

Community

Life on the inside isn't a career option *by the Editor*

STUDENTS attending a Crime Day at Chilwell School organised for their benefit by the 'Prison! Me! No Way!' Trust had a taste last week of just what prison might be like should they be foolish enough to be drawn into a life of crime.

Prior to the event, the pupils had been told to arrive at school wearing full school uniform and that, for the course of the day in question, they would be spoken to as if they were prisoners. Even so, some of the Year 9 students were still surprised to find themselves spoken to sharply if they didn't respond immediately when asked to do something – simple tasks that really shouldn't have challenged them, such as wearing their (long) trousers pulled up to

their waist and zipped up properly – if only they didn't have a point to prove to their peers.

All 195 of the Year 9 students at Chilwell School had been warned that they would be dealt with as if they were in prison, i.e. expected to seek permission to do things and pay attention to any instructions as they moved around the school block. Basically, it was going to mean moving around quietly and in an orderly manner, and some of the youngsters were always going to show off in front of their mates.

Maybe the few recalcitrant lads of Year 9, aged 13 – 14, who found it so very difficult to do as they were asked – full school uniform to be worn at all times, no outdoor

jackets inside, permission to be excused required before heading for the loo – are the ones who might ultimately benefit if they paid attention.

The Crime and Safety Awareness Days are run by staff from HMP Nottingham, who volunteer to go out into the communities of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. They teach adolescents what might await them should they choose to have a look at the inside of the UK's judicial system first hand, even letting them experience the bleak, dismal confines of a mock-up two-person prison cell, daily life in a prison workshop and procedures in a magistrates court.

In addition, the Year 9 pupils learnt about the wider implications of the crime of

arson from representatives of Notts Fire and Rescue Service. Nottingham City Transport ran a workshop about anti-social behaviour on buses and trams, and prisoners from the all-woman prison at Askham Grange, Yorks, spoke of their experiences.

To round off the session, a street scene had been set up in the school's theatre. Here, prison officers involved some of the Chilwell students in portraying the ease with which something that starts as an innocent-enough altercation rapidly degenerates into a fatal stabbing – and all involved are taken into custody.

At the end of the cameo, the retired prison officers ran through some of the offences that had taken place. These

included assault, carrying a weapon, litter, trespass, harassment of homeowner and, since a change in the law, crime by association. Taking the recent murder at Victoria Station in London, where 13 people, including girls, were arrested as an example, Prison Officer Ollie Woods said: "These days, it's not just the person left holding the knife who faces the charge of murder. Everyone who was with the murderer when the crime was committed is likely to be found guilty by association. Even if they are only 14."

For the most part, the pupils of Chilwell School found the Crime Day informative and instructive. Chris Burrell (13), of Attenborough, said: "I

think today will help us understand what can happen. Using students in the role play will have taught us more and is likely to make us think twice before we get involved."

Prison Officer and Crime Day Coordinator Nigel Bosworth said: "One of the most important messages we endeavour to get across to the students is that actions have consequences. By treating them as if they were in prison, they soon start to grasp that message.

Broxtowe Borough Council funds a number of the instructive 'Crime Days' in each of the senior schools in the borough across the school year.

Beeston Town Band seeks new members

BEESTON Town Band first came together about 1916 and, over the years, has won prizes at Crystal Palace. Now it is looking for new players.

The band has seen many people come and go. Ernie Dring, the band's conductor for many a long year, died and a few years ago, he was followed by Johnny Clay. Johnny had once been a leader of his own big band and was very popular in his heyday.

Band Secretary Maxine Shaw said: "These days, our oldest and dearest member is Bill Singleton, in his eighties and still getting along most Sunday mornings to the gang's meetings at the Commercial Inn, Wollaton Road, Beeston at 10am.

"We have done many jobs

for the local community over the years but now, we do not seem to be remembered for the pleasure we have given and music we have provided. From my point of view, this is very sad.

"We play Glenn Miller-type music as well as more well known pieces. The band is now, like many other bands, desperate for players as well as jobs to do. Anyone who may wish to come along for a blow, from woodwind to brass players and from young to old, is welcome to come along to The Commercial and say 'hello!'"

For more information, please get in touch with *The Beeston Express* in the first instance.

John Clifford School left in the shade

NINETY pupils of Years 3 and 4 at John Clifford Primary School could barely contain their excitement as, at long last, they were allowed into the new construction that had appeared in the centre of the school playground in recent weeks.

The long-awaited shade shelter and outdoor classroom, designed for use

by both pupils and parents, was finally to be opened by Notts County Council's School Travel Officer, Steve Stephenson.

Costing £5344 and funded by NCC, the wooden structure has generous dimensions and protective 'soft' flooring, as the young people who poured into the shelter for the first time soon discovered. The structure

will be used during the day as a classroom and as a quiet area at break times, a shady haven during sunny weather, and somewhere to shelter from the elements in sudden downpours.

Parents waiting to collect their children from school will find it provides handy protection against inclement weather.