on.

Them Salvation Army people, they can busk away and collect money; as much as they like. But if I get out there and do it, there'll be a policeman rushin' me off in five minutes

Now I live in a church as well, you know, God's church, the only real one there is, not an architects' one, a proper one. No painted stars on my ceiling, but real ones; none of them silly statues, but trees and bushes.

Some time back now I knocked on the door of this vicar an' I asked him for some food; do you know I could see him thinkin' twice on the matter. I says to him, "Do you believe in God?" "Of course I do!" he shouts. "Well then," I says, "come on the road with me. I believe in him implicitly. Go lock up your car an' come with me." Well, he nearly cut my head off with the slammin' of his door.

“BLACK SAM”

I went to Moorhaven once - injections, pills and all that. I realised it was a load of rubbish. I sees this psychiatrist bloke, only a young ‘un. I was weighing him up. He was like me; he knew nothing.

We’re all searching for something, aren’t we?

All right professor, I’ll tell ya somethin’ now: what’s gone wrong is this - greed; that’s God, that’s God today. Nothin’s friendly today. The young are vicious.

A tinker give me this dog. I went to the north of Scotland with him; I loved that dog. He lay on me ‘ead in any barn. He died, though. It didn’t make any sense.

A handshake can judge you.

With experience you can write a book, but no one would believe it.

You try to probe into somethin’, but suddenly it’s full stop.

We’re all strange people; we’re all escapin’; we’re al fanatics.

You searchin’ for somethin’, but what? If I could have had one spark, just one spark. There’s some force that governs. Some gigantic force, but what does it govern?

I can’t explain it; when I drink I seems to get some Dutch courage. And when I get it, I want more and I’ll get it any way I can, includin’ if it hurts people. Then you’re worse than before, but that’s self pity. Someone says somethin’ to you and you’re in trouble. You’re too much of a coward to drown yourself. Then the drink wears off and you’re in hell!

You tell a person straight to his face, they don’t like it. They say, “You bastard!” See? Who likes the truth?

Is there a God? That’s what they say. Bah! Nature’s the god. Force, that’s all, force and more force. The birds know it; that’s why they sing.

I’ve seen everythin’ an’ I’m out of control.

I can like and dislike - even hate - instantly: that’s a gift, ain’t it?

All the bums, the tramps, the misfits, the lot - I knows 'em. I'm a misfit, I knows that; I admits it anyways. I've got these ideas in my mush. I've been punched a few times. I had a fight with Johnny King in Liverpool - lasted one round.

They go to the NAB and balls around with them people for a few bob. By the time they gets it they're so fed up they buys cider. It's not always sunshine, you know; sometimes it pisses down with rain.

The likes of me, when you're down, they keep yer down. Ya go to the NAB and they keeps yer waiting for hours. I seen it in Manchester, Birmingham, all over the place. I've seen really starvin' sick men wait four hours for ten bob.

I get as far north as possible; maybe I'll get some crofter's cottage. The more barren the better. Escape: no noise, nothin'; just seagulls an' gannets. The chains will drop off me if I can get up there. I'm an "alky" but I don't drink much up there. Now, I'm a wreck.

I have actually seen somethin', honest - peace, quiet. My ears are so full of nerves.

When I look at yer pictures of the lads, I feel like I'm in a mortuary.

“DIOGENES”

I knows I’m a bloody fool and there’s some bloody fools don’t know it.

Live while you may,
And live in clover.
When you’m dead,
You’m dead all over.

If anybody looks ahead, nine times out of ten, they snuffs it.

A man says “See you in the morning” to me. I says “Never say ‘see you’ to me, always say ‘goodbye’ - you’m safer that way.”

You’m longer dead than you’m alive.

My landlord don’t worry about rent.

You can look backwards but you can’t look forwards.

You can hurry up an’ take yer time.

There was this man out o’ work and he said on this sunny day, “If oi were workin’ I’d take the day orf.”

Ah! It’s six o’clock; I’m orf to see the parson in the church where they’ve got bibles with handles on ‘em.

The word “if” has only got two letters but it’s got an ‘eck of a meanin’.

If anybody understands simple things, they can understand other things.

Always a true word spoken in a joke.

We’re goin’ on strike down the Labour Exchange tomorrow. Our shop steward says if they don’t get them cranes down there quick to lift the pencils up for us, we’re packin’ in.

“HARMONICA JIM”

Good atoms know their own, in this world of atoms.
If we make them into muck we become flies.
Somehow an atom can become a proper human being.

If you want to know what's on this earth, then be careful what comes out of your mouth. There's beauty on the world and you can get beauty out of it. The little voice is stupid; if you let that control you, then heaven help you.

Don't forget the atom people who won this world long before we came.

That little fly is very intelligent but on the cross I beat him.

You've got to make them understand you, not you them, otherwise they'll soon make shit out of you; they're very powerful people.

I get more from talking to myself than talking to most of the buggers round here.

At least I'm good for one thing - nothing.

You can walk through a graveyard and some of them that's buried there could have been you.

Come and visit me any time, the doors are always open, so are the windows. There's no floors in my house, so watch it!

I come from sod all, so why worry if I go back to sod all? Little atoms look after their own.

Give us a bomb; I want to sit on it. I want to get home quick.

People bore me stiff; it's all fighting down here, all hating.

The bloody police have moved me again, I've got to find another derry. Bloody nuisance; they can't see through their own name, can they? ‘Po’ for house and ‘lice’ for louse, see?

“COCKNEY JIM”

I've kept away from women - which are the damaging process.

Before the war, when mass unemployment was in, you was too old at forty. Then, miraculously, the war turned up and even men of forty or fifty were pressed into service. Suddenly, these poor derelicts were put to work, even imbeciles were put into factories.

Everybody has got their liabilities and their disabilities.

Gather ye dollars while ye may.

I am a tea-totaller; that is, a total abstainer from tea.

In the old days, imprisonment was one in a cell. Now it's three dogs yapping at each other in one kennel.

I had a peculiar attraction towards jewellers' windows; it must have been the sparkle of the diamond rings. I got a craze for them, there must have been an old baroness in my family.

I was arrested, locked in the cells, court case and released. Twelve quid's worth of expenses, all for what?

Birds sing in cages, but I'm not a bird.

Anybody that has seven children is entitled to a heart attack.

Prison Governor: What religion are you?

Cockney Jim: I am nonconformist.

Prison Governor: So what? We are the Orthodox British Church. Why are you nonconformist?

Cockney Jim: I do not conform to conformity.

Prison Governor: We will soon alter that.

Before I'm lowered into the grave, I'll always have the knowledge that I've had my own back on society in many ways.

He goes around the world to tell you what I could tell you walking up the High Street.