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"May We Quote You" This issue of Irregular is mainly devoted to extracts from several authorities on a number of different topics. The exception is the first article, "The Clayton Example". The editor appeals to readers to send in material about the outer suburbs. In recent months not much material has been received about these areas.

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I/36/70 The Clayton Example.
A Seemingly Simple Scheme for Co-ordinating Community Activities.

by "Gamma"

Karl Dittrich could possibly kick a football from the Clayton railway station to the heart of the complex of community facilities at Clayton. There nestled in behind the row of shops is the library, the auditorium, the mothers rest room, scout hall, basketball courts, swimming pools and a kindergarten.

It appears to the ^{un}informed observer that this grouped complex of services has "grown like Topsy". There is little evidence that from its inception there was any vision of an overall plan. But, there is plenty of evidence that the citizens of this part of Clayton have participated in the making of plans for particular parts of the whole group of facilities, and that the initial enthusiasms which were organised to campaign for particular projects have been harnessed to administering the various parts of the complex after they have been established.

For example, the Committee of Management of the Swimming Pools directly descends from the original group of people who met together to plan the Baths as a memorial to the Second World War. Similarly, the auditorium and library have been built in response to ideas put forward by citizens' committees and a plaque in these premises lists the names of those who pioneered this section of the Centre.

More than this, now that the library and auditorium are established, other citizens groups have been formed and new life has been breathed into groups which have existed precariously for many years. The Choral Society, the Local History Club, the Dramatic Club, Poetry Reading Groups, Groups of Migrants are only some of the organisations which are flourishing because of this local centre.

Although it is impossible to really quantify the effect of the existence of this Clayton group of facilities, a few facts were gleaned during a brief Sunday afternoon visit to Clayton in July of this year.

1) The auditorium was hung with 122 exhibits by 29 local artists. It seemed that viewing an exhibition at the Clayton Auditorium is quite a local social event for the whole family. Background music by a youthful folk singer, coffee and biscuits for adults and soft drinks for the young fry contributed to the cosy, friendly atmosphere.

2) The Program for the Clayton Arts Festival for 1970 which was held for a fortnight included a theatre production involving 27 people, performances by local schools, poetry reading, local history talks and so on.

3) An International Dancing Night was starred as the first event of the Arts Festival. The Clayton Centre has given particular attention to encouraging migrant families to use the facilities. For example, earlier this year a reception was held at the auditorium for Greek families who live in Clay.

4) Over at the Swimming Pools the Victorian Amateur Swimming Association was holding district swimming sports and there were dozens of aspiring Dawn Frazers and Jon Konrads in the water; with an equal number of encouraging adults on the edge.

2/36/70

Plans for the Future.

Under construction at Clayton is a pedestrian mall which will give a more dignified access from the shops to the library, auditorium, sports courts and pools. Plans have also been made for a gymnasium right beside the pools.

Some Special Features

1) The toddlers pool is completely fenced off from the other three pools (a learners pool, the heated pool, and an Olympic sized pool,) and it is sheltered from the cold south winds by the buildings which house the warm pool. In this corner for mums and little ones there are swings and other playground pieces. (This is the first fenced off toddlers pool that I have seen. Too many pools that I have patronised have loud speakers blaring reprimands to older children who romp around the toddlers pool.) A secluded corner like that at Clayton has much to recommend it. This thoughtful layout is typical of the loving care of parents and is one of the indications that Mr and Mrs John Citizen have been closely associated with the planning of the facilities.

2) The car park behind the shops and surrounding the library and auditorium on three sides is not only marked out for car spaces but also for court games. This dual use of car parks is not unique, but it is still not very usual. At least one of the advantages of this dual use is that it enables the complex of facilities to be more compact.... for more facilities to be close to the hub..... or perhaps, more precisely, for ~~the facilities~~ the facilities themselves to be so close to each other that together they form a hub.

3) The various parts of the Clayton community facilities while relating to each other spatially have not yet been tied together visually. The pedestrian mall with its central court will help to do this in one small part; the generous amount of space, with lawns, around the pools are already planted with trees; the main reason for tree planting was expressed as being to create a wind break and to give shade. The importance of landscaping to help integrate the parts into the whole does not yet seem to be influencing the planning of this complex. Although, here and there, especially around the auditorium and library attention has been given to a careful selection of plants, nevertheless, there is an obvious lack of any overall advice from a landscape architect.

With all its limitations, Clayton is a bright star for those who may become disheartened, thinking it impossible to find solutions to correct the bad, but seemingly overwhelming trends for social facilities to be scattered and for the community purpose to decline. Clayton is already proving that a neighbourhood which includes a grouped complex of community facilities is more likely to make participation possible for a wider cross section of the citizens.

Hat's off to the Cakleigh Council for their part in creating this centre, and to the particular councillors who have helped to champion the scheme. The significant key to the success of this scheme has been, and still is, the involvement of the local people in participation in the plans for their own suburb.

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3/36/ '70 A Town Planner Who is Concerned about Freeways and a Laundromat.

Professor John Andrews was "Guest of Honour" for the Australian Broadcasting Commission on 26 July 1970. (Prof. Andrews was for a time Chairman of the Department of Architecture at the University of Toronto. He has now returned to live in Australia and practices both here and in Canada. He is currently working on the Belconnen Satellite Town Project for Canberra)

Our Transit System is an Asset. Here is Prof. Andrew's challenging opening paragraph in his "Guest of Honour" talk.....

"One of the things that appeals to me most about Australia.... and I think I can be objective about this, having been away from the place for 14 or 15 years, is that there are many qualities here that town planners in other parts of the world are striving to achieve. I think we have been just a little blind to them.... we tend to take them for granted. The major one to me would be the transit system that everybody seems to decry. However, one of the major points is that we have a transit system.... its pretty run down, its filthy dirty.... the service is shocking.... the rolling stock is equally shocking, except some of the new equipment, but we do have a network and the road bed which is always the most expensive thing when you think about introducing public transport into a city anew.

A Town Planner Who is Concerned About Freeways... Continued.

Now it seems to me that before we go and tear the place apart with expressways and follow along what's happened in North America....follow along reasonably blindly I think in some instances,.... one of the things we should do is to look at the potential for improving the public transport system as we have it at the moment and improving it to the point where it's very convenient as for people. I think convenience is the only way in which you will be able to make a city operate at a profit and as a reasonable place to live. I don't find that expressways or massive motor car systems are the only answer... I think there is a place for the expressway and obviously the link between Sydney and Melbourne, and Sydney and Brisbane and elsewhere, should be an expressway. But, I'm very definitely against expressways as a solution, or the only solution for handling traffic in cities. And, we've got to consider cities as far as Australia is concerned. it's the most urban society in the world, strangely enough....84% of the people live in the cities.

4/36/'70 The Laundromat as a Meeting Place

And, here is Prof. Andrew's second last paragraph....

"Just think of the way people live. For instance... the laundromat (in the O.Y.O. units... editor) is generally tucked away in a dark hole or the place where people do their laundry is down in the basement. It's a place where there are some washing machines, and a couple of flues, and maybe an old plastic chair to sit on. But it seems to me that it's these little things that could begin to give quality to human life. Now just take the laundromat or laundry as the case maybe. There is no reason in earth why that has to be something stuck away in the bowels of the earth. It could be a nice place because it's a place that's very conducive to meeting as far as people are concerned.... you've got to put your washing in and wait for it... you've got to put it in the drier and wait for it.... and there's other people going to be there and doing it at the same time... Now that's just one little ~~facet~~ facet of life that in a way could be handled in a way that could be more pleasant. I think that this sort of quality of life is really what it's all about."

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5/36/'70 The Community School.

Notes from a talk given by Prof. Goldman (Latrobe University) to a meeting of teachers/ (emphasis in this article are ours... editor.)

"Wyndham School, Egreemont, West Cumberland, England is nearly four years old. It was deliberately built as a school to be closely integrated with the community.

Cumberland was from time immemorial an area of barren fells with many sheep and few people.... It flourished as a mining town in the nineteenth century and then suffered severely in the depression of the 1930s. The establishment of a huge atomic research and production station has produced a "population explosion". There are, however still three strands in the population.... agricultural workers, miners and people employed at all levels in a scientific laboratory.

The first task was to blend the disparate elements of the community into one. It was assisted by remarkably interesting buildings.. These in turn attracted an outstanding staff. The school is by definition "Comprehensive" academically and strives to be so also socially and the organisation of the school is aimed to do this.

As is not unusual in England, the school provided education for adults in the evenings and at the weekends. But, the two organisations are not separate. Many of the daytime staff both teach and study in the classes in the evenings... The evening organisation is also that of a community centre. Town band, Young Farmers, Bridge Club, Football Training, Political Meetings, Religious Societies, Consumer Groups.... these are a few examples of many different interests catered for. There is a coffee bar and lounge provided for the use of senior students in the day time and the public in the evenings.

A modern attractive youth centre is part of the premises. The policy is not for a closed membership. The youth centre provided a lounge, coffee bar, dancing area, juke box, and small entertainments like billiards and table tennis. The premises of the youth centre are used in the morning by a Nursery Play Centre for the "under fives".

The library and reference room are open to both the school and the public.

The school has a fine indoor swimming pool, which is open to the public when the school is not in session. The pool is controlled jointly by the Education Authority and the Rural District. Similarly, the playing fields have this dual control.

A task of the Wyndham team which cannot be overtly admitted but is none the less real is to spread abroad the concept of broadmindedness and internationalism. As the visitor enters the school, he sees on the wall a stone legend. It begins by quoting the first sentence of the American Declaration of Independence (We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal etc) and goes on....

'This school is dedicated to the brotherhood of all men and to the infinite possibilities of the spirit which is in them, to freedom both from oppression and from prejudice, to the open mind and to the open door. On the wall appear the names of men and women of our time who have championed one or others of these causes'.

A list of about 20 names is steadily growing. It includes.. Mohandas Ghandi, Albert Schweitzer, Pope John XXIII, John Kennedy, Dag Hammarskjöld, Albert Luthuli .. Martin Luther King.

Prof. Goldman concluded "We hope that this legend bears a silent witness which may have effect when we who caused it to be set up are no longer present.

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6/36/'70 "A Centre of Environmental Design".

Extracts from an article by Denis Freney.

"In June the students at the University of New South Wales declared the School of Architecture to be "A Centre of Environmental Design". They raised demands for student control over courses and the need for students to be "encouraged to become aware of human relationships and human needs on a universal basis"

In a leaflet published by the architecture students at the University of N.S.W. it is stated... "A world wide crisis exists in the relationship of man and his modification of the environment and the consequences in ecological terms.... The effect of deteriorating environments are of significant consequences to the well being and happiness of individuals and the relationships of peoples. Buildings and their wastes have become a major source of environmental pollution."

The students criticised the new building housing the School of Architecture... "Apart from poorly conceived planning, it fails technically in respect to lighting and acoustics, is wasteful with unusable but lavish lobbies, creates artificial barriers between staff and students of various levels... the building is technically and environmentally a hopeless failure".

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7/36/'70 The Land Boom of the 1970s

Extracts from an advertisement for "How to Get Real Estate Rich" by Fred. Johnson.. "A factual book showing how to take advantage of Australia's real estate boom".

Rising Land Values. Land values have been rising consistently in Australia for many years... land has far outstripped all other forms of investment in capital growth and income and provides security that no other investment can match. Suburban land in capital cities has risen enormously in the past 12 months with city properties doing even better than this. Properly selected land offers almost unlimited potential for accumulating wealth. Money invested 12 months ago is today showing income returns of 15% p.a or more, while if the owner was to sell he could make 25% tax free on his original outlay. Compared to the share market land is the safest investment of all.... not subject to factors beyond one's own control like company management etc.

And another quote from the same advertisement..... (ceiling)

No Value Ceiling. There is no ceiling to real estate value... the simple rule of supply and demand must always dictate value trends. A population grows (5,000,000 people in Sydney in the year 2000) demand for land uses rises in all sections of the community. More houses are needed, additional apartments, farms, office accommodation, and factory buildings etc. Higher land prices just must inevitably result. Progress must mean profit as we have recently seen with the great developments taking place in every capital city and in most regions and suburbs. It is hard to find even one case where land has shown a loss, say, in the past twelve months.

The concluding sentence of the advertisement warns... THE TIME TO MAKE A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT IS NOW... TOMORROW'S VALUES WILL BE HIGHER.